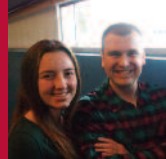


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ON THE COVER SCOTT HIGGINS - PAGE 22

# EXCHANGE

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## COLLABORATION LIKE NEVER SEEN BEFORE

by Jon Rohr

This issue of Exchange is published during one of the most severe crises I have ever experienced in my life. Unprecedented, home isolation, remote working, economic collapse, mortality, morbidity and phase have all become buzz words. Wartime speed has replaced peace time speed. And Waterloo Region's businesses, as usual, are stepping up to help, as we have in the past ... as we will in the future.

I am so impressed with our local government, our local institutions, our local businesses, our local charities and not-for-profits - they have stepped up, approached the COVID-19 crises head-on and have adapted to this global challenge. Stepping up is something that Waterloo Region and area has done in the past and continues to do given any new challenge, including challenges that demand working in unison to a common outcome. To the front line responders, our valued cherished health care workers and the volunteers that support them, "you are awesome, you are

extremely important and thank you so much".

To the advertisers in this issue, you are supporting a community-relevant magazine that communicates to the engaged businesses and citizens. We're not an association like the Chamber, or peer to peer groups like Communitel, we're more of an agency, as we carry their message and other organizations, associations and the businesses that grow this community on a multitude of levels. That is important, and Exchange is proud to lead that role.

This issue pulls together the community organizations that make a difference - the hidden gems that, without their interest, our communities' business interest would be worse off.

The articles in this issue highlight the evolving interest of our current/future entrepreneurs and community leaders. The youth! the many young people engaged with Waterloo Region who desire to broaden their perspective and to get engaged with both business and community causes. This issue also highlights the extreme collaborative nature of our Region, and the long-term impacts of those profiled who are planting seeds.

Collaboration has reached new heights for us, and that new level makes this publisher extremely proud. Thank you to all, stay well, stay healthy, until we get to the other side of this - be safe. X

# EXCHANGE

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## CONTENTS

### INTELLIGENT PHILANTHROPY 2020:

#### Affordable Housing, Worship & Community programs ..... 5

Three visionary organizations come together to help solve a community problem

BY PHILANTHROPY PARTNER

#### New Centre At Guelph Lake Brings Nature to the Community ..... 6

Donors support new facility, trails and planetarium

BY PHILANTHROPY PARTNER

#### Dr. Mike: The Next Generation of Physicians ..... 7

Retired physician, Ambassador and Legacy Donor

BY PHILANTHROPY PARTNER

#### For These Kids the Future is Now ..... 8

Teens making a difference today, and preparing to make an impact tomorrow

BY PAUL KNOWLES

#### Collaboration: Key For Community Organizations ..... 10

Non-profits, Institutions, businesses work together in COVID-19 pandemic

BY PAUL KNOWLES

#### Going Beyond To Showcase Special Olympics Athletes in Waterloo Region ..... 15

Special Olympics Games in Waterloo Region will happen for a first time if not the Spring

BY PAUL KNOWLES

#### Creating Micro-Granting Fund For Students ..... 22

Scott Higgins believes mentoring youth from elementary on up

BY EXCHANGE MAGAZINE

#### WATERCOOLER: .....18

#### MONITOR: ONLINE TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

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# AFFORDABLE HOUSING, WORSHIP AND COMMUNITY PROGRAM/KITCHEN SPACE

Three visionary organizations come together to help solve a community problem

Dan Driedger, Executive Director of MennoHomes, Pastor Monika Wiesner, St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Kathy Loveys, Parents for Community Living Executive Director

Kathy Loveys will take the tough calls, even when she knows the answer is probably going to be "I'm sorry, I wish we could help you but we aren't able to at this time". She will listen attentively as families in crisis share their concerns and she will feel their pain as they tell her their story.

Kathy Loveys is the Executive Director of Parents for Community Living (PCL). When she was hired as the ED in 1998, the organization operated one apartment and three family homes. They served 16 adults and their families. Today, just over two decades later, PCL supports over 160 children, youth and adults with 11 homes, two of them providing respite for children and adults, as well as day programs and a computer apprenticeship program for high school students.

Each story Kathy listens to is different, yet the same. On this day it is from an 88 year old grandmother wondering when her situation will be deemed a 'crisis' while caring for her granddaughter. The years of caring has taken its toll and she worries about her granddaughter's future. In the ideal world, a loved one would be able to leave home and have a life in our community that most of us take for granted. But sadly, for many, this isn't an option.

## PCL supports over 160 children, youth and adults with 11 homes ...

In Waterloo Region, there are over 526 adults with exceptional abilities waiting for a home of their own and over 573 adults waiting for employment and day support. In addition, there are 5000 households on the wait list for affordable housing. "We are a community in crisis, the demand for housing and support services outweighs what is currently available and far too many people are being left behind. In a community of abundance, we must do more to find ways to support more people than we do today" says Loveys.

Parents for Community Living wants to do more to help those in our community and they have a plan. Parents for Community Living is proud to be part of a unique partnership with MennoHomes and St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church. Together, they saw an opportunity to move forward with a project they couldn't have done by themselves. St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church which owns the property where the building will be built were looking for a sustain-

able way to meet their needs and unique ways to serve the community. MennoHomes, who is leading this project, has a solid track record of creating sustainable affordable housing with 105 units in the Region presently. Parents for Community Living is in need of community space to offer empowering and integrative programs for people with exceptional needs as well as housing options for adults who need a place to live independently in the community.

## Parents for Community Living is in need of community space to offer empowering and integrative programs for people with exceptional needs

The \$14.5 million project will build a five-storey apartment building at 544 Bridgeport Rd. at Lancaster Street, with 40 one-bedroom units and eight two-bedroom units. There will be a space in the building for St. Paul's Evangelical to continue their ministry. The building will also include a community space and teaching kitchen where Parents for Community Living can offer empowering programs that will also benefit the broader community. A key program will utilize a teaching kitchen where people will learn how to cook. "Cooking is one of the most liberating skills for people with exceptional abilities. It increases their ability for independent living and provides skills for meaningful employment," says Loveys. Employers recognize the value of hiring people with disabilities given they make some of the best employees and in addition natural friendships take place.

Inclusion and diversity are critical to building a thriving community.

Partnership is the way forward for not-for-profit organizations today. Not only does a partnership spread the work and cost, but it also fosters creative problem-solving and innovation. Three strong and committed organizations have come together to address the challenge of affordable housing in the Waterloo Region and we are looking for community minded partners to help us.

For more information on how you can contribute to this project, please contact Katherine Loveys at 519-742-5849 ext. 101 or email: [kathyl@pclkw.org](mailto:kathyl@pclkw.org). The mailing address for Parents for Community Living is 30 Dupont Street East, Unit 102, Waterloo, Ontario N2J 2G9



# NEW CENTRE AT GUELPH LAKE BRINGS NATURE TO THE COMMUNITY

**Donors support new facility, trails, observatory and planetarium to connect people with the outdoors in new ways**

Big changes are coming to Guelph Lake starting this year. With the support of hundreds of donors, the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) will soon break ground for a new nature centre within the Guelph Lake Conservation Area. The facility will replace the current building just north of Guelph, which has been visited by more than half a million people since it opened in 1982. It will be the base for a wide range of curriculum-based programs for more than 20,000 kids per year, as well as new active living experiences for visitors to the park.

