

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**United Way/Centraide of SD&G – Regional Emergency Response Council (SDGCA)**

*United Way/Centraide of Stormont Dundas and Glengarry* has cancelled its annual Handbags for Heroes Event scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020. This decision was made in an effort not only to flatten the curve of COVID 19, but also so that the organization may shift its focus into leading a collaborative COVID relief strategy for the region.

“So many great initiatives are popping up daily in our community. It is our responsibility to take the time to ensure we are putting our time, energy and money into the right investments. It is only logical that we ensure that our community’s most vulnerable population is being served in an efficient and organized manner even during a time of crisis” said Juliette Labossière, Executive Director for the United Way/Centraide of S.D.&G.

The United Way in partnership with the Social Development Council of Cornwall and Area have created a Regional Emergency Response Council for SDGCA. This Council’s purpose is to evaluate and define the community’s pressing needs during a time of crisis. This Council composed of 20 agencies, non-profits, and service clubs, representing the various sectors of service throughout Cornwall, the Counties, and Akwesasne, will create a short and long term action plan to address the most pressing needs that our community faces during this crisis.

The Council will work collaboratively to share information regarding regional assets and programs and ensure these are being communicated to the community as a whole. The Council will define and prioritize the needs of our community and collaboratively define actions to meet those needs. This Council will also decide how best to distribute the funds that will be raised within the [Local Covid Relief Fund](#), as well as through the [Local Love in a Global Crisis](#) initiative.

At the Council’s inaugural meeting on Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, it was decided that a funding criteria and a clear structure for the distribution of funds to certain vulnerable individuals as well as to support current programs currently servicing the community will be the top priority. The Council will determine how exactly they will distribute these funds in the coming days, and will ensure to communicate the processes to the community. As decisions are made, the information will be made available to the community both on the United Way/Centraide of S.D. & G.’s website and Facebook.

“This partnership shows just how much the Social Development Council of Cornwall and Area is flexible to the needs of the community and ready to work quickly and collaboratively through a lens of poverty reduction, even in a time of crisis” said Carilyne Hebert, Executive Director of the Social Development Council of Cornwall and Area.

The Emergency Response Council (SDGCA) asks that any industry, business or individual capable of donating to the [Local Covid Relief Fund](#) do so. We need your financial support to assist the frontline workers, the tireless volunteers, and the amazing nonprofits that are fearlessly fighting for our community.

**About United Way/Centraide Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry:** *The United Way of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry is governed by a local Board of Directors. For more information on United Way/Centraide SD&G, or to donate, visit [unitedwaysdg.com](http://unitedwaysdg.com).*