

NEW PROJECTS WILL HELP VULNERABLE SENIORS CONNECT TO COMMUNITY

United Way Greater Toronto's Allan Slaight Seniors Fund supports 15 projects over 6 years

March 29, 2021 – Nine innovative new projects funded by United Way Greater Toronto's Allan Slaight Seniors Fund will engage vulnerable seniors in creative ways that reduce their social isolation, which has been exacerbated through the pandemic. Because seniors are at greater risk of falling between the cracks of the health and social service system, these projects go beyond traditional formats to reach those who have historically faced barriers to support. Amongst those engaged will be Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQ2S individuals. These initiatives recognize that many elderly individuals are eager to develop new skills, share knowledge, and connect with others.

- **Native Canadian Centre Toronto** will deliver a traditional food program to Indigenous seniors who are experiencing high rates of poverty, physical mobility challenges, and social isolation, who are also struggling to meet dietary goals on a fixed income.
- **The 519** will reduce the social isolation of LGBTQ2S seniors through a drop-in program and through virtual participatory arts and culture-based engagements, including podcasting, photovoice and creative writing.
- **Parkdale Community Foodbank** will provide vulnerable seniors in Parkdale with social worker visits and weekly deliveries of meal kits, snacks, and fruit that they can easily prepare with simple kitchen tools. Meal kits will be provided through Aangen, a social enterprise that employs marginalized community members.
- **TAIBU Community Health Centre** will engage seniors of African descent through the expansion of the *Ubuntu Village* – an engagement strategy based on Afrocentric values designed to help seniors become peer leaders so they can successfully age at home while staying active and healthy and helping each other.
- **WoodGreen Community Services** will connect vulnerable and low-income seniors living in assisted housing with essential financial counselling and tax supports to help them remain financially stable.
- **Unison Health and Community Services** will help seniors living with multiple vulnerabilities in Northwest Toronto learn how to virtually interact with service providers, family, and friends. This program partners with youth Tech Buddies to deliver an inter-generational approach.
- **VHA Home HealthCare** will deliver in-home recreational activities to marginalized seniors with dementia living in priority neighbourhoods in Toronto and Peel Region, providing family caregivers much-needed respite to improve the family's health and quality of life.
- **Human Endeavour** will disseminate technology solutions through a collaborative of agencies, to keep seniors in Toronto, York and Peel regions engaged, active and healthy during COVID-19 and beyond. Service providers will provide language- and culture-specific supports.
- **LOFT Community Services**, with Toronto Community Housing and Humber River Hospital, will develop adaptive activities to engage low-income seniors, reduce isolation, improve quality of life, and delay the onset of dementia for seniors in social housing and seniors with dementia or cognitive decline.

In addition to the new projects, six Allan Slaight Seniors Fund projects launched last September:

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto**, in partnership with Circle of Care and Triple G, matches socially isolated seniors with young people and BBBST's Big/Little matches.

- **Etobicoke Seniors Support Services**, in partnership with Community Living Central York, Community Living York South, and Humber College, provides case management and volunteer support to families with aging parents caring for adult children with developmental disabilities.
- **FoodShare Toronto** delivers fresh food boxes biweekly to isolated seniors in Northwest Toronto neighbourhoods, particularly to racial and cultural communities that often face barriers to participation in services, including Black and racialized communities.
- **Hospice Toronto** connects peer support workers to homeless or vulnerably housed seniors in need of palliative care.
- **Native Child and Family Services of Toronto** provides Indigenous seniors and Elders with case management, counselling and social activities through a holistic and culturally responsive model.
- **St. Leonard's Place Peel** supports men who have experienced homelessness, mental illness, addiction, or involvement with the criminal justice system with case management, mental health support, integration, finances, life and long-term care planning and system navigation.

In 2019, the Slight Family Foundation launched a \$15-million gift – the largest individual gift in United Way Greater Toronto's history – to help connect vulnerable seniors with community supports to help them stay active, vibrant and engaged with their communities. To learn more visit unitedwaygt.org.

About The Slight Foundation: Established in 2008, The Slight Family Foundation is committed to making a difference. The Foundation supports projects related to health care, social service initiatives, the arts, at-risk youth as well as providing aid to disadvantaged countries.

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

Downloadable photos: [Photos can be found here](#). Cutlines appear beneath each image.

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