

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## ***IN OUR HEARTS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES TO SHARE FROM THE HEART WHAT WILL GET US THROUGH COVID-19***

### **\$6-million-and-growing fund provides rapid relief & builds long-term resiliency among communities and organizations hit hardest by COVID-19 crisis**

**Vancouver, BC** – Vancouver Foundation today launched *In Our Hearts* to announce the second phase of the **Community Response Fund**, an ongoing support fund founded by the Foundation along with Vancity, United Way Lower Mainland, and the City of Vancouver. - Currently just under \$6-million and growing -it addresses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on BC charities. First launched on March 18 to provide essential support to frontline organizations, the fund is now expanding its scope with a new injection of \$1-million in additional funding from Vancouver Foundation - to offer vital support to the arts and culture sector.

“The first phase of the Community Response Fund has already provided much needed funding to more than 30 frontline organizations severely impacted by this crisis,” said Kevin McCort, CEO of Vancouver Foundation. “But we also know that our community’s strength and vitality is dependent on other pillars like arts and culture organizations who are also devastated by the pandemic. This is why we are launching a second stream of funding for these types of charities who are just as important in uniting us and will play a pivotal role when our community recovers from this crisis.”

The goal of the *Community Response Fund* is to provide a strategic response to this crisis through the rapid deployment of essential relief and services to charities who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and its economic consequences. The coordinated effort is led by four partner organizations from across all sectors who are united to leverage and direct collective and complementary knowledge, expertise, and resources to where it is needed most.

The *In Our Hearts* campaign is inspired by how British Columbians are coming together to protect community by giving and sharing what’s in our hearts. The campaign encourages people to share their support for frontline workers, charities, organizations, and others that are “in their heart” through social media or at home, or donate to the Community Response Fund or a charity of their choice.

Since its launch, the Community Response Fund has provided operating support to [dozens of charities](#) providing on-the-ground support to individuals and communities impacted by COVID-19. The first phase focussed on triage and immediate response; ensuring uninterrupted operation for charitable groups on the frontlines facing significant fallout from the pandemic.

The additional \$1-million injected into the fund today seeks to move beyond immediate reaction, providing charitable groups with resources to build long-term resiliency in anticipation of continued and prolonged disruption. As it does so, it also [opens the program eligibility](#) to include arts, culture, and other community programming that are not considered frontline human services — but who are just as important to the social fabric that ties our community ecosystem together.

The Community Response Fund was established to be adaptive and nimble. The intention is that it will continue to remain responsive to the evolving needs of crisis as it follows the spread of the virus, meets emerging needs, and anticipates what issues might arise next.

Local businesses and business leaders are invited to provide essential community support through [contributions to the program](#). Rize Alliance and lululemon are stepping up as corporate champions. They're joined by Tom Shepansky, founder of Rethink Canada and a champion among individual donors. And The Polygon Gallery, a nonprofit champion in the arts and culture space. Each of these community-minded champions – corporate, individual, and non-profit organization – is challenging others to step up and share what's in their hearts.

The partnership extends its special appreciation to Global BC and Vancouver Sun, who have carried the important message of the fund as its official Media Sponsors.

For more information or to donate to the fund visit [vancouverfoundation.ca/covid19](http://vancouverfoundation.ca/covid19).

For more information about how to participate in the *In Our Hearts* campaign, visit: [vancouverfoundation.ca/whats-new/in-our-hearts](http://vancouverfoundation.ca/whats-new/in-our-hearts)

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**Media Contact:**

Glenn Ewald, Director of Communications  
416-629-7477 or [glenn.ewald@vancouverfoundation.ca](mailto:glenn.ewald@vancouverfoundation.ca)