

ONTARIO'S CHARITIES ARE STRUGGLING

PANDEMIC PUTS #GIVINGBACK AT AN ALL-TIME LOW

MEGAN DELAIRE
mdeilaire@toronto.com

Ontario's charities are in distress.

Across the board, surveys of charities and non-profit groups by organizations like the Ontario Non-Profit Network and Imagine Canada have revealed office closures and program cancellations, human resource challenges and an abrupt loss of revenue from the cancellation of fundraising events this spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Imagine Canada, which

works to strengthen Canadian charities through research and advocacy, projected in March that the economic downturn associated with COVID-19 could cost charities in Canada between \$9 billion and \$15 billion in revenue.

Charities generate revenue through auctions, fundraising events and campaigns and galas as well as earned income from service fees and other forms of online and in-person gift-giving. A report published by Imagine Canada in May revealed charities have experienced declines in revenue from all sources, with arts and recreation organizations and charities that rely on earned income hit especially hard.

The organization's di-



Steve Somerville/Torstar

Across Ontario, charitable organizations are struggling as the COVID-19 pandemic cuts off their revenue streams. Here, volunteers load boxes of food, toys and household items for delivery as part of Operation Ramzieh by the Abuse Hurts organization.

rector of research, David Lasby, based the report on the results of a late-April survey of 1,458 heads of charities in Canada. He said trends in Ontario, which has the largest non-profit sector in Canada, mirror what he has seen across the country.

"Fundraising is a very personal endeavour, and there's actually very little of it that doesn't, in some way, at some stage of the process, track back to face-to-face contact," he said. "Physical distancing affects much more than you might think. If you think

this is just about the cancellation of event-based fundraising, actually, it's more than that."

While Ontario's charities have lost revenue in previous economic downturns, like the 2008-09 recession, Lasby said losses were usually limited to a few revenue streams, allowing charities to compensate in other areas. Lasby said the broad losses are unprecedented.

"We're basically in territory almost without precedent in living memory," he said.

LOOKING AHEAD

Of the charities surveyed by Imagine Canada, only 20 per cent believe they will be able to maintain their current level of operations for three to six months.

Bruce MacDonald, president and CEO of Imagine Canada, said there is a risk of a disappearance or reduction of services.

"We live in a society where we have benefitted

from the ability to pick up a phone or go online and connect with an organization and very quickly receive whatever services we need," he said. "I think what's at risk is the future of those being available to Canadians when they want them."

MacDonald said charities, governments and donors all have a part to play:

- * charitable organizations need to come up with innovative ways to fundraise and deliver their services in a world reshaped by the pandemic;

- governments should move to stabilize the non-profit sector through emergency funding; and

- donors need to dig into their pockets to help keep their favourite charities alive.

"We really do need Canadians, where possible, to hang with charities," he said. "If they value those services, and they still have employment and can help a bit more, now is the time to do so."



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As part of the Ontario government's commitment to reduce the health risks from West Nile Virus (WNV) in Halton Region, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) will be conducting a larviciding program to control larval mosquitoes in order to prevent their development into vectors of WNV. Treatments will take place between June and October 2020.

The larvicide methoprene (Altosid Briquettes, **Registration #27694** under the Pest Control Products Act, Canada) will be applied to catch basins, and Bacillus thuringiensis subspecies israelensis (otherwise known as BTi Pellets, **Registration #18158** under the Pest Control Products Act, Canada) will be applied to stormwater management ponds within the MTO's property. All larvicide will be applied by provincially licensed exterminators and their trained technicians.

For more information on the locations and dates of application, please contact MTO at **416-235-5462** (collect calls accepted).