



Whatcom Community  
Foundation

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Los Niños Fund to provide humanitarian aid to families affected by Yamato immigration raid**

The Whatcom Community Foundation, in collaboration with Community to Community Development, established the Los Niños Fund to support local families affected by the February 24, 2009 immigration raid at Yamato Engine Specialists in Bellingham.

The Fund will provide assistance to households with children: 1) of families residing locally with member(s) detained in the raid, and 2) with sole parents or caretakers or single-income parents or caretakers. More than 30 children have been affected by the raid.

#### National Attention

The Four Freedoms Fund (FFF) was the Los Niños Fund (Fund) catalyst. FFF is a national funding collaborative established “to energize American democracy by supporting and engaging immigrants and refugees.” Upon learning of the Yamato raid, FFF contacted Community to Community Development, a Bellingham-based nonprofit working toward social, economic and environmental justice at the local and global levels, as well as OneAmerica, a Seattle-based organization working to advance democracy, social justice and human rights, and the Whatcom Community Foundation (WCF).

Fund proceeds will provide much needed food, housing and energy assistance for the families. WCF will accept gifts and make grants from the Fund as well as coordinate with various community partners. Community to Community Development and Catholic Community Services will provide vouchers to eligible families. The Markets, owner of Cost Cutter and Food Pavilion stores, is providing a discount for food vouchers purchased with grant proceeds. The Opportunity Council will also be in contact with the families to ensure that those eligible for existing programs are aware of their availability.

“Immigrants, regardless of their legal status, are often reluctant to access community services even if they’re eligible,” noted Rosalina Guillen, executive director of Community to Community Development. “They are very aware of public sentiment and don’t want to be a burden. That makes this extraordinary effort vital.”

Mauri Ingram, president and CEO of WCF, remarked, “Everyone we’ve contacted regarding the Fund has been generous and creative in their approach to meeting this need.” The Fund is modeled on the New Bedford Immigrant Families/Niños Fund of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts. The 2007 raid of the Michael Bianco Plant in New Bedford, Massachusetts was the impetus for that fund. “It is invaluable to have the counsel of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts as we work to develop an efficient and effective means of providing aid,” said Ingram. “We’re gaining significant benefit from the New Bedford experience.”

#### How to Help

Contributions to the Los Niños Fund may be made payable to Whatcom Community Foundation – Los Niño’s Fund and sent to the Whatcom Community Foundation at 119 Grand Avenue, Suite A, Bellingham, WA 98225, or via credit card through the WCF website ([www.whatcomcf.org](http://www.whatcomcf.org)). Gifts are tax deductible. For more information please call the Foundation at (360) 671-6463.

#### About Whatcom Community Foundation

WCF, founded in 1996, is a dynamic vehicle for philanthropy and community building in Whatcom County. WCF currently holds 100 funds totaling more than \$8.5 million to benefit Whatcom County nonprofit organizations in all areas of service to the community. The organization has granted more than \$2 million to numerous local nonprofits since July 1, 2008. WCF also provides services to donors who wish their charitable giving to be as effective as possible.