



MEDIA ALERT

LACK OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER DEATH SENTENCE FOR GTA HOMELESS

TORONTO – JUNE 9, 2020. In addition to the mounting COVID-19 pandemic plaguing those most vulnerable, the lack of clean drinking water is just another nail in the coffin for those living on our city streets. More homeless people die in the summer from the results of extreme heat, including dehydration, than in the winter from the effects of the cold. In Canada’s richest province, over 9,200 people in the GTA alone are homeless. While shelters provide some relief, those in need spend their days outdoors with little to no reprieve. Agencies and shelters working with the cities most vulnerable rely on survival kits and water distributed by Engage and Change annually to help the homeless survive – “some of them walk as much as 15 kilometers each day in search of food, shelter, clothing and other necessities.” While the loss of life among our homeless is an ongoing concern that comprises all demographic characteristics, something as simple as clean drinking water remains a scarce commodity for relief agencies and outreach programs that provide aid to those living in shelters and on our city streets.

In an insurmountable act of compassion, corporate partners Nestlé Waters Canada; The Salvation Army; Fortigo Freight Services; Toronto Police Services; and The Bargains Group will distribute over 400,000 bottles of water and essential items to outreach providers and homeless shelters in an effort to provide life saving resources to the homeless in extreme summer weather conditions: **Monday, June 15, 2020; The Salvation Army, 150 Railside Road, North York; 12 pm PRESS CONFERENCE.**

COVID-19 LIMITS RELIEF EFFORTS

Project Water is an Engage and Change program committed to helping those less fortunate endure the hardships of summer by providing such necessities for the needy as: bottled water, a re-usable water bottle, sunscreen, hat, toiletry and first aid items, etc. Since its inception in 2000, Project Water has placed in excess of 2 million bottles of water into the hands of Toronto and surrounding area homeless. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 mandates, a variant effort to the Engage and Change initiative will allow for the distribution of Nestle Water and a handful of personal hygiene items to agencies that service our homeless via The Salvation Army Railside, Hamilton and Ottawa depots.

Water is the essence of all life and is an invaluable resource to those most vulnerable all year round,” said Jody Steinhauer, founder of *Project Water*. “However, lack of clean drinking water among those less fortunate takes precedent in the warmer months when the risk of death by dehydration increases significantly due to excessive heat and humidity.” It takes a village to save a life. “We are grateful to our community partners in leading the charge in this ongoing endeavor to help save the lives of those living on our streets and in shelters and encourage all in the GTA community to rally for those whose life expectancy is at risk over something we all take for granted – shelter and clean drinking water.” **For more information or to make a donation, visit www.engageandchange.org.**

Media Contact:

Jody Steinhauer, The Bargains Group/Engage and Change, 416-785-5655 or info@engageandchange.ca

Francisca Gambino, francis G communictaions, 416-432-4599 or francis@francisgpr.com