

# Text of His Excellency Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia

## Press Conference June, 25<sup>th</sup> 2015

"I'm very pleased by the progress we've made in planning for the World Meeting of Families congress in Philadelphia. The family congress is the reason for the Holy Father's journey to the United States, and Pope Francis' public Mass on September 27 will cap a weeklong celebration of global family life. The Holy Father's visit will have a wonderful preamble in the congress' events, and Philadelphia can expect a beautiful and extraordinary week of festivities."

The following key updates regarding the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 have been provided, as of June 15:

### ***Registration:***

To date, there are 11,821 paid registrants for the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015. Within that figure, 1,148 are registered for the Youth Congress (*Ages 6 -17*). Currently, more than 100 nations are represented in the current registrant count, with the United States reflecting the top registering country followed by Canada, Vietnam, Dominican Republic and Nigeria. There are 50 or more registrants for the Congress from the following nations (*in alphabetical order*): Argentina, Australia, Colombia, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland and Vietnam.

The World Meeting of Families Marketplace, at the World Meeting of Families Congress at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, has far exceeded initial expectations with over 250 exhibitors to-date covering over 150,000 square feet of exhibit space within the Convention Center.

### ***Volunteer Engagement:***

Currently, there are 6,100 individuals eligible to volunteer. 3,400 volunteers have signed up for events but it is important to note that not all events are posted as the full Papal itinerary has not yet been released. Pennsylvania leads with more than 2,000 registered volunteers. While New Jersey is a close second, which might be expected, states such as New York (*180 registered volunteers*) and Texas (*123 registered volunteered*) are also represented. More than 300 eligible volunteers speak Spanish and the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 continues to capture volunteer information related to foreign language skills. Interestingly, there are at least 37 volunteers who are 80 years of age and older. More than 30 percent (33%) of volunteers have generously donated the cost of the required background check back to the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015.

### ***Transportation:***

The World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 recently announced the launch of its Official Bus Operator Registration site, **[wmof.goground.com](http://wmof.goground.com)**, in partnership with GO GROUND, the official transportation management partner of World Meeting of Families. All commercial charter buses and privately-owned buses must register to ensure parishes, tour operators and other private groups have access to designated parking spaces for September 26-27, which will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. With buses being one of the most effective modes of transportation, event organizers are planning for upwards of 5,000 charter buses. GO GROUND

registration will run through Friday, July 31 and more information can be found at [wmof.goground.com](http://wmof.goground.com).

The World Meeting of Families is also pleased to announce the introduction of ***KnowB4UGoPHL*** and ***The Papal Visit Playbook*** campaigns for detailed in-the-know plans about public transportation routes and schedules. Event visitors are encouraged to visit ***KnowB4UGoPHL*** at [www.worldmeeting2015.org](http://www.worldmeeting2015.org) for updates on how to access Philadelphia and navigate through the events. ***KnowB4UGoPHL*** will be a valuable resource for visitors wanting to get easy directions from Point A to Point B as efficiently as possible. With updates on mass transit schedules, insider tips and information on locations, walking routes and maps, visitors will have easy access to helpful tools in preparation for this global event through ***KnowB4UGoPHL***.

***The Papal Visit Playbook*** is a more in-depth overview for local residents living and working in and out of Philadelphia. ***The Playbook*** will inform residents of transportation and lodging logistics, location perimeters and maps, event timeline of commemorative attractions, museum exhibits, entertainment, and merchandise offerings among many more details. Philadelphia will be in the international limelight and when it opens its doors to visitors from more than 150 nations in faith and celebration. It is important that the World Meeting of Families be fun, engaging and exciting for both local residents and international visitors alike. This is under development and will launch later this summer.

### ***Housing:***

More than 1,600 people have already registered to offer their homes through the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 “Host a Family” program. While there are hundreds of rooms already secured, additional registrants are welcome to help meet the anticipated demand for this housing option, which is aimed at offering comfortable accommodations in a cost-effective manner. Interested individuals and families can find detailed information about participating in “Host a Family” at <http://www.worldmeeting2015.org/get-involved/host-a-family/>.

There are also 65,000 hotel rooms within a 60 mile radius of Philadelphia and the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 continues to work closely with all local tourism agencies to ensure that there is access to hotel rooms across the region, including New Jersey and Delaware. Hotel rooms do remain available but it is important to note that the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 has no influence or control over the market prices set for hotel rooms.

“We are delighted at where we currently stand in planning the four-day Congress as well as the Papal visit,” said Donna Crilley Farrell, Executive Director of the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015. “Whether delving into Congress registration, volunteer engagement or housing options, we continue to be overwhelmed by the enthusiasm exhibited for this event and the generosity of so many in giving their time and talent to the World Meeting of Families. Certainly, there is more work to do but with three months until the event, we feel confident in our planning efforts as we continue to track positively toward reaching our goals.”

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Co-sponsored by the Holy See’s Pontifical Council for the Family and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the World Meeting of Families is a triennial global event that seeks to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe and highlight its intrinsic value to the good of society. This international gathering will welcome Pope Francis to the United States for the first time in his

Papacy. Being held in the United States for the first time ever, the official theme for the 2015 World Meeting of Families is **“Love is Our Mission: The Family Fully Alive.”**

For more information regarding the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, visit **[www.WorldMeeting2015.org](http://www.WorldMeeting2015.org)**. For more information regarding The Holy See’s Pontifical Council for the Family, which co-sponsors the World Meeting of Families, visit [http://www.familiam.org/famiglia\\_eng/00002554\\_HOME\\_ENG.html](http://www.familiam.org/famiglia_eng/00002554_HOME_ENG.html). You can also engage the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia on Facebook (*World Meeting of Families 2015*) (*Encuentro Mundial de las Familias – Filadelfia 2015*), Twitter (*@WMF2015*) (*@WMF2015ES*) and Instagram (*WMF2015*).

### **About World Meetings of Families**

Beginning with 1994, The Year of the Family, the Pontifical Council for the Family has been responsible for organizing the World Meetings of Families in Rome (1994); Rio de Janeiro (1997); Rome (2000); Manila (2003); Valencia (2006); Mexico City (2009); Milan (2012); and now, Philadelphia (2015). Since its inception by Saint John Paul II, the World Meeting of Families has sought to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe.