

As Cost of Living Soars, IFCJ Launches Program To Support Impoverished Israeli Children Heading Back to School.

Survey Conducted in Partnership With the Geocartography Knowledge Group Finds 25 Percent of Israeli Parents Unable To Afford Basic School Supplies.

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As Israeli children prepare to head back to school amidst a period of skyrocketing prices for food, electricity and many other basic necessities, the [International Fellowship of Christians and Jews of Canada \(IFCJ Canada\)](#) is [spearheading a program](#) to help ensure children will not be deprived of the school supplies many kids take for granted.

The program will see the distribution of 10,115 clothing cards for families to purchase new school clothes for children as well as the delivery of 730 backpacks filled with materials for school including pencil boxes, pens, markers, scissors, erasers, notebooks, and other essentials to start off the school.

The urgent need for the program emerged following [a survey conducted by IFCJ and the Geocartography Knowledge Group](#). The survey revealed that as many as one-quarter of all families in Israel estimate they don't have the budget to purchase supplies ahead of the 2022 school year. It also found that the average cost of school supplies for each child is 612 shekels, the equivalent of approximately 236 Canadian Dollars.

IFCJ Canada President Yael Eckstein reported that the organization is witnessing increased economic hardships across Israeli society. "While historically the economic challenges associated with a new school year were relegated to lower-income homes, factors from increasing prices, as well as lingering economic effects from COVID-19 has those hardships impacting on wider



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*IFCJ Canada President Yael
Eckstein*

elements of our society,” she said.

“No child should have to go back to school embarrassed that they don't have new notebooks and pencils. We believe that a new school year deserves to be a happy and hope-filled occasion,” said Eckstein. “This outreach funded by our committed community of donors will take a bit of the burden off of these families under what we know continues to be a challenging time.”

According to the survey, directed by Professor Avi Dagani and Dr. Rina Dagani of Geocartography, parents struggling

with their children's educational expenses are forced to reduce spending in other areas. While the first cuts typically go to more “elective” areas like entertainment or new clothing, many have to make concessions in gas, food and even water consumption.

“We are a large family, and the prices are rising all the time,” said V, a mother of four who has received the vouchers from the program. “Our fourth daughter is going into first grade this year. Every year it is difficult for us to buy all the supplies needed for school. In the past, we could not give our children the things they asked for because we simply did not have enough money. Thanks to The Fellowship and this initiative, our children can feel like they matter. It gives them a good feeling, self-confidence and the chance to return to school happily.”

“With rising costs for materials worldwide, we are looking to ease the burden on families whose main focus should be their children and access to proper education and support,” said Jackie Gotwalt, Executive Director of IFCJ Canada. “It is difficult enough to afford food, let alone clothing for growing children as well as school supplies when there are so many families struggling to make ends meet. IFCJ Canada is grateful to be able to help the children of Israel build a brighter future.”

For more information about IFCJ Canada's work, please visit its website at www.ifcj.ca.

The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews of Canada (IFCJ Canada) was founded in 2003 to promote better understanding and cooperation between Christians and Jews and to build broad support for Israel. Today it is one of the largest providers of not-for-profit humanitarian aid in Israel and is a leading force helping Jews in need worldwide. IFCJ Canada is a separately registered charity governed by an independent board of directors and led by President Yael Eckstein. Founded by Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, IFCJ Canada operates alongside a network of Fellowship offices worldwide, including in the United States, Israel, and Korea. For more information, visit www.ifcj.ca.

Website www.IFCJ.ca | Facebook IFCJCanada | Instagram @ifcjcanada

Petra Kooman
Graf-Martin Communications
+1 519-342-3703 ext. 106

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