Currently, kids from kindergarten to high school visit the centre for school programs as well as very popular environmental adventure camps and eco-birthday parties. Whether taking part in a bug hunt, planting trees or studying creatures living in the Speed River, they all remember what they learned. And often, they come away from the experience feeling more calm, self-reliant and confident – a part of something bigger than themselves.

As an Environmental Education Specialist, Greg Meredith has worked at the centre for more than thirty years. "As a classroom, nothing is better than being outdoors. Typically our students say it's their favourite trip of the year," says Greg. "For some, it's the first time that they have ever cooked a hot dog outdoors or caught a crayfish. Nature is important to both our physical and mental wellbeing. Our programs are fun, hands-on, and more importantly they connect students to the natural environment."

Interest in these programs is growing, but staff are currently turning people away due to lack of space – more than one thousand people in the spring months alone, staff estimate. Up to six classes a day come to the current centre, which was formerly a single family home. Groups meet up in areas that were once the basement, garage and living room before they go outside. On bad weather days, it can get very crowded.

Visitors to Guelph Lake Conservation Area also don't have access to programs at the centre currently, because it's located about half a kilometre outside of the conservation area. The GRCA saw an opportunity to engage more people by locating the new centre within Guelph Lake Conservation Area. It will have purpose-built learning spaces and an area for park guests, and it will be surrounded by new trails and habitats for people to learn from and enjoy.

The Grand River Conservation Foundation (GRCF), the GRCA's charitable partner, has taken the lead on fundraising, and local companies have lined up with their support. "At our restaurants we often say, there is no planet B," says Court Desautels, President of The Neighbourhood Group. "There has never been a more



Young student catching butterflies along the banks of Guelph Lake

important time to educate our young people, and our whole community, about the importance of a healthy environment." The Neighbourhood Group's restaurants, including Borealis Bar & Grille, The Woolly and Mijidaa, host an annual River Dinner to raise funds for the project.

"I am so excited about the new centre! It offers a place that will truly engage our children in nature. It will give our kids the chance to put down the technology and get back out into the natural world they are designed to live in," says Susan Frasson, President of Wood Development Group, who with her husband Alex and four children are the Honourary Chair Family for the fundraising campaign.

The new centre isn't the only development at Guelph Lake. Through a partnership with the Rotary Club of Guelph and its Charitable Foundation, two new trails near Guelph Lake will be created, and a new astronomy program will be established at the conservation area. Rotarians have also made a leading commitment to the nature centre.

These new outdoor features are the next step in the Club's commitment to Guelph Lake. They first got involved in 2008, when Rotarians and the community began to plant a new Rotary Forest. Over time, 60,000 trees have been planted on one hundred acres of land across the road from Guelph Lake Conservation Area.

"2020 is a really special year for us – it's the Club's 100th anniversary and the start of even bigger things at Guelph Lake," says Carolyn Weatherson, the Club's President. "After so many years of partnership with the GRCA and the GRCF, we could think of no better way to celebrate our centennial than to invest in Guelph Lake and the people who visit it. Combined with the new nature centre, the trails and the astronomy program will make it a true destination."

More than \$2 million has been committed to the project to date. Other leading donors include the WC Wood Foundation, the Wellington Catholic District School Board, Terra View Custom Homes, Syngenta Canada and the Estate of Gil Henderson.

*For more information about the project and other ways to support local conservation, visit [www.grcf.ca](http://www.grcf.ca) or contact Sara Wilbur, Executive Director of the Grand River Conservation Foundation, at (866) 900-4722 x2272 or [swilbur@grandriver.ca](mailto:swilbur@grandriver.ca).*



A portrait of Dr. Mike Lawrie, a middle-aged man with grey hair and black-rimmed glasses, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. He is smiling slightly and has his arms crossed. The background is a solid light brown color.

# DR. MIKE: THE NEXT GENERATION OF PHYSICIANS

**Dr. Mike Lawrie, Retired Physician,  
Cambridge Memorial Hospital Ambassador,  
Former Chief of Staff, Legacy Donor**

As a former CMH physician and Chief of Staff, residing in Cambridge, I've always understood how important the hospital is to our community. As a former hospital spokesperson and medical leader I've actively participated in CMH fundraising campaigns to ensure that first class healthcare facilities provide the services we need close to home. These services are only available because of generous community donors who support their local hospital. I witnessed firsthand the impact of having the best medical tools possible available to me and my colleagues, as we treated and cared for local families.

Whether fighting a world epidemic or providing daily medical care, we must ensure that our hospital continues to have financial support, and the latest technology to provide exceptional care. For my family and loved ones, I want a hospital that has the best possible equipment.

I've seen great improvements in healthcare over the years, and I know that technology will only continue to advance. When I was younger, people would stay in hospital for 5-7 days after surgery. Today, many patients go home the same day to rest and heal in comfort. These advances only happen with upgraded surgical and diagnostic equipment. I still remember the excitement among my peers when the first CT/CAT scanner arrived, when the first MRI went online, and all the various upgrades that were needed along the way. Now we are able to record during surgery, communicate with patients through cellphone and tablet apps like CoHealth, and consult on cases from anywhere in the world. Community support continues to help improve how we care for our patients through updated equipment and technology.

I'm proud to have been a part of Cambridge Memorial Hospital for forty years. I have always believed that part of what we earn should be recycled by giving back. 'The more you have, the more you owe' is my personal motto. It is the intention of my wife and I to continue with annual gifts, as well as leaving a legacy gift in our wills. We want to ensure our hospital stays relevant and up-to-date for the next forty years! I'm happy to pay it forward for others. It feels good, and it's the right thing to do!

"I have always believed that part of what we earn should be recycled by giving back."

Dr. Mike Lawrie

[www.cmhfoundation.ca/donate](http://www.cmhfoundation.ca/donate)



# FOR THESE KIDS, THE FUTURE IS NOW

**SVP Teens making a difference today, and preparing to make an impact tomorrow**

BY PAUL KNOWLES

**S**VP Teens in Waterloo is a program to prepare young people to be volunteers and philanthropic donors in the future. Except, those young people are not prepared to wait – they have gone beyond future goals, to get involved, right now.

The youth organization – involving young people from grade seven through high school graduation – is a spin-off of Social Venture Partners Waterloo Region. SVP Waterloo Region is “a network of engaged community members” who “invest time, money, and professional expertise in local non-profits. Through our model of venture philanthropy, we seek to effect significant, long-term social change in our community.”

The adult organization has 90 Partners, and according to SVP Waterloo Region Executive Director Rose Greensides, invests

SVP Teens “exposes these youth to Waterloo Region on a very different level... it keeps them connected.”



