

# Media Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**November 4, 2019**

## **Creating an Unforgettable Holiday for Simcoe Muskoka Children**

United Way Simcoe Muskoka (UWSM) is pleased to partner with Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Borden and Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions to bring Holiday with a Hero to our communities this November 30. UWSM will be helping children who have suffered trauma make this holiday season unforgettable for them and their families with this heartwarming event.

Holiday with a Hero will pair up to 75 Simcoe Muskoka children with local Heroes, including military, police, paramedics and firefighters on the morning of November 30. The children and Heroes will then be given a gift card so the children can buy gifts for their family and friends. The only rule? The children must also buy a gift for themselves.

“We know that the holidays can be a difficult time of year for many families, whether it is the impact of poverty, the absence of loved ones or any number of circumstances,” said UWSM CEO Dale Biddell. “Holiday with a Hero eases the burden on these children and families, while giving them a day they will remember for years to come.”

After the children are done shopping, they will be transported as part of a procession of emergency vehicles to a pancake breakfast, gift wrapping and activities including a bouncy castle and face painting.

“Holiday with a Hero provides a perfect opportunity to support those in need, and to demonstrate the powerful links CFB Borden has with its community partners, links that go back over a century.” said Lieutenant-Colonel Charleen Coulbeck, CFB Borden Administration Officer. “Additionally, the event is an opportunity for children, our leaders of tomorrow, to interact in a positive way with uniformed personnel. This truly reinforces the idea of giving back to the community, the same community that CFB Borden is proud to call our home.”

Holiday with a Hero, which has been successful in other communities like Chatham-Kent, is not just about providing a memorable experience, but it also helps to change the perspective these children might have of Heroes like police and paramedics.

“Family Connexions is thrilled to be a partner in this event,” said Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions Director of Communications & Community Relations Melanie McLearn. “We know the children attending will have lots of fun as they interact with caring adults in the community. Building connections in this way helps break down barriers, creates positive memories and encourages more trusting relationships between young people and those in uniform. It is a wonderful win-win!”

In an effort to make this day as special as possible, 100% of donations for Holiday with a Hero will go towards the event. If you would like to support or learn more about Holiday with a Hero, please visit <https://uwsimcoemuskoka.ca/heroes/>

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