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– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

Where the Children Sleep:
A Photo Exhibit on Refugee Children in Europe and the Middle East
By Magnus Wennman
On view October 21, 2017-March 4, 2018



Farah, 2, Azraq, Jordan, by Magnus Wennman

*A boy without a bed.
A girl afraid to close her eyes.
A child who dreams of when bedtime didn't bring
terror.*

More than two million children have been forced from their homes by the war in Syria. Refugee children in neighboring countries or making journeys through Europe show us where they sleep while they await an uncertain future.

Captivating photographs of sleeping refugee children by acclaimed Swedish photographer, Magnus Wennman and original text by Carina Bergfeldt, will debut at the American Swedish Historical Museum in October 2017.

Where the Children Sleep captures the impact of the war in Syria, which began in 2011, through a series of 22 photos documenting the tragic consequences of the refugee crisis by portraying what the simple act of bedtime brings for the youngest and most vulnerable refugees—children. Each photograph comes with a story of how these children and their families struggle through the Middle East and Europe while making the harrowing journey out of Syria.

Magnus Wennman, a two-time winner of the World Press Photo Award, says, “I came up with this idea that I wanted to document where the refugee children sleep. No matter how hard this conflict may be to understand, it’s not hard to understand that children need a safe place to sleep.” In early 2015, Wennman, along with Swedish journalist Carina Bergfeldt, traveled through seven countries in the Middle East and Europe where they met refugee children who showed where they lay their heads at night. The result is *Where the Children Sleep*, which puts faces, names, and stories to the millions of refugee children who spend the night in camps, in fields, outside closed borders, and on the side of the road now that their lives have been violently uprooted.

UNHCR, in collaboration with Fotografiska (The Swedish Museum of Photography in Stockholm), has brought *Where the Children Sleep* to audiences in the United States in order to raise awareness about the plight of Syrian refugees. “Children are our future. No one can see these images of children of war sleeping peacefully after being forced to flee their homes without being deeply moved,” said Shelly Pitterman, UNHCR representative for the United States and the Caribbean. “They are our children.”

In conjunction with *Where the Children Sleep*, the Museum is also showing two smaller exhibits focused on migration. *Portraits of Migration: Sweden Beyond the Headlines*, is a series of 20 images that explore the stories of those who have found asylum in Sweden. By providing personal stories for examining Sweden’s response to the refugee crisis, this exhibit helps us to understand the impacts of migration and acculturation. And on the Museum’s lawn, visitors will be able to explore a ‘better shelter’. Designed by an enterprise partnering with the IKEA Foundation and the UNHCR, these refugee shelters offer displaced persons a secure, adaptable, and dignified place to live.

Where the Children Sleep, *Portraits of Migration* and the ‘better shelter’ will be on view at the American Swedish Historical Museum from October 21, 2017 to March 4, 2018. The Museum will offer free admission on Sundays for the duration of the exhibition. As part of the opening on **Saturday, October 21, the Museum is hosting a “How Can I Help?” fair from 11am-3pm.** The fair will be a day of education to promote broader awareness of the immediate needs of refugees in our area. Refugee aid groups from the greater Philadelphia region will be on site to meet with members of the public and let them know what their organization does and how people can get involved.

For more information on *Where the Children Sleep* or on the Museum itself, call 215-389-1776, ext. 108, email crossy@americanswedish.org or visit americanswedish.org/calendar.htm. The American Swedish Historical Museum is located in FDR Park at 1900 Pattison Avenue in South Philadelphia, five blocks west of the Sports Complex. The Museum is easily accessible from Route 95 or 76 and has free parking. For those taking public transportation, the Broad Street subway AT&T station, or SEPTA’s Route 17 bus is within walking distance of the Museum.

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