Tim Jackson

\$60,000 a year in three chosen not for profits. That investment goes well beyond financial donation to the organizations, as SVP Partners volun-

teer to mentor and advise non-profits “to help them scale their impact and become sustainable, high-performing organizations.”

Two long-time SVP partners are Jane Arnold and Tim Jackson, who is a co-founder of SVP Waterloo. In 2013, their son, Ben Jackson, was one of the founding members of SVP Teens. Ben told

Exchange that initially, the Teens group included a handful of young people – nine, in all – who were the children of SVP Partners. The goal, from the beginning, was to expose teens to the philosophy of philanthropy. Ben Jackson, now

an M.A., Accounting student at the University of Waterloo, is one of four adult mentors to SVP Teens.

The goal of SVP Teens hasn't really changed in the seven years it has functioned, but the group certainly has, especially in the past year. It has grown, exponentially, with about 85 young people now involved. Says Greensides, “the teen program exploded in the summer of 2019,” expanding from 12 young people to 85.

That growth owes a lot to current SVP Teens Chair Jocelyne Murphy, who has spearheaded recruitment and project development, and has also been a key part of grant applications and organizational efforts that have led to the hiring of the first-time SVP Teens Coordinator, Jill Mills, who joined the organization earlier this year, on a 10-month contract. The grant applications were made by the teens, themselves, mentored by a volunteer HR professional.

Mills says that her role is “to facilitate the growth of the program, and to help build it on a sustainable model.” That's a challenge, both because of the sudden surge in interested members, but also because of the nature of SVP Teens – the students graduate from high school, move on to university, and leave the group. So “sustainability” is an ongoing challenge. Murphy, as she has led the group, has been aware of that, and has recruited other SVP Teen board members who still have some years left before university, so there will be continuity of youth leadership, going forward.

Mills stresses that growing the group does not mean immediately adding another 80-plus members. It's important that young people who join are “committed and engaged” in the vision of the group.

Murphy joined the group when she was in grade 8, way back in 2015, so she qualifies as a veteran participant and observer of the bur-

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Rose Greensides, Ben Jackson, Jill Mills and Jocelyne Murphy

they connect the kids to their community. She noted that there is always a need to retain the talent we have in the region, and suggests that SVP Teens “exposes these youth to Waterloo Region on a very different level... it keeps them connected.”

Murphy is a true believer in SVP Teens, and not only because of the real difference the organization can make in the community – and in the attitude of members toward philanthropy. She says it is also, simply, fun, and a great place to make friends. She noted that when SVP Teens members are involved in volunteer activities apart from the organization, it’s their friends from SVP Teens that they recruit to help in those projects – creating a web of teenage activism that spreads across the community.

geoning program.

Led by Murphy and her friends and fellow members, SVP Teens not only learn about philanthropy, and how they can make a difference when they are adults – like an increasing number of socially-engaged teenagers, they are making a difference, right now.

One project saw them collect 1,000 articles of clothing for newly arrived refugees in the region through the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, and through Reception House Waterloo Region.

Ben Jackson says that he is very impressed with the growth and maturing of SVP Teens over the past year. He says that when the program first began, with himself and eight friends, all of them were involved in sports, so it was natural that their first beneficiary was an organization called KidSport KW. Today, he says, “it’s exciting to see the transition the group has made, how they have transitioned” into a broader perspective of the needs of the community. The most recent, 2019, beneficiary of SVP Teens fundraising was Kinbridge, the south Cambridge community support organization.

Murphy says, candidly, that most of her fellow members do not come from economically-challenged backgrounds, so working with an organization that serves “low-income neighbourhoods really just opens you up.”

Greensides sees a collateral benefit to these kinds of programs;

Greensides says the teen members are key to growth and success. They go to their schools – and there are 16 schools represented in the Waterloo SVP Teens group – and tell the story, which brings more interest from other teens.

And the organization really is driven by the youth she says, even to the point where the SVP Teens governance structure was developed by the young people themselves.

In fact, the Waterloo teens have done such an impressive job that the local organization has become a model that other groups are starting to follow. Social Venture Partners is an international organization, with over 40 affiliate groups in eight countries. But none of them, says Greensides, have a Teens organization like Waterloo Region has. This is the only example of SVP Teens in the world, and the goal is to make it a pilot, a template for other affiliate groups in other countries.

Murphy believes SVP Teens empowers young people. “As teenagers, we see all these issues we want to contribute to, but no way to do anything about them...” until SVP, which is a “very valuable” solution to that social roadblock. Now, they are able to make that difference, to tackle the issues they care about, and to prepare themselves to make an impact throughout the rest of their lives. X

## CFFB 2020/21 Events: HERE’S WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!

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# COLLABORATION THE KEY FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Non-profits, institutions, businesses work together in COVID-19 pandemic

BY PAUL KNOWLES

It was a simply request from Waterloo Regional Chair Karen Redman, but it seems to sum up the entire issue. “We have to keep working to make sure we get through this together. I’m asking you to help others.” The community is taking that to heart. In the midst of the unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, community organizations, institutions, businesses and individuals are adapting and cooperating at a level seldom if ever seen before. For example, United Way Waterloo Region Communities, Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, Social Venture Partners Waterloo Region (SVPWR), and Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation, along with other regional funders, are working together to support urgent and emerging community needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As well, the three hospitals in Waterloo Region, long known as very independent institutions, are in full collaboration mode to tackle the pandemic. Even though the universities and colleges are closed, they are having an impact in the fight. And local businesses are taking innovative steps to help, ranging from companies retooling to create badly needed equipment for the fight against the



*“Lasting community change happens when service providers work together as part of a larger service network – no one individual or organization can do it on their own.”*  
– Joan Fisk

virus to campgrounds opening early to provide safe places for people needing to self-isolate. Key community not for profits joined together to create the United Way’s Community Response Fund. These funding organizations are pooling collected money in a revolving fund – as donations are received, money is dispersed to local charities addressing the community’s immediate needs, with fundraising as an ongoing effort. Urgent and immediate needs may include, but are not limited to: access to shelter, food, and crisis-related supports.

## Can’t do it alone

United Way Waterloo Region Communities CEO Joan Fisk says, “Lasting community change happens when service providers work together as part of a larger service network – no one individual or organization can do it on their own.” Rose Greensides, Executive

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Director at Social Venture Partners Waterloo Region, added: "SVP is proud to work together to structure joint fundraising criteria and streamline the application process, which helps us raise and deploy the money as soon as possible. By uniting, we can share our skills and amplify our impact." One major donor to the new fund is the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, which has stepped outside its usual parameters because of the unusual times. A statement from the foundation reads, "Normally, the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation does not invest in crisis situations or basic needs. Extraordinary times mean that typical rules must change. As a first stage of response therefore, the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation is allocating \$150,000 to be granted collaboratively with investments from other regional funders through the United Way's Community Response Fund."

