

Good morning! I thought you'd be interested in receiving an update on how the United Way and agencies on the front lines are responding to the Covid-19 crisis.

Everyone in the community has been impacted in some way by COVID-19. People are anxious about their jobs, access to food, supports, family – and worried about what the future holds. We are fortunate to have dedicated first responders, healthcare workers, neighbours who look out for each other, and a network of agencies that continue to support the most vulnerable in these exceedingly challenging times.

It's no surprise that the non-profit sector has risen to the challenge of finding collaborative and innovative ways to support their clients. I'm sure it's also no surprise that agencies are struggling to survive in a time of great need and reduced resources.

Here's an update on what's happening on the ground here in Kingston, Frontenac, and Lennox & Addington, as we work closer together than we ever have before – supporting and learning from our frontline agencies and partners. The gaps we identified in our social support systems are now crevasses, exposing the vulnerability of so many in our community. Thanks to your support, help will be there for those who need it the most.

### **FOOD ACCESS & SHELTER:**

Food access has emerged as one of the most critical issues for those who are vulnerable in our community. The United Way of KFL&A Covid-19 Fund has been working closely with agencies to understand the issues they face and address some of their most pressing needs, like the cost of food, supplies, sanitizing and cleaning, take-out containers, staffing.

**Outreach St. George, St. Vincent de Paul, Martha's Table** offer lunch programs week days and were open over the Easter weekend. **The Lion Hearts Inc** provided 3,000 meals every day of the week in three locations, two in Kingston and one in Napanee. The **Partners in Mission Food Bank** in Kingston continues to provide food to an ever-increasing number of people. **South Frontenac Community Services** and **Rural Frontenac Community Services** work closely to provide food, meals to residents across the county. **Kingston Community Health Centres** provide free or low-cost **Good Food Boxes** to families and individuals throughout KFL&A.

This support has only been made possible through funding from the Covid-19 Fund United Way. Additionally, the fund has been able to support agencies providing critical services for those in need at this time of crisis – **Home Base Housing, Kingston Youth Shelter, Dawn House, Addictions & Mental Health Services, KHSC Detox Services, Kingston Community Legal Clinic, Resolve Counselling.**

### **SENIORS:**

As the shut-down was announced, United Way immediately began to receive calls of concern from seniors with two key issues: those who could not afford food and those who could afford to buy food but were unable to go to stores. Many have caretakers who are practising social isolation.

To help tackle this challenge, United Way is partnering with **Kingston Community Health Centres**. Together, we are working closely with the **Seniors Association, Council on Aging** and our **Retirees United** committee to design a program to deliver food to seniors, using the federal funds as well as some from the United Way's Covid-19 Fund dollars. We hope to have this ready by the beginning of May.

The Federal government announced \$9 million for seniors through the New Horizons fund, to be invested through United Ways across the country. Our United Way will receive approximately \$65,000 to support vulnerable seniors. This funding for seniors will be combined with United Way funding to help seniors in KFL&A. <https://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/federal-government-joins-united-ways-across-canada-in-helping-vulnerable-seniors/>

### **COUNSELLING, MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS**

We are staying in constant contact with agencies to better understand what's available in the community. Many of them are running, with adapted service delivery to protect clients and staff.

The United Way strives to provide updated information, sharing resources that are available. You can review and access these on our website: [www.unitedwaykfla.ca/covid-19-supports](http://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/covid-19-supports) or by calling 211.

### **HOW YOU CAN HELP**

The **UNITED WAY KFLA COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND** was launched three weeks ago to support local efforts. We have moved fast. Thanks to the ongoing generosity of the people in our community, we have already collected close to \$200,000. The funds go out the door almost as soon as they come in to support the most urgent basic needs such as supporting the elderly, mental health, cleaning supplies, temporary accommodation, staffing – whatever agencies and shelters require. The need continues. All contributions to this fund are extremely welcome.

Local Love in a Global Crisis. [www.unitedwaykfla.ca/covid-19/](http://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/covid-19/)

### **VOLUNTEERING**

There has been an overwhelming interest in helping out. There are limited opportunities right now as agencies struggle to find ways to keep volunteers and staff safe. However, please feel free to email the United Way Volunteer Centre to let us know how you would like to help in the coming weeks, months ahead: [volunteer@unitedwaykfla.ca](mailto:volunteer@unitedwaykfla.ca). We will share this information with community organizations as we all learn more about ways that volunteers can help, in the days to come.

You can get all our updates and see updates and messages on our social media Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: @unitedwaykfla or our website. [www.unitedwaykfla.ca](http://www.unitedwaykfla.ca)

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the community's response to the pandemic.

Thank you for your support as you, your family, friends and neighbours find ways to cope with and adapt to the new reality. We live in a wonderful caring community, made all the stronger by people like you, who continue to compassion and support for those who need help the most. I wish you safety, health and all the very best.

Bhavana

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