

DONOR DOLLARS

IN ACTION



Pandemic Support Edition

SPRING 2021

New experiences, phrases, and skills filled our days this past year, a year we will never forget. Experiences like holiday dinners over zoom, new words like “physical-distancing”, and new skills, which for us included learning how to host a virtual Annual General Meeting. 2020 was a year like no other, and though it had its struggles we have never been more grateful!

The compassion, resilience, and sense of community from donors and volunteers has been astounding!

Thank you all for stepping up in the most incredible ways. We are truly honoured. Thank you!

Your Dollars in Action

“Thank you for the live zoom chats. Its a great way to reach out to others safely.”

— A CLTO family

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340
ACTIVITY
BOXES

4,800
STAFF
WELLNESS BAGS



2,450
REUSABLE
COMMUNITY MASKS



5,000
EAR SAVERS

10,000
BOTTLES OF
SANITIZER

24,000 HOT
MEALS

528 FRIENDLY CONNECTIONS MADE

From left to right: An activity box delivery from a volunteer, a staff member wearing their new CLTO face mask, and staff receiving wellness bags.

Donor Dollars in Action

PPE (PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT)

At the beginning of this pandemic, the safety of staff and people we support was our top priority — and still is! This meant PPE, and lots of it! We immediately started accessing all of our contacts and resources, like **Abell, Ayles Electric,** and **Aquamaster Plumbing,** to find masks, face shields, sanitizer, gloves, and anything else we could think of.

When the call went out, we were overwhelmed by how quickly our city stepped up! Distilleries like **Spirit of York, Reid's** and **Dillions** paused the distilling of their spirits and put all their efforts into manufacturing hand sanitizer, which they graciously donated. Along with bottles of portable hand sanitizers for our frontline workers, which became like liquid gold when hand sanitizer was a scarce commodity in stores.

Organizations like the **TTC, Knix,** and so many others, including Facebook groups like **The Sewing Army,** and **CaremongeringTO** donated facemasks so that the people we support and our staff could be safe, not just at work, but also while they were out in the community. We also received hand-knit ear savers (that keep the mask's elastic from pulling on your ears) donated by amazing groups like the talented Facebook group **Mask Mate Ear-savers for Front Line & Essential Workers — CANADA!**

These generous donations helped to keep the people we support and our staff safe and secure. In those early days, it allowed them to step out of their houses for essential errands or exercise with a little more confidence, knowing that the risk of contacting COVID-19 was lessened significantly.

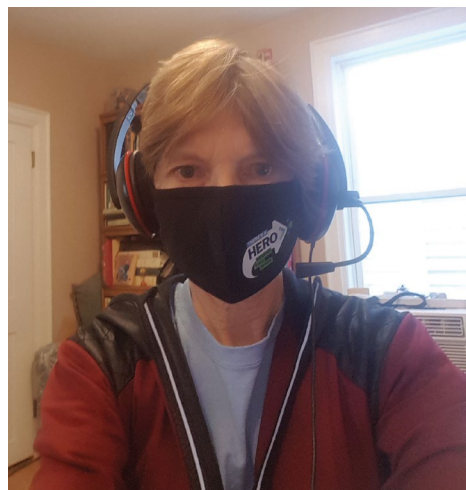
Your Dollars in Action

“I am a parent of a daughter living in a CLTO residence for many years now and want to say how much we all appreciate all the superb care and love she has received. We know now in these extremely difficult times how much harder they are all working with all the new protocols. Thank you all at CLTO for the expertise and guidance. We are so grateful to you all. Continue the good work.”

— A CLTO family



Our custom made CLTO masks reading ‘There’s a hero behind this mask’



Some of our fantastic staff wearing their new Community Living Toronto masks.

Donor Dollars in Action

STAFF WELLNESS BAGS

We simply cannot say enough about our amazing frontline staff!

They go above and beyond every day for the people they support. So, when COVID-19 hit and the isolation, stress, and other symptoms everyone has collectively felt this past year started to sink in, we knew that we needed to recognize them and make sure that they were appreciated.

We started collecting items to create staff wellness bags, a small token of our gratitude. The goal was to fill these bags with items to make their jobs a little easier. We reached out to organizations to see if they could contribute and were blown away by the response!

Seamless Care agreed to sponsor this endeavour, donating **1,300 tote bags!** **Lush** wanted to make sure our staff were able to take a moment for themselves and donated over **1,000 bath bombs** and **bubble bars**.

We received over **1,000 fruit and nut bars** from **Leclerc** to help keep our staff going, as well as over **2,000 Mrs. Fields cookies** from **Exclusive Brands**, and an additional **3,000 cookies** from **Mondelez International**, along with a countless amount of coffee, tea, and chocolate! All of which were greatly appreciated, especially the coffee... and the chocolate and cookies!



One of the first activity boxes delivered.



The Honorable Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, helping stuff some of our staff wellness bags.



Some of the amazing goodies inside one of the wellness bags that have gone out to staff.