A similar joint venture has been announced in Guelph, as the Guelph Community Foundation partners with the United Way of Guelph Wellington Dufferin in supporting the Guelph COVID-19 Community Response Fund to support agencies doing critically important work and those that have been put under immense pressure as a



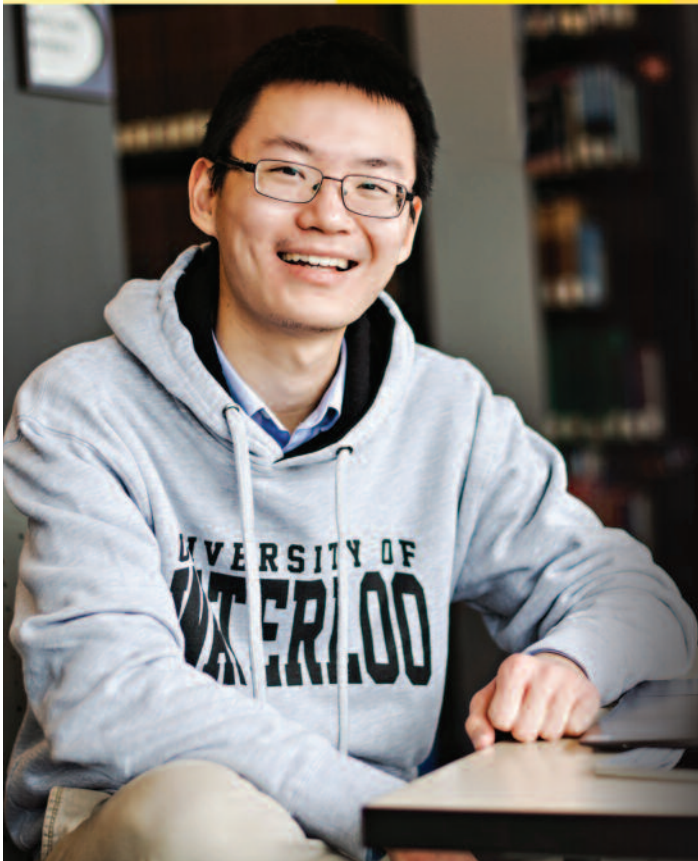
*"It is critical - during this unprecedented health crisis - that we adjust our operations to better serve our community and ensure business continuity of vital food assistance services throughout Waterloo Region" - Wendi Campbell*

as strong as possible," said Chris Willard, Executive Director of The Guelph Community Foundation. "We are proud to work with the United Way—an essential community support—and we will continue to build on this partnership. Even while physically isolated, we can pull together and help. Together, we are calling on Guelph's organizations, businesses and citizens to join with us and support those in greatest need in our community. Isolation is a greater burden on some and home isn't always a safe place to be. Help us support the teams and volunteers laying everything they have on the line to keep us safe, well cared for and healthy."

In Guelph, and in Waterloo Region, the Community Foundations are focusing both on helping in the immediate crisis, and in providing resources during the eventual recovery. In what is described as "a first response," the KW Community Foundation has allocated \$300,000 "to address the immediate and longer-term effects this will have on our community." Elizabeth Heald, President and CEO of the KWCF, says, "we sent a brief survey to our

result of the current crisis. The collaborative fund will provide one place for philanthropists, community leaders, corporations and Guelph's care mongering citizens to support the community's

COVID-19 response. "During this difficult time, it's more important than ever for us all to work together. That's why we were eager to partner with the United Way to pool resources and work collaboratively so that our collective impact is




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charitable partners to ensure their voices were incorporated in our approach to dealing with COVID-19. Based on the valuable information we received, our Board and team have developed a plan to quickly flow funds to local organizations.” That plan includes collaborating with the United Way fund; providing \$50,000 to acquire Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for local frontline community workers and healthcare workers; and allocating \$100,000 to establish the COVID-19 Charitable Recovery Fund at KWCF. Heald explained, “COVID-19 will have lasting implications for many of our charitable partners. This new fund will provide assistance to organizations in the mid to long-term as they work to recover and rebuild from the pandemic.”

### Hospitals collaborating

Health care workers are on the front lines of the fight against the pandemic. And the three hospitals in Waterloo Region – Grand River, St. Mary's and Cambridge Memorial – have developed an unprecedented level of cooperation in the face of COVID-19. The Presidents of the three hospitals joined radio host Mike Farwell for a virtual town hall meeting in early April, and they spoke with one voice. As Patrick Gaskin, President and CEO of Cambridge Memorial Hospital explained, “Across the Region we have been working collaboratively to ensure that we have the supplies, equipment, staff and capacity.” He said that there has been “an incredible amount of planning at the front end of this,” adding that the three hospitals have been working together to plan for the crisis since the potential for the pandemic first became apparent.

Ron Gagnon, President and CEO of Grand River Hospital, agreed. “We’ve been at this since early January, to begin preparing. We’re trying to project forward what our needs will be... we’re working collaboratively to ensure that we’ll continue to have the right equipment.”



*“COVID-19 will have lasting implications for many of our charitable partners. This new fund will provide assistance to organizations in the mid to long-term as they work to recover and rebuild from the pandemic.”*  
– Elizabeth Heald

Gagnon commented on the support of the Waterloo Region community – “how they have stepped up has been just breathtaking.”

Lee Fairclough, President, St. Mary's General Hospital, noted that early in the planning process, a private donor created a fund to allow for a collaborative planning process among the three hospitals. “We used that time to open up the capacity. We have been as proactive as we can in terms of equipment, to try and be ready, together. We have the equipment staff needs. The community has stepped forward with donations of equipment, and also helping us get into the supply chain.” The general public is being invited to contribute to a joint fund established by the three hospitals. Details can be found at [region-ready.ca](http://region-ready.ca). Contributions will help all three hospitals continue to purchase more of the equipment, beds and supplies they need at this critical time.

### Retooling, innovating

There are dozens and dozens of examples of businesses – in the region and across the country – stepping up in this crisis. Many are retooling to be able to produce protective equipment and medical devices like ventilators, to be used in the battle against the virus. Researchers and entrepreneurs at the region's educational institutions are also throwing their energy and expertise into the fight.

For example, researchers at the University of Waterloo have launched an open-source project last week to improve COVID-19 screening using artificial intelligence (AI). “My goal was to engage people worldwide to push this initiative along and I’m getting my wish,” says Alexander Wong, a systems design engineering professor who heads the Vision and Image Processing Lab at Waterloo. “We’ve received overwhelming support and positive feedback, and we’re using it all to improve the software.”

