

Blanket/Coat Drive for Refugees a Great Success

2015 Donations Grew by More than 300% Over 2014

(Fairfax, VA – December 14, 2015) The Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC), the American Turkish Friendship Association (AFTA) and Embrace Relief are pleased to report the 2015 blanket/coat drive to assist Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Turkey has been a great success.

In 2013, 29,000 pounds of blankets were collected and in 2014 the amount equaled 39,180 pounds. For 2015 the donations more than tripled last year's donation weighing in at more than 120,000 pounds (60 tons). If the boxes containing the goods were stacked on top of each other they would exceed one mile in height the equivalent of more than 16 Statues of Liberty stacked on top of each other.

"Northern Virginia residents, businesses and folks across the country have once again risen to the challenge to help us provide humanitarian relief to those folks who have fled their homes due to the Civil War in Syria and the violence related to ISIL in the region," said NVRC Executive Director Mark Gibb. "We are grateful for everyone's support and that of our friends at Paxton and Maersk who are donating their services to truck and ship the coats and blankets."

This year there were collection sites throughout Northern Virginia from Richmond to Arlington and in 13 states and the District of Columbia. The dedicated web site for the project had more than 9200 unique visits over a 30-day period. The blankets have been trucked to Norfolk for loading on a Maersk freighter which will depart Norfolk for the port city of Mersin, Turkey where the blankets and coats will be off loaded and distributed to refugees via a local Non-Governmental Organization in the camps and in the community.

This year's blanket drive campaign was co-chaired by Fairfax BOS Chairman Sharon Bulova, Arlington BOS Chairman Mary Hynes, Prince William BOS Chairman Corey Stewart, Loudoun BOS Chairman Scott York and Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille.

You can view our infographic on the drive here: <https://magic.piktochart.com/output/9981034-blanket-drive-by-the-numbers> You can view photos from the collection drive here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskna156G>