

Good morning!

I thought I would provide you with a quick update on what's being done in the social services world in our region in response to the COVID-19 virus. I know you may not find time to read this but I'd like you to know what an amazing, caring community we live in. I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well.

These are scary and challenging times for all our agencies and their clients. And it is truly a privilege to work with such compassionate partners and agencies, working together to serve our most vulnerable.

Community Updates:

- We have reached out to our agencies to let them know they have flexibility and the ability to adjust their funding and programs as needed to deal with the COVID crisis; and for them to let us know if they need anything.
- We are part of regular group calls for food/meal providers in Kingston and Frontenac County (and have reached out to L&A). Many meal programs are switching to take-out only, meals on wheels continue in Frontenac, and food banks are open but by appointment. We have found a couple of gaps that we have been able to fill immediately (cost of food, containers, supplies); and have been actively promoting these meal programs so people know where to go. United Way has been able to respond to some of the more urgent needs which is going a long way.
- United Way is working with the City and the shelters – the adult, family and the youth shelter. We are also in touch with the 2 women's shelters and supportive housing agencies. Again, filling in gaps where we can – simple things like cleaning supplies and sanitizers, anticipating a higher need shortly for staffing, barriers between beds, food, alternative accommodation, etc.
 - o The City has found an alternative location for the youth shelter so that they can practice social distancing. In the meantime, we are helping out with food, cleaning, moving costs.
 - o In From the Cold adult shelter (34 beds) is also looking at alternative housing options; we are looking at funds from Reaching Home that can be used for alternative accommodation if needed
 - o The women's shelters are coping as much as they can. They need food, sanitizing supplies, etc and we have been able to coordinate some of this
 - o All shelters may need to limit intake at some time and are working on how this may impact the community

Funds available for COVID-19 needs

1. **United Way KFLA COVID-19 Response Fund:** UWs across the country are launching response funds.

We have launched our fund locally to support local efforts and we are starting to see donations come in. Local Love in a Global Crisis.

www.unitedwaykfla.ca/covid-19/

Funds will be used for

- Basic needs, supporting the elderly, community capacity, mental health, volunteers support, cleaning supplies, temporary accommodation, staffing, barriers between beds – whatever agencies, shelters need to support the most vulnerable

We are delighted to announce that the Churchill Foundation has stepped up and are providing a matching fund to encourage donations through this fund.

<https://www.unitedwaykfla.ca/united-way-kfla-launches-fund-to-help-the-most-vulnerable-in-community-respond-to-covid-19/>

2. **Federal funding** (Reaching Home in Kingston) can be used towards COVID 19 response. We are the community entity for Kingston (which means we give out federal funding). We have reached out to shelters, detox, street health, AMHS (Addictions & Mental Health Services), etc to see what they may need
3. We have made some funds available for urgent needs

Staffing:

- Our office is physically closed; some staff are working from home, others are in the office, practising social distancing and some are just sent home in the interim. The management team will continue to work through staffing options beyond March 31st.

Events and meetings

- We have cancelled all events through April. Some meetings have been cancelled, others are being held via conference calls.
- Success By 6 is usually the first week in May; we are cancelling these events – instead we have adapted the digital campaign to show caregivers things they can do at this time. It is a great visual campaign, as always.

You can get all our updates and see some of the material and messaging on our social media Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: @unitedwaykfla or our website. www.unitedwaykfla.ca

Best wishes and regards. Happy to answer any questions.

Bhavana

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