The researchers partnered with Waterloo company DarwinAI to develop and publicly release COVID-Net, the AI software that can detect coronavirus infections from chest x-rays. As well, two UW facilities have shifted their production focus to 3D-printed parts for face shields used by health-care workers battling COVID-19. 3D printers in the Multi-Scale Additive Manufacturing Laboratory and in the Print and Retail Solutions Department at the University are being used to build certified pieces of the protective equipment from a special material currently in short supply throughout the local medical






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community. The University's efforts build on the significant work of local entrepreneurs like InkSmith CEO Jeremy Hedges, whose company was recently certified by Health Canada to mass-produce protective shields for healthcare workers. Health Canada reached out to companies and institutions across the country to determine the number of 3D printers capable of creating required medical equipment, including parts required for the shields, worn over top of surgical masks for additional protection. "Our lab quickly volunteered to help and we're now part of a community group of companies and institutions that have banded together to provide free medical support and supplies," said Ehsan Toyserkani, a mechanical and mechatronics engineering professor and research director of the MSAM lab. "Our printers have been working 24/7 to help produce these necessary pieces of equipment," said Ryan Jacobs, Director of Print and Retail Solutions. "We're proud to be playing our part in supporting frontline health care workers." With materials supplied by Cimatrix Solutions Inc. located in Oshawa, Waterloo's printers started off producing 50 to 60 engineered polymeric headbands and bottom reinforcements a day, only to increase that quantity as the local need demanded.

Meanwhile, UW's Velocity incubator extended its intake for new companies and is giving priority to those that can help with Canada's effort to combat COVID-19. "We know that startups have a great capacity to identify opportunities, innovate quickly, and develop market-ready technologies," said Adrien Côté, executive director of



*"We used that time to open up the capacity. We have been as proactive as we can in terms of equipment, to try and be ready, together. We have the equipment staff needs. The community has stepped forward with donations of equipment, and also helping us get into the supply chain."*  
- Lee Fairclough

Waterloo's Velocity incubator. "Velocity can help by working with founders to quickly evolve their strategies and product development to rally to this cause."

Other post-secondary institutions are also active in the crisis. Wilfrid Laurier University has collected thousands of pieces of PPE from faculties and offices in all of the university's locations. These supplies are donated to Grand River Hospital and the Brant Community Health System to be distributed to local hospitals and clinics according to the highest need. In total, the university is donating nearly 12,000 N95 masks, 38,500 disposable gloves and 200 isolation gowns, along with surgical masks, plastic visors, goggles, hand sanitizer and test kits.

Conestoga College has taken the same approach, donating equipment and supplies to local hospitals. "These are extraordinary times, and we all need to step up and contribute to the greater good," said Conestoga President John Tibbits. "Sharing our resources to protect front-line workers and provide additional capacity for hospitals in this time of crisis is one of the ways that Conestoga is making a difference in the fight against the global pandemic." In addition to providing urgently needed N95 masks, gloves and other personal protective equipment, the college is also sharing ventilators, hospital and long-term care beds, stretchers, mattresses and a variety of care equipment that would otherwise be used to help students build the hands-on skills required for success in their future careers as health professionals. The total value of the equipment and supplies provided by the college is estimated at approximately \$2M.





## Nutrition is essential

The COVID-19 crisis has created enormous challenges for the region's social service agencies that provide food to families and individuals who are food insecure. In normal times, one in eight households in Canada are classified as "food insecure" – and in these days of the pandemic, that number is much higher. Organizations that provide essential food have adjusted their programs, but continue to try to meet the needs in the community. For example, the Food Bank of Waterloo Region has activated the Community Food Assistance Network Pandemic Business Continuity Plan. The Food Bank reports that "in collaboration with the Region of Waterloo Community Services and Public Health Department – this plan was designed to ensure local resources are mobilized to continue essential service delivery to our community while protecting the health and safety of staff, volunteers and community members. It is critical – during this unprecedented health crisis – that we adjust our operations to better serve our community and ensure business continuity of vital food assistance services throughout Waterloo Region," explains Wendi Campbell, CEO. "With that in mind, we have made the decision to temporarily reduce the number of food distribution locations. This is an important step in not only ensuring emergency food is available for many weeks to come, but also in minimizing the health risks for staff, volunteers and community members."

Normally, the Community Food Assistance Network – a system of 100+ community programs and agency partners – works together to ensure people in our community in need of food assistance, receive it. During the COVID-19 crisis, programs not identified as a vital service

have been asked to stop food distribution – including some hamper programs, community meals and snack programs – in the interest of public health and safety. There are 30 community programs and agency partners identified as vital service programs. These programs have implemented additional health and safety practices to reduce the risk of exposure to the community and have additional capacity to support increased demand. Programs specifically targeted to children

have adapted their delivery methods, but continue to try to serve their community. For example, Nutrition for Learning, which traditionally distributes food to kids in school, are now delivering snack

packages at specific distribution sites Monday to Friday. And "Food 4 Kids is distributing grocery cards to all the food insecure families that they serve," says Kelly Sue Labus.

We will also be advocating on behalf of Waterloo Region firms to ensure their urgent needs and concerns are heard" - Tony LaMantia

## Guidance for businesses

A new support team has been created to help local businesses in the environment created by COVID-19. The Region of Waterloo, all seven area municipalities, Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation and local partners have created the Business and Economic Support Team of Waterloo Region to help all types of local businesses cope with challenges caused by COVID-19. "Collectively, this group will be a point of contact for governments as they make rapid decisions to support the evolving economic and business environment, and will help to promptly disseminate these decisions to our business community. We will also be advocating on behalf of Waterloo Region firms to ensure their urgent needs and concerns are heard, clearly articulated and addressed," said Tony LaMantia, President & CEO, Waterloo EDC, who will serve as Chair of the BESTWR. The

leadership team also includes Iain Klugman (Communitech), Ian McLean (Greater KW Chamber of Commerce) and Greg Durocher (Cambridge Chamber of Commerce). In addition, members of BESTWR will include representatives from the Region and all area municipalities, and representatives from many other organizations engaged in supporting local businesses and the local economy.

## "Care and compassion"

The overall picture, while apparently bleak in the face of a virus for which there is no current cure and about which there is insufficient information, still offers reasons for hope. "When there is a need this community responds with care and compassion – every time. Most importantly we have to get money to critical organizations that serve some of our most vulnerable in our community," says Brock Hart, Board Chair, Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation. "Give directly to organizations you care about."

KWCF CEO Elizabeth Heald summed up the new spirit of cooperation for Exchange: "We always have had good intentions of being collaborative, and did what we could, but this has made it a necessity to take it to the next level. This has heightened the urgency to make this happen, and I believe there is no going back. This is the new normal."

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# GOING BEYOND COVID-19 TO SHOWCASE SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES

Special Olympics Games in Waterloo Region for the first time

BY PAUL KNOWLES

The organizers and supporters are disappointed – but they have not given up. The pre-COVID-19 plan was for Waterloo Region to host the Ontario Special Olympics Spring Games in May of this year, for the first time ever.

Now, the pandemic has forced the postponement of the event. However, Sergeant Melissa Quarrie of the Waterloo Regional Police Service, says “The plan is definitely to host provincial Games in the Region, when it becomes feasible! Definitely a postponement rather than a cancellation. The determination of a new date for the Games will depend on a lot of factors, including COVID-19, availability of facilities and the Organizing Committee which is comprised mostly of volunteers, WRPS operational considerations, etc.”

