



**United Way
Greater Victoria**

#Unignorable meets Local Love in a Global Crisis

The University of Victoria Retirees Association has, once again, met the challenges faced by so many in our community by helping the United Way of Greater Victoria make a big difference in the lives of over 90,000 people in the Greater Victoria region. This year's campaign raised over \$4.35 million dollars to support 63 agencies addressing needs at the frontline. I want to thank each and every one of our members for their generous donations over the past year. ***Together, we raised nearly \$38,800 in support of our local community for the 2019 campaign.*** Over the last three years, members of the UVRA have raised nearly \$110,000 as part of the University of Victoria workplace campaign – a very significant accomplishment!

Just as this year's campaign was wrapping up, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, confronting vulnerable people in our community with even more challenges. Responding quickly to this new crisis, the United Way of Greater Victoria raised an additional \$1.2 million to support those in our community who have been particularly hard hit by the isolation imposed by the pandemic. A couple of examples:

- 1) Building on a strong foundation of partnerships with like-minded organizations, the United Way quickly responded when Mandy Farmer, CEO of Accent Inns called for help. "United Way has done so much good with their Local Love campaign," said Mandy Farmer. "They literally came to our rescue when people started calling the Accent Inns front desk wanting to pay for part of a hotel stay for a frontline worker. Over a weekend, we forged a partnership that has helped to pay for over 1,200 room nights for frontline workers who needed to self-isolate away from their families. It is a tremendous feeling to be able to tell a nurse who could not afford a hotel bill on top of all their regular bills, that their stay is being covered by the generosity of their community. A lot of tears have been shed around here."
- 2) Funding support for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society has enabled the deployment of a highly trained field team to proactively call seniors in the CRD affected by a blood cancer in order to conduct a reassurance check-in and evaluate the individual's needs. The caller asks whether a person is isolated, needing direct support such as money or food, or is struggling with mental or emotional challenges or stress.

As you will appreciate from your own experiences of the pandemic, the needs in our community in the coming year will be even more significant. And, as is frequently the case when needs increase, there can be a corresponding experience of donor "fatigue."

Can I ask each of you to give some thought over the summer months whether you might be able to set aside a small amount of your own resources to share with your community to meet its growing needs?

I will be back in touch with you in the late summer to provide details on the 2020 United Way campaign – the United Way of Greater Victoria is counting on the generosity of the UVIC Retirees to respond! In the meantime, please do as Dr. Bonnie Henry recommends: be kind, be calm and be safe!

Mary Ellen Purkis, UVRA United Way Campaign Chair