

UNITED WAY INVESTS \$1.2M TO ADDRESS ONGOING IMPACTS OF PANDEMIC

COVID Relief Grants will enable 126 agencies to quickly provide services for vulnerable groups

August 16, 2021 – The duration and severity of the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on communities across Peel, Toronto and York regions – particularly on those who were already facing poverty and are from equity-seeking groups. United Way Greater Toronto is investing \$1.2 million to help agencies respond quickly and effectively to the urgent needs of residents facing the greatest barriers. United Way’s **COVID Relief Grants**, which launched June 24, will benefit 126 community agencies – many of which support equity-seeking groups severely impacted by the pandemic. These grants are in addition to the nearly \$31 million in Government of Canada and Local Love emergency funds that United Way Greater Toronto has directed to over 800 COVID-specific emergency programs since the start of the pandemic.

The COVID Relief Grantees are offering:

- **Food programs** including hampers, grocery cards, and culturally appropriate food distribution
- **Homelessness programs** serving takeaway and outdoor meals and distributing hygiene kits
- **Mental health programs** providing multilingual counselling and assisting those who have lost family members to COVID-19
- **Children & youth programs** offering art kits, music programs, tablets, and work opportunities
- **Culturally specific programs** serving Indigenous, Black, Chinese, South Asian and other communities

“While some of us are beginning to transition back to the life we knew before, far too many continue to feel the devastating impact of COVID-19, and will continue to for some time,” says Daniele Zanotti, President & CEO of United Way Greater Toronto. “Every day, we hear from residents and our network of frontline agencies about crisis calls for mental health supports, access to food and a good job. These COVID Relief Grants allocate resources to the people and place who need it most – and now.”

“We’ve seen firsthand the devastating impact the pandemic has had on young people with disabilities,” says Sukaina Dada, Executive Director of SMILE Canada Support Services. SMILE serves vulnerable populations, including racialized, refugee, low-income, and marginalized children and youth with disabilities, in a culturally responsive manner. “Their needs are often unique and not easily met elsewhere, but this grant will allow us to provide families who are struggling financially with those essential goods and services that are so critical to their health, development and well-being.”

Beyond emergency funding, United Way Greater Toronto has offered flexible funding to community agencies throughout the pandemic so they could continue to ensure access to critical supports. Together with the City of Toronto, Peel Region and York Region, United Way also convenes community coordination tables to identify and respond to service gaps, needs, trends and opportunities in the neighbourhoods hardest hit by the pandemic.

For a full list of COVID Relief Grants recipients, visit unitedwaygt.org.



WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN
**PEEL, TORONTO
& YORK REGION**

About United Way Greater Toronto: As the largest non-government funder of community services in the GTA, United Way Greater Toronto reinforces a crucial community safety net. United Way's network of agencies and initiatives in neighbourhoods across Peel, Toronto and York Region works to ensure that everyone has access to the programs and services they need to thrive today. Mobilizing the network and other community support, United Way tackles #UNIGNORABLE issues linked to poverty. United Way's work is rooted in ground-breaking research, strategic leadership, local advocacy and cross-sectoral partnerships committed to building lasting solutions to the GTA's greatest challenges. unitedwaygt.org

Media contact: Deena Douara, Communications Manager, United Way Greater Toronto
Office: (416) 777-1157 | Cell: (416) 574-4971 | Email: ddouara@uwgt.org