“Before the Special Olympics, it was thought that people with intellectual disabilities couldn’t participate in sports.” - Sergeant Melissa Quarrie

Quarrie adds that the eventual timing will arise from “a conversation between Special Olympics Ontario and WPRS leadership.”

But there is little doubt that it will happen, at some point, if only because of the evident passion on behalf of the Police Service – ably represented by Quarrie, who was named Games Manager of the 2020 Provincial Spring Games – and community volunteers like Ron Caudle, founder and owner of the very successful seafood retailer, “Caudle’s Catch.”

If you ask Caudle and Quarrie why they have devoted so much time and effort to help lead the Ontario Special Olympics Spring



Sergeant Melissa Quarrie with Caudle's Catch Ron Caudle

Games, you will get some interesting answers.

Caudle explains that the Ontario Special Olympics are a project of police departments across Ontario. He was asked by Waterloo Regional Police Service Chief Bryan Larkin to get involved, and he says he didn't want to be on the wrong side of the Chief of Police.

Quarrie simply explains that she was assigned to be Games Manager of the 2020 Provincial Spring Games.

Neither of those answers comes close to telling the full story.

Caudle is committed, 110 per cent, to the Games. That's not surprising, since Ron Caudle is renowned for his community work. Most recently, he was awarded The Michael R. Follett Community Leader of the Year Award at the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards. The honour was conferred because of Caudle's "leadership in the development of the community by creating or facilitating significant solu-

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tions to meet community needs and inspiring others to achieve excellence.” The citation said, “Ron Caudle has made a huge effort to support not-for-profit organizations since opening the doors of Caudle’s Catch 34 years ago... He has sat on the board of directors for the Grand River Hospital Foundation and was the chair for five years. Caudle’s Catch’s annual golf tournament has raised over \$250,000 for the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre. Ron has been a huge supporter of the local food bank... Annually, Caudle’s Catch donates to over 50 charities.”

Caudle’s response to the award? “I’m humbled.”

So when Chief Larkin asked Caudle to get involved, he knew he was asking the right guy, a man with a heart as big as his adopted community.

And yes, Sergeant Quarrie was appointed to her position, also by Larkin. But that’s not her whole story, either. Because she shares the fact, with some emotion, that she has a four-year-old daughter who has an intellectual disability. If she wasn’t there on assignment, she’d be completely involved in the Special Olympics as a volunteer, she admits.

### Hundreds of athletes

A total of 635 athletes are planned to compete in the Ontario Special Olympics Spring Games, and it’s hoped they will all get that opportunity, eventually. They will come to Waterloo from all over the province; 23 athletes have qualified who are residents of Waterloo Region. They will be accompanied by coaches, bringing the total number of participants to over 800.

That figure, of course, does not include family members and friends who will be here to support and cheer, more than doubling the number of total attendees.

And then there are the volunteers – Quarrie says “700 volunteers would make me happy,” and at time of writing, 617 had already signed up.

Although family members will undoubtedly be here, Quarrie makes the point that, just like at other Olympic events, the athletes will be staying in an Athletes’ Village, in this case at Wilfrid Laurier University, which is partnering with the police service to sponsor the event. Quarrie says the athletes really appreciate this opportunity for a taste of independence.

Quarrie, who has been involved in other not for profit causes, says, “This is the biggest event I have ever planned.” And she’s thrilled to have the opportunity.

Caudle makes his involvement sound simple. “The Chief asked me to help out, to raise the more than \$500,000 we need.” A small summary of a very big job.

So Caudle has jumped in, ready to speak to whoever will listen, arrange sponsorships, and promote the “Draft an Athlete” program which encourages donors – individually or in groups – to support individual athletes with a \$500 donation.

The participants do not pay to participate. Their transportation, food and accommodations are all provided. Says Quarrie, “Everything’s covered through our fundraising efforts.”

### Honourary Co-chairs

Special Olympics Ontario has a long-standing partnership with the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police through the annual



Waterloo Region Police Chief Bryan Larkin

Torch Run. The Waterloo Regional Police Service has been an active partner of the Special Olympic Torch Run for 35 years.

Because the Ontario Special Olympics are sponsored by police services across the province, Waterloo Chief Bryan Larkin and Police Services Board Chair Karen Redman – who is Chair of Waterloo Regional Council – are honorary co-chairs of the Spring event. Caudle says that both Larkin and Redman are taking their role well past the “honourary” expectation to actively be involved in the Games.

Larkin says, “We are honoured to have been selected to host

these Games and highlight the talent of these amazing athletes.

These Games not only provide an opportunity for our community to showcase our great hospitality, but a chance for us to witness incredible athletic ability, hard

work, and determination. We are providing these amazing athletes with a chance to turn their dream into a reality.”

He adds, “I have had the pleasure of meeting many of the local athletes and continue to be impressed by their dedication and passion for sport. I am proud of our community for coming together and supporting them to ensure they have an experience filled with many fantastic memories. It will be a very proud moment when our community joins together to cheer on the athletes for the 2020 Spring Games right here in Waterloo Region.”

Redman added, “We are excited to host more than 2500 special athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators for the biggest Spring Games in the history of Special Olympics Ontario. As the Chair of the Police Services Board, I am honoured to support Special Olympics Ontario, and more importantly the amazing athletes who see their ability and go beyond their disability.”

The Regional Chair also noted, “The Spring Games will generate over one million dollars for our local economy.”

### “Go Beyond”

The slogan for these Games is “Go Beyond” – a phrase coined personally by Quarrie. From athletes to volunteers to donors, this “challenges people to go beyond.”

The Games are good for the community, good for the volun-

“When you see the difference you can make in somebody’s life... they’re made to feel important.” – Ron Caudle



teers, good for the families and friends but, bottom line, the Special Olympics are all about the athletes, and Caudle and Quarrie get that.

Quarrie talks about "The joy they have when they get to compete and meet with their peers... it's heartwarming."

Caudle says that when he has met "so many of the athletes at the events we have done... being on these teams, it's their Christmas."

He adds, "When you see the difference you can make in somebody's life... they're made to feel important."

Quarrie contends that the Special Olympics have completely changed public perception of people with intellectual disabilities. "Before the Special Olympics, it was thought that people with intellectual disabilities couldn't participate in sports. But it wasn't lack of ability, it was lack of opportunity!"

### "We want to help"

Caudle, a man with a lot of experience in voluntary fundraising, says that people are eager to support this particular cause. "As I go out there and talk to the people who have an opportunity to support us, the response has been, 'We want to help, how can we?' It's incredible support."

His biggest fear is that after the fact, "someone will come up to me and ask, 'How come you didn't ask me?'" Well, if you are reading this, consider yourself asked!

When the Games do take place, will Caudle's work be done? Not if history is any indication. His tenure on the Grand River Hospital Foundation ended because of the organization's term limitation bylaws. So he formed a group of hospital "ambassadors" so he and other like minded people could continue to promote the hospital.

