

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Response Fund Donates \$106K to Frontline Service Providers

March 31, 2020, Thunder Bay, ON – United Way of Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay Community Foundation are pleased to announce the initial round of funding, that will support local frontline agencies and organizations through the Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Response Fund. The collaborative fund that was announced just last week, is providing \$106,306.50 to six local service providers that are working tirelessly to address urgent community needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Response Fund provides one place for philanthropists, community leaders, corporations and individuals to contribute, to help ensure that community members affected by the pandemic stay safe, healthy and have access to basic needs such as food, clothing, hygiene products, shelter and crisis counseling.

The agencies and organizations receiving support in this first round of grants include:

Roots to Harvest- \$16, 800: *Emergency Good Food Box for Seniors*- Collaborating with Thunder Bay Good Food Box Program, they are creating an Emergency Good Food Box that will include healthy, non-perishable food and fresh produce that will reach 100 low-income senior households per week.

St. Andrew Soup Kitchen (Dew Drop Inn)- \$19,600: *Take me Home, Lunches from the Dew*- Life saving food access to meals for Thunder Bay's most vulnerable citizens daily.

Shelter House Thunder Bay- \$14,286.50: *Shelter House COVID-19 Pandemic Response: Sheltering the Community*- Steps to ensure no one in the community goes without food or a safe place to sleep.

RFDA Regional Food Distribution Association- \$40,000: *Emergency Food Bank Hamper Distribution*- Supports those in need of food.

Our Kids Count- \$2,000: *Our Kids Count COVID-19 Response-* Distribution of food hampers, counseling and home visits, Big Brothers Big Sisters support by phone.

Northwestern Ontario Women's Shelter- \$ 13,620: *Regional First Nation Emergency Good Food Box-* Food Box delivery of 1152 boxes to three regional First Nation communities over the next two months.

Says Michael Quibell, Executive Director of the Dew Drop Inn, "For us it is essential we continue to feed the hungry in Thunder Bay. With so many lives depending on us I shudder to think what would happen if we no longer could offer our services. The Dew Drop Inn is currently assembling 400 Take Home Lunches a day and this funding will allow us to continue to feed the hungry in Thunder Bay and add as much nutrition as possible to these meals. A huge thank you to our amazing staff, our awesome volunteers and the incredible support from our big-hearted community. We simply could not do what we do without you."

This is the first round of Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Response Fund recipients with additional funding expected to be announced later this week. A joint committee continues to evaluate applications with a commitment to ensure there is a rapid response to emerging needs as funding is contributed.

Says Albert Brulé, Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Thunder Bay; "The last two weeks have been overwhelming for the entire community. We all know someone out of a job, working the frontlines, or in need. In the midst of all of this, we must continue to remember the local organizations and agencies who are a lifeline to thousands of people in Thunder Bay. These vital service providers are doing what they can despite the shortages and are taking a risk to help those who are struggling."

Local agencies can apply for funding through the Thunder Bay Community Foundation's online grant platform. Individuals and corporations are encouraged to donate to the Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Response Fund online at www.uwaytbay.ca or www.tbcf.org, alternatively by mail to either organization.

Says Alexandra Calderon, Executive Director of the Thunder Bay Community Foundation, "The Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Response Fund is supporting organizations helping those who are impacted the hardest, and it's happening quickly. The demand for these emergency funds is escalating daily as the situation in our city develops. We are grateful for the donations that have come in to date, which made this possible. Frontline organizations and agencies continue to need our help. Please donate to the Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Response Fund so we can support more initiatives like these."