A delivery of bath bombs and bubble bars from LUSH – we love the personal touches.

Thank You from the bottom of our hearts

So many people answered our calls for help this past year. It reminded us that we truly have an amazing community. Whether you made a cash donation, provided a gift in kind or gave of your time – thank you! You've helped thousands of people and we are very grateful for each and every one of you.



Donor Dollars in Action

FOOD INSECURITY

Along with safety and wellbeing, food insecurity was a big issue that arose from COVID-19. Though we believe no one should go hungry, especially because of this pandemic. To help achieve this goal, once again we turned to you, our donors.

MLSE and Scotiabank donated over 22,000 premade meals to people we support, our staff and the extended community. The Daily Bread Food Bank awarded us a grant of \$10,000 to use for food delivery containers, which along with a \$5,000 grant from United Way of Greater Toronto for grocery kits and gift cards, and \$1,800 worth of grocery gift cards from Breakfast Clubs of Canada enabled us to get even more meals out to the people we support.

Tim Hortons even stopped by and surprised one of our residential locations with a coffee and treat pick-me-up.

These meals and groceries were a lifeline to many, especially during a holiday. We are so thankful to have been able to supply an additional 2,000 meals in October and December, which was only made possible through the generosity of donors like The Cochrane Family Foundation, David I. Kells, Jones DesLauriers, Dr. Marwah Younis Damani, Sonderbloom, Nadine Dee Chiu Fund, Live Assets Ltd. and The Badeau Family. For some, these holiday meals where the only thing that made the day special. For everyone however, these meals showed that someone cared.

Your Dollars in Action

“I read L’s story that was posted on LinkedIn. It was very touching... and knowing that just \$5 can give a hot meal to families made me think how can I not?”

— A LinkedIn follower



Your Dollars in Action

“Our three boys would like to donate a meal each.”

— A wonderful friend



Our staff and some very sweet volunteers delivering meals to some of the people we serve.

Donor Dollars in Action

ISOLATION AND BOREDOM

With everyone safe at home, we knew we had to find ways to keep the people we support entertained and engaged! We immediately started providing daily, online Facebook Live entertainment to help with the isolation that many were starting to face.

However, with this new program and so many other incredible activities and resources now online, reliable internet and access to technology became a big concern. Thankfully, we received **\$55,000 in grants** from the **United Way of Greater Toronto's Local Love and COVID Emergency Support Funds** along with a very generous donation of over **\$40,000** from **VM Ware**, to help support tech needs such as improved internet connections, and iPads, tablets or Echos for people in support.

Although, accessing the internet with all its free online programs is one way to battle boredom and isolation during lockdowns, people were beginning to feel screen fatigue.

With the support of people like you, activity boxes were created to send

to group homes and individuals in our community. 340 activity boxes have been sent out so far and we're already working on putting together more!

In addition to a long list of items donated, these boxes have been made up of **50 pumpkins** for decorating during Halloween, countless colouring sets and activity workbooks from organizations like **Tim Hortons**. Over **2,000 toys** from **Spin Master** and **600 build-it kits** from **Home Depot**. Along with more than **500 lbs of felt** from **The Felt Store** that allowed people's imagination to run away with them.

These donations, along with a **\$25,000 grant** from the **United Way of Greater Toronto**, have also helped launch a brand-new program, **Friendly Connections**. A way for people feeling isolated to stay connected through fun deliveries every week including postcards, letters, colouring pages, and even phone calls just to say 'Hi'! People with an intellectual disability all over Canada can now sign up for up to 4 weeks of connection!



Some of the goodies in the activity box that went out in October.



Our people receiving an activity box full of fun stuff.

"Dear [CLTO] team, I do not have words to say thank you. Because of your help we have managed to balance work and online learning for all our children. Your understanding of our routine and accommodating our schedules really saved us.

Thank you!"

- Dani and Mauro

ConnectABILITY.ca

Friendly Connections



SIGN UP for 'Friendly Connections' to stay connected through fun weekly deliveries, such as a postcard, a letter or just a simple email to say 'Hi'!

COVID 19 Resources

Supporting Individuals, Families and Caregivers



For more COVID-19 Resources visit [ConnectABILITY.ca](https://www.connectability.ca)

Donor Dollars in Action

LIGHTS PROGRAM

Marcus is a 22-year-old young man on the autism spectrum who dreamed and talked about living on his own for an entire year, before, as his mum says, “taking the leap of faith” and moving into his own apartment.

To get ready, he built up his independent living skills with support from L’Arche and LIGHTS. He practised cleaning and vacuuming and other housekeeping techniques, and discovered that, among other enthusiasms, he really loves to cook.

In October, 2019, Marcus moved into his own apartment, not far from his parents. He was adamant: he wanted to be completely independent. LIGHTS helped his family develop a plan, a budget, find an appropriate place to live, and set it up. LIGHTS also helped with funding. Helping a person with disabilities set out to live independently for the very first time takes enormous resources of time, money, contacts, experience and just plain old energy. But it’s what LIGHTS does and does well.