So it's likely that the Special Olympics now have a life-long ambassador in the Codfather. As well, he told Exchange, he has been approached to join more than one non profit board of directors, and he is weighing those opportunities.

He undoubtedly will get involved somewhere, and soon, because, as the Follett Community Leader Award citation reads, "He is an advocate for those less fortunate. He brings our community together for good causes and is a true example of what a community leader looks like." **X**



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### KW Counselling Services

KW Counselling Services is a multiservice agency offering counselling supports to individuals, couples and families in the Waterloo Region. Our Walk In Counselling Clinic is open each Thursday from noon-6pm. In addition to our counselling work we offer a variety of parenting education workshops (Parenting with Passion), the [www.parentingnow.ca](http://www.parentingnow.ca) website, leadership training and outreach for members of the multicultural community, and supports for the LGBTQ2+ community (OK2BME). We are proud to have been supporting children, youth and families in this community since 1950.

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University of Waterloo professor Bill Anderson, a professor of chemical engineering, is drawing on two decades of research into disinfection using ultraviolet (UV) light to help solve a shortage of masks for front-line healthcare workers in the COVID-19 crisis. He is using UV light to help solve a shortage of masks for front-line healthcare workers in the COVID-19 crisis. With local hospital staff all over Ontario asked to store used masks for possible disinfection and deactivation of viruses, this professor may just have the solution if a global mask shortage is realized. Anderson has consulted with officials at several hospitals in southern Ontario as they explore ways to reuse N95 respirators instead of throwing them out after each use.

As Canadians implement social distancing measures to minimize the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), researchers at Wilfrid Laurier University are studying the effects of social

isolation on Canadian workers in real time. Simon Coulombe, assistant professor of psychology, is leading a study entitled "Overcoming the unseen: The effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the mental health of Canadian-based workers." Coulombe and his research team aim to determine how factors related to the COVID-19 outbreak, especially social distancing measures like working from home, impact individuals' mental health, family relationships, finances and overall wellbeing.

The University of Waterloo has named a respected university administrator and academic as its next Dean of the Faculty of Engineering. Mary Wells, an accomplished materials engineer, is known for her strategic leadership in building collaborative and strong relationships within a university setting and for her work in attracting, engaging and retaining women in the engineering industry. Wells currently serves as the University of Guelph's Dean of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, a position she has held since 2017.

The Board of Directors of the Child Witness Centre has announced the appointment of David Morneau as Executive Director as of January 13, 2020. This appointment follows the retirement of Laura Muirhead who provided leadership and inspiration for the past seven years, helping the organization grow and making a difference in the lives of many children and youth.

The Region of Waterloo has been officially designated a 'Bee Region' by Bee City Canada who approved the Region's application and commitment to protect pollinators.

The Cowan Foundation has donated \$250,000 to help address homelessness. The Foundation presented the cheque at St. Mark's Lutheran Church—the future site of Indwell's first affordable housing program in the region. This contribution is a critical component in the funding of this project, as Indwell is to finalize the purchase of St. Mark's in June 2020.

Flanagan Foodservice has achieved Platinum status as one of Canada's Best Managed Companies. Flanagan Foodservice was initially recognized as a Best Managed Company in 2013 and has since been awarded Gold Standard and

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now Platinum Club Member status. Platinum Club status is awarded to companies that have maintained their Best Managed status for seven or more years and must re-apply each year.

A \$5-million FedDevOntario contribution will help Cambridge company scale up operations, accelerate growth and create 50 new skilled jobs. Founded in 2008 by a group of engineers and consultants, JCAI Inc.'s innovative technologies are now used by more than 150 airports and major airlines worldwide. The systems provide real-time data to operators and optimize the use of de-icing fluid, reducing waste and runoff, and contributing to greener operations. "This commitment from the Government of Canada will leverage JCAI Inc.'s Canadian innovation and technology to an ownership position in advanced aviation technology platforms worldwide," said Jeff Campbell, Founder and President, JCAI Inc.

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New student counsellor positions and a digital virtual care tool will be created to expand the wellness service offerings for co-operative education students at the University of Waterloo. The new services come at a time of heightened uncertainty for students, as rapid changes in response to COVID-19 compound the stresses associated with co-op terms. Starting in spring 2020, the new counsellors will provide one-on-one counselling to prepare students for the challenges they face during work terms — including complications arising from the pandemic. Students will have faster access to mental health and wellness support through phone and virtual consultation. The digital tool will enable students to interact securely with campus wellness practitioners using video-calling technology.



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The Region of Waterloo, the area municipalities and many community partners took exemplary action to support the health and safety of vulnerable people affected by COVID-19. As part of the Region pandemic response plan, more than 17 municipal and community partners have formed a Community Support Control Group. Together with the private sector, this group is responding to the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with the following supports:

- An isolation space received people who are homeless and showing symptoms of COVID-19
- Food hampers and meals will be delivered to people with low income who can't leave their home. This program can also serve people who are homeless if emergency shelters and other agencies become unable to.
- Public washrooms and spaces are being opened in and around city cores in Waterloo Region.



Scott Higgins presents a \$1000 cheque to WLU student Jonathan Wilson

continued from page 22 nity leaders who are trying to move this forward and really make long-term investment in young people here in Waterloo Region. I think that's very consistent with the mission of the Business & Education Partnership. We really exist to help young people prepare and explore the world of work. This is another way we can help connect them to community leaders and the resources, the talent, the financial resources of people who want to invest in them."

Verhoeve says that BEP exists "to be a connection between industry and education and help strengthen those ties. To help young people be more prepared to make that transition from high school to jobs or post-secondary education."

Becky Zettl is the Specialist High Skills Major Lead at the Waterloo Region District School Board. The SHSM is a ministry-approved specialized program that allows students to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and assists in their transition from secondary school to apprenticeship training, college, university, or the workplace. The public school board offers eight SHSM sectors, including agriculture, arts & culture, business, environment, health care fitness and health, information and communications technology, manufacturing, non-profit, sport and transportation. About 1100 students are involved, across the public schools in Waterloo Region. The program is also offered through the Catholic school system.

In each sector, community partners and mentors are involved with the programs. For instance, the Schlegel Research Institute for Aging is a partner in the health care sector. Zettl believes the new micro-grant program will engage many students across all of the sectors. She told Exchange, "This generation will likely have to be entrepreneurs in their careers, in terms of promoting themselves as personal brands." The program is available to all students, but is not run through the school boards

At the "What Will You Create?" awards ceremony, which saw the six university students pick up \$1000 awards, Higgins told the scholarship winners that "You are the next generation of Creative Capital of Canada."

Higgins added, "Creativity isn't measured by its outcome, it's measured by its process: thinking, trying, failing, shifting, trying again. I was really encouraged by the applications that came in. Some really thoughtful ideas but most importantly, there were passionate people behind those ideas."

Scholarship winners included Olivia Cullen (UW), Hashveenah Manoharan (UW), Liam Murphy (UW), Kevin Paul Naranjo Paredes (UW), Kristen Williams (WLU) and Jonathan Wilson (WLU).

