

# CatholicPhilly.com



## A welcoming city, and a chance to be part of the welcome

By **Archbishop Charles Chaput**

On Feb. 13, the New York Times reported — Philadelphians might say “finally noticed” — that the City of Brotherly Love is enjoying a major resurgence as an international urban center. Philadelphia is a city on the move; a city that “has greatly evolved economically and culturally since 2000,” revitalized by “celebrity chefs, a vibrant technology sector and [a] thriving art scene” — not to mention some of the finest universities, museums, medical centers and historical locations in the United States.

It’s a city vital to the birth and growth of American freedoms. That’s obvious. But it’s not merely important as a key to understanding our life as a nation. It’s also a great place to live, to work — and to visit. When delegates to the Democratic National Convention arrive here in 2016, they’ll enjoy the evidence for themselves.

But even more imminent, and even larger in its crowds, is the impending visit of Pope Francis and the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) this September. And that brings me to the point of my column this week. Somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 people from all over the world will pour into Philadelphia for the WMOF Congress beginning Tuesday, Sept. 22, and continuing through Friday, Sept. 25. And when the Congress concludes, and the Holy Father arrives for events on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 26-27, we expect more than a million eager visitors to the Philadelphia area.

Where will they all stay? Hotels are open right now for those registering for the Congress during that week. The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau has been a wonderful partner from the beginning of the WMOF planning as we worked to secure hotel rooms. The trouble is, only 11,000 hotel rooms exist in Philadelphia and barely 65,000 within a 60-mile radius. That’s why we urgently need to have alternative housing available for the many people coming here from so many different countries.

I’m asking Catholics and other generous people across the archdiocese to please consider opening your homes to offer lodging to visitors via the “Host a Family Program.” Anyone with a furnished guest bedroom, apartment or home (including vacation homes) within 120 miles of Center City Philadelphia is encouraged to take part. It’s easy to sign up;



people simply need to visit the World Meeting website at [WorldMeeting2015.org](http://WorldMeeting2015.org) for guidance through the process.

You’ll be asked to create a “Host a Family” profile and include a description about yourself and your home, including the number of bedrooms available for guests, distance to Center City Philadelphia, photos, household rules and any other relevant information about your home or community.

Host a Family is powered by Homestay.com, an international organization that specializes in helping to resolve housing shortages during large-scale events around the world. Their technology provides hosts with a platform for providing accommodations to both domestic and international visitors attending the World Meeting of Families. Whether you’re a young professional, retiree, female, male, individual or the head of your family, there are a variety of ways to participate.

The WMOF leadership team describes the program this way:

### What is the Host a Family Program?

The program enables regional property owners to easily share their homes with visitors. Hosts can share a furnished guest bedroom or property with a visiting person, group or family in exchange for a nightly fee. Homestay.com is a global travel firm that provides the technology platform, technology support and customer service.

### Why would a visitor want to stay in a home rather than a hotel?

Available hotel rooms throughout the region are limited. The Host a Family Program is a good alternative for visitors in finding affordable accommodations. It’s also a good way to meet new friends, share cultural experiences and to have a local contact to help them navigate their visit.

### How do I sign up to be a host?

Hosts can register through a Homestay link found on the WMOF website, [www.WorldMeeting2015.org](http://www.WorldMeeting2015.org), to find a match that suits their needs. Guests will pay a nightly fee to the host family in exchange for their accommodations.

*Continued on back*

The technology provided by Homestay.com enables you to create a host profile, upload photos and provide features and descriptions of your home and bedrooms available. Once approved to "go live," your listing will be available exclusively for this event. Please note that your detailed address and contact information will not be publicly visible online. Guests receive these details via email, but not until after a confirmed booking is completed.

#### **How much should I charge for my home or guest room?**

That's up to you. Hosts determine what to charge in exchange for accommodations. To increase the likelihood of a reservation, and to encourage as many pilgrims to make the journey as possible, it's recommended that the fees be as

reasonable as possible.

#### **How can I get more information?**

More information including the program terms and conditions can be found on the WMOF website.

One of the blessings we've experienced in organizing the WMOF event is the hugely generous help of donors, business and government leaders from every religious background. The World Meeting of Families is a gift to the whole Philadelphia region; a tremendous opportunity to showcase our great city, its beauty, its energy and its welcoming spirit. I hope you'll be a part of that celebration — and a wonderful way to do it is to be a host this September.

## **NEWS BRIEF**

*See more Catholic news at our website, [www.CatholicPhilly.com](http://www.CatholicPhilly.com)*

### **World Meeting of Families raises \$30 million**

Officials for the World Meeting of Families this year in Philadelphia announced today, Feb. 20, that \$30 million in cash and in-kind donations has been raised to support the four-day event Sept. 22-25, capped by the visit of Pope Francis.

The congress will welcome Catholic and non-Catholic speakers and participants from across the United States and the world to discuss ways of strengthening families.

The \$30 million in pledges puts the fundraising effort at 67 percent of the estimated \$45 million budget to host the event. Expenses will include security and safety measures, technology, transportation, labor and infrastructure enhancements including telecommunications cabling and pedestrian-control barriers.

World Meeting planners expect to clarify costs for the event after they receive a formal itinerary from the Vatican of the papal visit, perhaps by the summer.

The Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau estimates the regional economic impact of the congress and the papal visit to be more than \$418 million.

The World Meeting of Families is a nonprofit organization operating independent of the Archdiocese of

Philadelphia.

Sponsored by the Holy See's Pontifical Council for the Family, the World Meeting is held every three years in a different city. The event seeks to strengthen the bonds of family across the globe and highlight the family's value to the good of society.

The World Meeting will be held for the first time in the United States and precede the first papal visit of Pope Francis to this country. He is also expected to visit New York and Washington, D.C., during his trip.

### **La Salle U makes history in naming first female president**

La Salle University has chosen its next president, and the choice is groundbreaking on several accounts.

Dr. Colleen N. Hanycz, who will begin her tenure in July, is the first woman president in the school's 152-year history and also the first lay president, other than interim presidents.

La Salle was founded by the Brothers of the Christian Schools and she succeeds Brother Michael J. McGinniss, the most recent in a line of 28 Christian

Brothers to lead the school.

At this time Hanycz is principal (president) of Brescia University College, London, Ontario, a Catholic college founded by the Ursuline Sisters and the only all-women college in Canada.

La Salle, on the other hand, was an all-male college for its first century, although now women make up almost two-thirds of the student body.

This will not be Hanycz's first encounter with the Christian Brothers. As a high school student in Toronto she attended Christian Brothers-run Senator O'Connor College High School.

Hanycz earned her B.A. in history from St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto, her J.D. from Dalhousie University and LL.M. and Ph.D. from Osgoode Hall, which is considered Canada's premier law school.

Her family includes her husband Peter and her three children: Erik, a college student who looks toward a career as a Catholic high school teacher; Emily, a high school sophomore and Claire, a fourth grader.

### **Stay connected at [CatholicPhilly.com](http://CatholicPhilly.com)**

**CatholicPhilly.com** is the digital successor to *The Catholic Standard and Times*, and your online source for Catholic news and information.

Visit **CatholicPhilly.com** and **sign up for our free weekly email newsletter**.