Then the pandemic interrupted. Life slammed shut. All the activities Marcus enjoyed – the movies, the arcade, the restaurants – shut down. He couldn’t get together with his buddies. The jobs he had been investigating and training for were suddenly unavailable.

Marcus is an adaptable person and he quickly realized that under pandemic circumstances and restrictions, living with a roommate would be a better option. He missed the support and companionship of friends. He moved home for two months, while his parents, with the help of LIGHTS, looked for a two bedroom apartment and a roommate.

Marcus is now happily settled in his new home with a supportive housemate – a mentor, as Marcus describes her. This young woman, a trained early childhood educator, helps Marcus plan meals, shop for food, and take on incidental tasks that arise. Best of all, life under the pandemic is no longer so lonely. Marcus does lots online – his days are practically a spreadsheet of workshops, classes, and entertainment – but now he has a friend with whom he can share his plans, thoughts and feelings.



Marcus in his “command central” – a comfortable, accessible, safe place, to experience all his classes, workshops and entertainment.

Moving to a larger apartment, meant additional furniture and household goods. The R. Howard Webster Foundation – one of LIGHTS’ major donors – specified when they made their gift to LIGHTS, that the funds be used to help with home furnishings. Marcus’s family applied for and received money for that purpose. That meant Marcus could buy a dining room set, a coffee table and a desk, some small cooking appliances, some bedding – the stuff that makes a home feel like a real home.

Donor Dollars in Action

LIGHTS PROGRAM

The desk has become Marcus’s “command central” – a comfortable, accessible, safe place, in the middle of a pandemic, to experience all his classes, workshops and entertainment. A real home of one’s own, a place to safely be oneself, is never just a physical dwelling, or a collection of chattels: it’s a sanctuary. These additional funds helped Marcus create an oasis, a place of comfort and repose and control.

Marcus is now living his dream. His life skills and independence have grown exponentially – a great source of pride and comfort not least of all to Marcus, who no longer has to rely so much on others, no longer has to feel like a burden. His mum is now (happily!) relegated to being a mere “scheduler” of his meetings and activities. She joins him in a monthly confab with his housemate to discuss household issues.

Marcus also wants to get a job and find gainful employment when the pandemic is over. He has big plans. In the meantime, ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) is his only income. At less than \$1,200 a month, his stipend will never cover rent and food, to say nothing of transportation and other household outlays. LIGHTS funding helps Marcus’s parents cover those expenses, while giving Marcus the independence he always hoped for.



Donor support has made this all possible, and never so much as in the past year, LIGHTS continues to be a leader in the challenge to help families develop residential supports in their communities. The LIGHTS model is efficient, innovative and flexible.



For further information visit **LIGHTS.to** or contact **Sylvie Labrosse** at **647-588-9495** or **sylvie.labrosse@cltoronto.ca**

Every other Friday we host a live webinar with our COVID-19 updates.

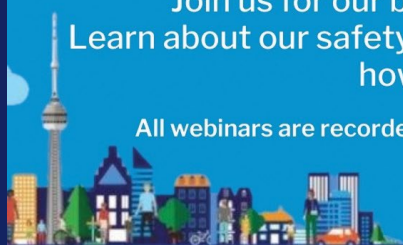
Visit cltoronto.ca/coronavirus to register for the next update webinar or view previous recordings!

COVID-19 Update Webinar

Every other Friday from 9:30 am - 10:30 am

Join us for our biweekly COVID-19 update. Learn about our safety measures, re-opening plans, and how you can help

All webinars are recorded for you to go back and listen anytime



Donor Dollars in Action

YOUR DONATIONS IN ACTION

With the support of people like you we are:

- helping provide healthy meals and grocery options for people who may be food insecure
- providing activity kits to individuals in support to keep them engaged while at home
- creating virtual programming through our CLTO and Shadow Lake Centre Facebook pages
- providing technology such as tablets and internet to those in need
- providing small grants to help people reach their goals through the Choice that can Change Lives Fund
- helping individuals and families with the cost of camp through Shadow Lake Centre subsidies and grants
- There are so many things that donors and funders are helping with and we are very grateful. THANK YOU!

Want to know more about how your support is being put in action or looking for other ways to give? Contact **Sylvie Labrosse**, Manager of Fundraising at **647.588.9465** or sylvie.labrosse@cltoronto.ca



Our shadow lake staff showing off their new virtual camp swag.



Some of the amazing handmade cloth masks that have been generously donated to help keep our people safe.

Your donations help make our Facebook Live programming possible.



We run new sessions daily, visit facebook.com/cltoronto to watch. *You don't even need an account!*

Your Dollars in Action

“I just wanted to mention how much my son enjoys the video chats set up and moderated by you staff. They have been a real boost for him and a safe way for him to keep in touch and make new friends.”

— A CLTO family



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