Manoharan told the audience at the event that, "My favourite part of studying in Waterloo has been the opportunity to be exposed to so many types of knowledge in so many different





Becky Zettl: Specialist High Skills Major Lead  
Waterloo Region District School Board

fields.”

Murphy added, “For me, creativity means creating ingenious solutions to solving problems, solving problems that will affect the greater population as a whole as well as individuals.”

Wilson said, “The world needs more solutions and less distractions. Creativity is turning what we imagine into reality. My experience studying within the Creative Capital of Canada has been very eye-opening and very valuable.” The awards were the first “What Will You Create?” awards from HIP, but Higgins says that helping to fund creativity has always been vitally important for his company. Kristen Williams’ project is a music therapy podcast that exists to build connections across the world while educating listeners about

music therapy; in presenting the scholarship, Higgins noted that HIP’s first Human Resources policy involved giving \$1000 to employees to participate in live music.

The “What Will You Create?” scholarship program was launched

“When you plant those seeds, they blossom into something amazing. This is a long-term program in the community.” - Scott Higgins

in September 2019. It was open to students from UW, WLU and Conestoga College. Four of the winners are from UW; two come from Laurier.

In addition to Williams’ creative idea, the winning concepts included:

- An affordable and flexible community using modular and sustainable structures—with design considerations based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.
- A series of re-naturalized spaces within our cities that act as a Teaching Garden Network for urban dwellers, involving nature education and public participation in the natural world.
- A platform that serves to accelerate the process of talent acquisition—connecting startups with the right candidates according to individual work, financial and cultural needs.
- Developing land-based seaweed farms using freshwater to accompany the large markets for seaweed including food, animal feed, cosmetics etc.
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Scott Verhoeve: Executive Director of the Business Education Partnership of Waterloo Region



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At the post-secondary event, Higgins predicted that there was more to come. He stated, "Inspiring the next generation of creative minds, instilling confidence in their problem-solving spirits, and encouraging the celebration of our success stories is what this scholarship is all about. The focus right now is to teach and inspire the creative minds who reside here – to encourage them to embrace their individual creativity in an effort to spark a chain reaction. The 'What Will You Create?' scholarship is just the beginning of what's to come."

And with the announcement of the micro-grant program, the curtain on that next phase was lifted. The key, said Higgins, is recognizing the potential in young people long before they reach the post-secondary stage. "Talent shows itself at 12, 14. Why are we waiting until 21, 25, to try and see that innate ability? Why not find it and try to mentor it?"

He added, "If we root our culture – creativity, invention, entrepreneurship, collaboration, barn-raising – if we champion the culture of this place, which has always existed, then we will be successful, and we should do that through investment in youth. And if we stop doing that, and we just celebrate post-secondary success, then we lose sight of what caused that success."

"I feel of late we've stopped recognizing that. These kids are our future. If they have positive memories from the place they call home, if they fundamentally believe they can change the world from that place, and go off and do good things, they value that place and they reinvest in that place... You can really build an ecosystem."

Higgins says the most important impact of the program will involve instilling a sense of confidence in the participants. "Creative confidence needs to be a fundamental principal,

ongoing. If they don't have it, then they don't know to try. What really matters is, you know how to learn, you know how to try, you're not scared, you have confidence."

Verhoeve adds, "The biggest part of this is that the students realize that people care, and are feeling connected – they are not alone. This fund is saying, 'We care about you, our young people, we want to invest in you... we are paying it forward so when you are in our shoes, you will pay it forward too.'" Higgins sees the new program as a long-term investment. He expects the fund to raise half a million dollars a year, and to continue for at least a decade. "Five million dollars invested in youth over 10 years... when you plant those seeds, they blossom into something amazing. This is a long-term program in the community." **X**

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# CREATING MICRO-GRANTING FUND FOR STUDENTS

Partners mentors youth from elementary on up

BY EXCHANGE MAGAZINE

Scott Higgins, Becky Zettl and Scott Verhoeve

Scott Higgins says what may seem obvious: “For me, our youth is the future.” But he doesn’t just say it – Higgins, President of HIP Developments, has put money and effort where his mouth is. HIP has spearheaded the creation of grant programs for students from elementary to post-secondary levels, and he believes the ambitious new funding models will inspire confidence and creativity in students of all ages.

And he believes doing that in Waterloo Region will help root the best and brightest of our young people in the region, with far-reaching, long-term benefits for this community.

The first wave of HIP’s support for students came earlier this year, as six students from the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University were the recipients of the first-ever “What Will You Create?” scholarship sponsored by HIP Developments. The \$1000 awards were step one in an ambitious scholarship program being created by HIP Developments, as part of the company’s support for the Creative Capital of Canada movement.

But a program with much larger potential impact will be launched in September, providing “micro-grants” of between \$500 and \$1500 to elementary and high school students, classes and even entire schools. HIP is leading this effort, working with the Business & Education Partnership of Waterloo Region (BEP), and collaborating with the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Higgins told Exchange, “Creative Capital Canada had been going on for a year and a half. We were looking for ways to reflect that movement and also to invest in youth. One of the ways was launching a micro-granting fund to support grade school and high school students with their creative confidence and creative ideas.

We approached the BEP because of what they do in the community, as a potential partner for the project. Over the last seven or eight months we’ve been working with the BEP to try to refine what this approach would be – how do we work with something like this? We’re excited that this feels like its all coming together now.”

Higgins and his colleagues put their faith in young people into practice, by working with BEP and the school board to bring together a group of high school students to take a hard, analytical look at the proposed micro-grant program.

After that session, Higgins said, “We’ll launch fundraising in the summer time but launch the fund in September. We envision it to be a \$300,000 to \$500,000 a year annual fundraising from the business and philanthropic community, and giving it out in micro-grants from \$500 to \$1500 for students, student groups, could be a classroom, could be a school – to fund their creative initiatives, whatever they may be.”

Higgins added, “That’s the beauty of the fund – there’s no judgement. The fund is really an open platform. If you have an idea and you show some initiative behind that idea, the funding is yours to pursue that idea.”

The HIP President sees unlimited potential in the plan. “That’s the poetic thing for me here: rebuilding the confidence in our youth, that their ideas are important.

“I just think that you do that for a decade, and watch what happens.”

Scott Verhoeve is Executive Director of the Business & Education Partnership of Waterloo Region. He is thrilled to be partnering with HIP: “It’s really exciting to be on the ground floor with commu-

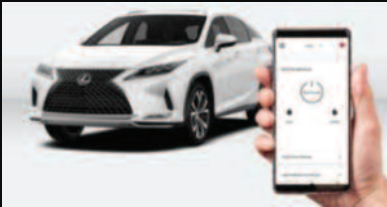
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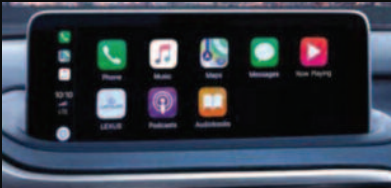
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