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Dufferin Community Foundation again supporting charities in need

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

The Dufferin Community Foundation is again helping local not-for-profit organizations who continue to struggle with the financial impacts of COVID-19.

The foundation is making an additional $30,000 in emergency grant funding available for not-for-profit organizations who have mental health and well-being initiatives in Dufferin County. The deadline for organizations to apply is Feb. 28, with the money being dispersed later in March.

The Dufferin Community Foundation gave out over $160,000 through the Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF) last year and the common theme coming from not-for-profits was that issues surrounding mental health were growing in the shadow of the pandemic.

Last year's funding also couldn't have come at a better time for many charities who applied, as they desperately needed a financial boost.

?When we heard their stories, listened to their stories and read their applications, the need for funding was apparent. Some of these organizations, couldn't fundraise at all during 2020,? explained Debbi Goss, Dufferin Community Foundation co-ordinator.

?We just understood how critical it was to get funding into the hands of our charities and the common theme, right through, was mental health and well-being. We realized that this is an emerging issue. Mental health is affecting even the strongest among us.?

Many of the contributing factors to poor mental health are consequences of the pandemic, such as social isolation, food insecurity, housing insecurity, substance abuse, addiction, and homelessness.

Dufferin Community Foundation received its charitable status in December of 2018 and from 2019 to 2020, the number of not-for-profits applying for funding nearly doubled.

Unlike the $162,000 distributed last year through the ECSF, the new $30,000 in emergency funding was sourced directly from the community, with mostly private citizens donating.

Goss said she's blown away by the support that the foundation received after it put out a call to residents for financial assistance in creating the new emergency support fund.

?We live in a very generous community, filled with people helping one another, whether that's something like shovelling the driveway or delivering hot food ? people really want to give, but oftentimes they're just not sure who to give to,? she noted.

Goss says with this funding, it was easy for residents to give because they know it's going to be combined with other donors to support local charities who are struggling.

?It's that power of many concept,? she said. ?I think that's where this funding was attractive to people that could say, I can give a small amount or I can give a larger amount and it will make an impact. We also learned through dispersing the emergency federal emergency funds last year that they're all being put to use, so I think people have a comfort zone then, in saying, okay, this is somewhere I know if I give my money, you guys will make sure that it's handed out to those who need it most.?

The Dufferin Community Foundation is a volunteer ran organization with the mandate to educate the community on philanthropy and build endowments so that the next time an emergency happens, they'll be prepared to support local charities in need.

In total, approximately $220,000 has been dispersed through the foundation and last year, $162,750 was divided between:

? Hospice Dufferin

? Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County

? Community Living Dufferin

? Parkinson Society Southwestern Ontario

? Youthdale Riding Program

? Orangeville Food Bank

? Scientists in School

? St. Mark's Anglican Church

? Family Transition Place

? Dufferin Child and Family Services

? Canadian Mental Health Association

? Pine River Institute

? Rotary Club Shelburne

? Theatre Orangeville

? Choices Youth Shelter

? Easter Seals Ontario

? Dufferin Parent Support Network; and

? Dufferin Food Share Program

Goss stressed the foundation's appreciation to all their donors and stressed that the support they're providing wouldn't be possible without them.

To learn more about how to support the organization, visit: https://dufferincommunityfoundation.ca/for-donors/