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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way of Thunder Bay Provides \$123K to Respond to Urgent Needs of Seniors Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Thunder Bay, ON, June 10, 2020 - United Way of Thunder Bay is providing \$123,000 in funding to 12 organizations across Northwestern Ontario, to help address the urgent needs of seniors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program along with additional support from the Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Relief Fund, the grants support the delivery of a range of community services by organizations across the region, working with senior and Indigenous Elder populations, including meeting basic needs, reducing social isolation, addressing food security, and transportation.

Roots to Harvest - \$20,000.00- Emergency Good Food Box for Seniors: Roots to Harvest and the Thunder Bay Good Food Box Program are creating Emergency Good Food Boxes that include healthy, non-perishable food and fresh produce to supplement senior's diets on low income, reaching 100 households per week.

Alzheimer Society Thunder Bay- \$1914.50- Caregiver Care Kits: Caregivers are currently under a tremendous level of stress as they face isolation and reduced community support. This program provides caregivers with kits to encourage relaxation, exercise, and healthy stress management during this crisis.

Ma'moweh Wii'soo'ka'tiwin Foundation- \$20,000.00- COVID-19 Elders Meals on Wheels- The COVID-19 Elder Meals on Wheels Program services nine First Nation communities and provides all Elders in each community with one prepared meal Monday-Friday for four weeks.

Keewaytinook Okimakanak Tribal Council- \$37,000.00- Remote First Nations Food Security Program: This program coordinates, plans and charts shipments of food and hygiene/household cleaning products to Keewaytinook Okimakanak First Nation communities, with a targeted focus on delivery to homes with Elders.

Municipality of Nipigon- \$3,000.00- COVID-19 Seniors Wellness Program: The COVID-19 Seniors Wellness program seeks to address the well-being of Seniors by providing care packages that contain nutritional food, treats, activities to reduce boredom, and resources to help minimize the feeling of isolation.

Alzheimer's Society of Kenora/Rainy River Districts- \$2,000.00- Activity Kits: The program is developing Activity Kits to be dropped off at senior homes. The kits have a variety of activities that can be done by someone living with dementia and can be used at any time during the day or night to provide caregiver relief.

Manitouwadge Golden Age Centre- \$690.00 -Senior Virtual Social Events: Providing the Manitouwadge Golden Age Centre the technological capacity to continue to hold virtual social events and check-ins with their membership.

Gathering of Rivers for Community Care- \$9,400.00- Elder Support Services: This program assists in the outreach to community members in a culturally sensitive manner that seeks to speak to them in their first language (Ojibway, Oji-Cree and Cree). The program helps to purchase supplies online, by telephone, or thorough other means that are safe. Assistance with cell phone and telephone plans will be provided so individuals can call out to friends, families and care givers on a more regular basis.

Atikokan Pioneer Centre- \$3,500.00- Telephone Check-In Services: This program provides check-in calls to 200 seniors to reduce social isolation, as well as a delivery service to meet basic needs.

City of Dryden- \$3,000.00- Extended MyLift Programming for Seniors: The MyLift transportation program is expanding services and hours, eligible only to Dryden's senior population, to help address issues around food security and transportation that Seniors are facing.

Lakehead Social Planning Council and Age Friendly Thunder Bay - \$15,000.00- 211 Older Adult Service Coordinator and Age Friendly Thunder Bay Newsletter: Lakehead Social Planning Council will hire an Older Adult Service Coordinator to assist 211 with connecting seniors to the right services. Age Friendly Thunder Bay will reach out to seniors through their newsletter to inform them about ongoing community initiatives.

Canadian Mental Health Association, Fort Frances Branch - \$7,506.00: Increasing technological capacity to work with seniors and provide older adult populations access to technology that could assist with connectivity for rural Northwestern Ontario residents. CMHA, Fort Frances Branch is able to provide continued mental health services to seniors in Atikokan, Sioux Lookout, Dryden and Fort Frances, through virtual counselling, education and supportive sessions.

“The purchase of iPads with data capability will provide the option of virtual services in the senior’s home, even if the senior does not have the equipment or accessible internet. Many of the individuals we have the privilege of serving, have different types of mobility, mental health, and cognitive concerns, so having the ability to be inside someone’s home virtually, is an effective way to support them,” explains Jolene Morrisseau, Geriatric Mental Health Lead, CMHA Fort Frances Branch. “The iPads also help provide personal connection, and when you can see the look on a client’s face and are able to react with empathy through expression, it just makes such a profound difference. It’s important to maintain connection in these difficult times and this initiative helps to make the lives of our clients easier and a little bit fuller.”

Says Albert Brulé, Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Thunder Bay; “We have been hearing that many seniors are finding that they are cut off from activities and people that bring meaning to their life – recreational programs,



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exercise or just face-to-face interactions that they are accustomed to having. This funding will fast-track support for vulnerable seniors in need throughout Northwestern Ontario. Funding is being directed toward initiatives such as food programs, mental health supports, increased technological capacity and cultural programming.”

United Way of Thunder Bay also reminds people that they can continue to show local love by contributing to the Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Relief Fund by visiting unitedwaytbay.ca.

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About the New Horizons for Seniors Program

The New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) provides grants and contributions for projects that help improve the well-being of seniors and foster their social inclusion. To provide immediate essential services to seniors impacted by COVID-19, the Government of Canada is providing \$9 million under the NHSP to be distributed through United Way Canada network. These funds will help organizations providing support to seniors dealing with the impact of COVID-19.

About the Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Relief Fund

The Thunder Bay COVID-19 Community Relief 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 counselling. The Fund is jointly administered by the United Way of Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay Community Foundation.

Media Contact:

Amanda Bay
T- (807) 628-7109
E- amanda@firedogpr.com

Funded by the Government of
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