



MEDIA RELEASE

Guelph COVID-19 Community Response Fund puts community dollars to work

Guelph, Ont., April 29, 2020—Nearly a dozen local charities in need of extra support amid the COVID-19 pandemic have received more than \$65,000 from the Guelph COVID-19 Community Response Fund, less than a month after the fund launched. Today, the Guelph Community Foundation and United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin announced the second round of grants made possible by the community's generosity.

"The Community Response Fund is providing urgent, immediate support to the agencies and people who need it most, said Chris Willard, Executive Director of the Guelph Community Foundation. "While first responders are heroically helping those in the greatest medical need, there are many grassroots organizations helping people affected by social isolation, job loss, mental health and food insecurity."

The [North End Harvest Market](#), a program of the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition, received a grant of \$6000 from the Fund. The Harvest Market has been providing free weekly fresh fruit and vegetables to community members in Guelph and Wellington County for more than five years. The true heart of the market is to build connections and support people with food, love and kindness.

"When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we were forced to close the market, as it operates out of portable six at Waverley Public School," said Brendan Johnson, Executive Director of the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition. "When it became clear that the community required the market to re-open to serve those in need, market manager Barb McPhee quickly worked with Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health and the Upper Grand District School Board to create a new plan. The grant from the Community Response Fund made it possible to have food supplies there when we needed them, and to serve the increase in demand."

Before the current crisis, between 175 to 225 people would access the market each week. With support provided through the COVID-19 Community Response Fund, the market has been able to double its weekly food budget to meet a dramatic increase in need.

While putting physical distancing practices in place, the market has added curbside pick-up and deliveries for people unable to leave their homes. They have received requests and referrals from doctors, midwives, Immigrant Services, nutritionists, and from friends in the Indigenous community. Thanks to these community-driven dollars they have been able to address a dramatically growing need in our community.

The stories of those using the market are heartwarming and help us to understand the impact community generosity can have in the lives of a great diversity of people in our community:

- A mother of seven children cried when the Harvest Market dropped off a hamper of fruit and vegetables. She was now able to provide healthy food to her family and still afford to buy milk and diapers with her tight budget.

- A senior who had not been able to leave her home in six weeks was delivered fresh produce and COBS bread to her door. Crying, she held up a sign in her window for the delivery driver with a heart and a huge 'thank you'.
- A new friend to the market was told by her doctor and nutritionist that she needed to eat more fruits and vegetables but was not able to get out to the grocery store. The market was able to deliver produce and meet her needs and her growing baby.

"We cannot express enough thanks and gratitude to the amazing corporations and individuals that have contributed to the fund," said Rick McCombie, Interim Executive Director at United Way. "Being able to rapidly respond to the increased need and get money out the door and into the community where it can do the most good, is all thanks to their generosity."

To date, the following organizations have received grants from the COVID-19 Community Response Fund:

- Family Counselling and Support Services for Guelph Wellington - \$5,000 for communications and new volunteer training to assist with the increased demand of the Distress Line
- Shelldale Family Gateway - \$6,000 for virtual community outreach and grocery cards
- March of Dimes GWD - \$5,000 for the Assistive Devices Program, to support more adults and seniors with disabilities living at home
- Children's Foundation of Guelph and Wellington - \$5,000 to support the Fresh Food for Kids program
- Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition - \$6,000 for Neighbourhood Group Essential Goods Project
- North End Harvest Market - \$6,000 for COVID-19 Market Support
- Hope House - \$5,000 to support a virtual mental health counselling program for those experiencing increased anxiety and grief-related issues
- Child Witness - \$2,000 to support children (and their caregivers) who are victims or witnesses of crime during social isolation
- HIV/AIDS Resources & Community Health (ARCH) - \$5,000 for Emergency Food Hamper Program
- Portage Program for Drug Dependencies - \$5,850 for Bunker House Admissions Project

The Fund will continue to provide grants to organizations as dollars become available. Agencies experiencing need related to COVID are encouraged to apply at unitedwayguelph.com/Covid19Application

Individuals and corporations are encouraged to continue to donate to the Guelph COVID-19 Community Response Fund online at guelphcf.ca or unitedwayguelph.com or alternately by mail to either organization.

Media Contacts:

Jessica Barrie, Operations and Community Engagement Manager
The Guelph Community Foundation
PO Box 1311, Guelph, ON N1H 6N6
(519) 821-9216
jbarrie@guelphcf.ca

Colleen Murdoch, Communications Director & Acting Director, Community Impact
United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin
85 Westmount Rd., Guelph, ON N1H 5J2
(519) 821-0571 x22
colleen@unitedwayguelph.com

For further information about the North End Harvest Market, please contact:

Brendan Johnson
Executive Director
Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition
(519) 803-3374
brendan.johnson@guelphneighbourhoods.org