



The Guelph Community Foundation partners with United Way of Guelph Wellington Dufferin on Community Response Fund

Guelph, Ont., March 31, 2020—Today, the Guelph Community Foundation announces a partnership with the United Way of Guelph Wellington Dufferin to support the growth of the Guelph COVID-19 Community Response Fund. Through this collaborative effort they will support agencies doing critically important work and those that have been put under immense pressure as a result of the current crisis.

The Guelph Community Foundation's contribution to the Community Response Fund launches with an initial donation from the Hugh and Lorna Guthrie Fund that will match up to \$10,000.00 to get the ball rolling.

The collaborative fund will provide one place for philanthropists, community leaders, corporations and Guelph's care mongering citizens to support the community's COVID-19 response. The fund will work through three phases:

Respond: Initially, the fund will support the organizations addressing the most urgent needs of those struggling in our community like access to nutritious food, clothing, hygiene products, shelter and crisis counselling.

Rebuild: Once we are on the other side of the pandemic curve, the fund will work to support the non-profit and charitable organizations devastated by the economic downturn, lack of sponsorship and available funding.

Recover: Finally, the fund will support those organizations working to nurture and strengthen the soul of our community through inclusive, accessible events, festivals, recreation and arts programming, and counseling services as we find a new normal and prepare for the future.

A joint committee with staff and volunteers from both organizations will evaluate applications and ensure a rapid process in order to respond to shifting and emerging community needs.

"During this difficult time, it's more important than ever for us all to work together. That's why we were eager to partner with the United Way to pool resources and work collaboratively so that our collective impact is as strong as possible," said Chris Willard, Executive Director of The Guelph Community Foundation. "We are proud to work with the United Way—an essential community support—and we will continue to build on this partnership."

"Even while physically isolated, we can pull together and help. Together, we are calling on Guelph's organizations, businesses and citizens to join with us and support those in greatest need in our community. Isolation is a greater burden on some and home isn't always a safe place to be. Help us support the teams and volunteers laying everything they have on the line to keep us safe, well cared for and healthy."

The COVID- 19 pandemic is exacerbating challenges that families across Guelph and Wellington County deal with daily. City and County health and social service organizations are experiencing a sharp increase in demand for services to meet basic needs.

Colleen Murdoch, Communications Director & Acting Director, Community Impact says “Every donation to the Guelph COVID-19 Community Response Fund will support the front-line agencies that are ensuring people have access to basic needs during the crisis. This fund truly shows the power of community collaboration and working together to reach diverse networks.”

Lloyd Longfield, Member of Parliament for Guelph says, “The Government of Canada sees Not-For-Profits as key community partners in helping the vulnerable in our communities, especially as we work to respond to COVID-19. We are working hard to make it easier for Canadians to support grassroots organizations so that communities can come together during these challenging times. The Guelph COVID-19 Community Response Fund is exactly the kind of solution we need. We all have a role to play, so that together we can support each other - whether it’s asking for help or offering help.”

Mike Schreiner, Member of Provincial Parliament for Guelph says, “We know that communities need the right support to be able to come together and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. I’m working to advocate for the best support from the province, but we will also need to rally support for local organizations. Local service organizations are essential to organizing communities and supporting those in need and front-line workers. Let’s mobilize support for local organizations who are providing essential services for people in need”

Cam Guthrie, Mayor of the City of Guelph says, “The City is facing one of its greatest challenges and I know that we’re up to the task of responding to the need in our community. Supporting each other is what we do here in Guelph - making sure we all have what we need and that we support the front-line workers who are keeping our city going from health care, to retail, to transportation and so much more. I know I’ll be supporting this fund to make the most of the matching donations. I hope those who can will support it as well.

Individuals and corporations are encouraged to donate to the Community Response Fund online at guelphcf.ca, unitedwayguelph.com or alternately via mail to either organization.

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