

Media Release

United Way Simcoe Muskoka
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 6, 2021

United Way Simcoe Muskoka distributed more than \$1.7 million in COVID-19 relief funding in 2020 through the Emergency Community Support Fund

Over the course of 2020, United Way Simcoe Muskoka distributed more than \$1,744,000 in funding to 61 local charities in Simcoe County and Muskoka. These organizations are responding to the pressing needs of the most vulnerable in our community while dealing with a sector-wide decline in revenue that puts their own future in question.

Funding provided by the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF) was used to enhance existing or introduce new programs to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Distributed throughout two phases of funding—one in the summer and one in November—the ECSF has helped local organizations with the increased needs face by our residents.

"With the ECSF support we have been able to help over 30 seniors combat social isolation and improve access to their community services, remotely, using their digital devices and apps," says Jennifer Ellis, Executive Director of Gateway Centre for Learning in Midland. Gateway was a recipient in Phase One of the ECSF. "Devices that were once used hesitantly for "emergency" purposes only are now used with ease, confidence, pride and for fun!"

Half of all recipients had never received funding through United Way Simcoe Muskoka. These projects are supporting those most impacted by COVID in our region, including children and youth, those experiencing mental health challenges, those living in low-income, those fleeing domestic violence, and seniors.

"Canadian charities and non-profit organizations play a vital role in our communities and continue to do so in the face of real challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. "Our government is pleased to support these organizations through the Emergency Community Support Fund so that they can continue to help the most vulnerable members of our communities during these difficult times."

"We are pleased to extend the reach of this program to support more agencies to do their great work to support our vulnerable residents," says Rosslyn Junke, Director of Community Impact at United Way Simcoe Muskoka. "It has been gratifying to see community partners respond so quickly to local needs during such a challenging year."

While we are in the midst of a second wave of COVID-19, charities and non-profits are rising to meet the needs, both new and existing, while facing an uncertain future. Almost 1 in 5 Ontario charities and non-profits have been forced to close their doors, at least for now, and even more are expected to shutdown indefinitely, despite there being more Simcoe Muskoka residents in need of assistance than ever before.

United Way Simcoe Muskoka is proud to have worked with the Government of Canada to distribute this funding and assist our region's most vulnerable. To learn more about how United Way Simcoe Muskoka is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and how you can help, please visit www.uwsimcoemuskoka.ca.

Funded by the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund:



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About United Way Simcoe Muskoka

Poverty touches most aspects of a person's life from food, shelter and employment, to mental and physical well-being. United Way Simcoe Muskoka seeks to improve lives and build communities by leveraging collective resources and mobilizing collective action to achieve the greatest impact. Through services such as the Urgent Needs Fund and by funding critical services throughout our communities, United Way Simcoe Muskoka is ensuring that local residents have the resources and assistance they need to unlock their full potential.

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