



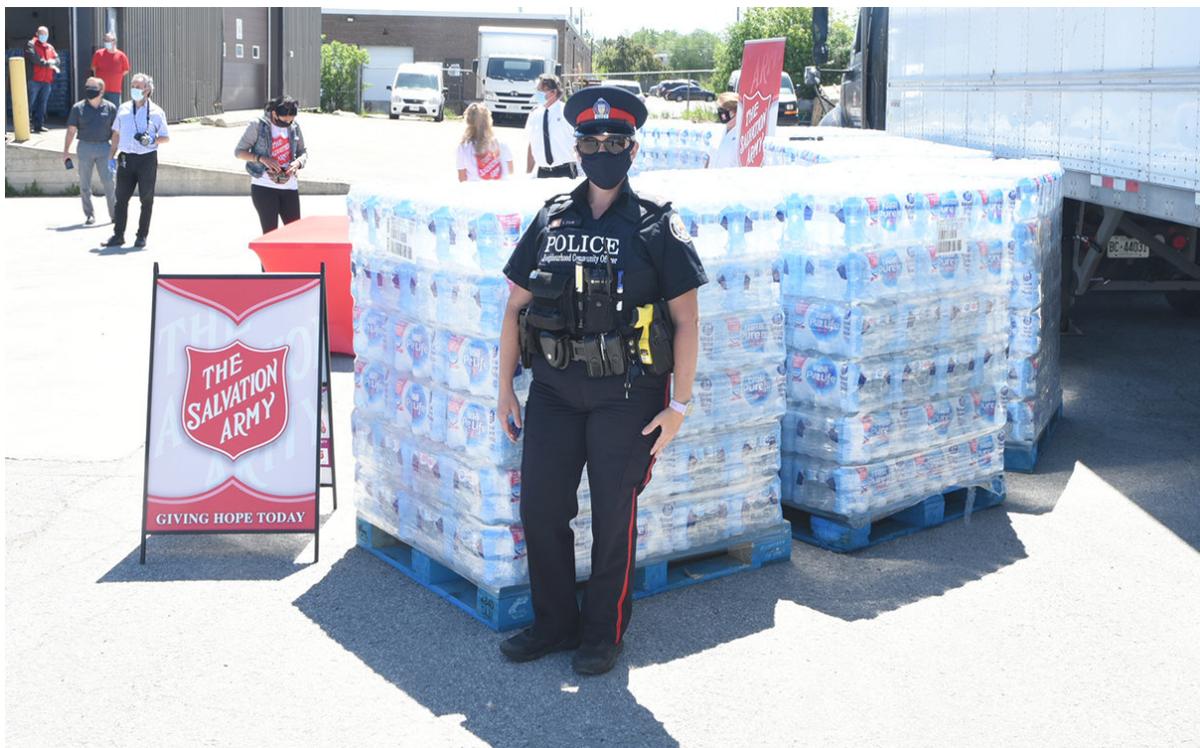
Water Flows to Homeless

By Ron Fanfair, Toronto Police Service

Published: 10:11 a.m. June 17, 2020

Updated: 10:21 a.m. June 17, 2020

The Toronto Police 13 Division Community Response Unit is collaborating with several community partners to distribute nearly 400,000 donated bottles of water to homeless shelters and outreach providers in the province.



Neighbourhood Community Officer Const. Lindsay Cook with donated water

Established 21 years ago, Project Water is an Engage and Change program designed to help those in need endure summer hardships.

“It is a powerful and very important partnership to work with community members like this who are doing so much good, especially in challenging times like this,” said S/Sgt. Roger Desrochers at a news conference at the Salvation Army Rainside Rd. warehouse on June 15.

In previous years, 13 Division CRU officers were on hand to help load trucks for

distribution.

“Because of COVID-19 we aren’t doing that this year,” Desrochers said, of maintaining social distancing practices. “It’s very hard that our members can’t be here en masse. When I had to turn down volunteers who wanted to come here today, it was telling to see the looks on their faces. Obviously, it has been very rewarding for them in the past and we are hoping they can be back next year.”

Neighbourhood Community Officer Const. Lindsay Cook has been involved with the event for the last three years.

“This is a critical program because I come across many homeless people while on my beat in the community,” she said. “I see the need.”

In the next two weeks, the water donated by Nestle Canada will be distributed.

“We are doing this because homeless people are in desperate need of being hydrated,” said Jody Steinhauer, the President of the Bargain’s Group and founder of Engage and Change, noting that homeless people die in the summer due to dehydration.



Staff Sergeant Roger Desrochers speaks about the Project Water initiative

This is the largest donation of water to be distributed through the Salvation Army warehouses in Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa.

“The Salvation Army work with people on the street and when it gets into summer time and it gets extremely hot, we want to make sure that people are hydrated,” said Rob Kerr, the Salvation Army’s Toronto & Eastern Ontario Public Relations Director. “I think this year, more then ever, this is going to be a concern for us. We are worried about people having access to water in a safe manner in this COVID-19 era.

“We don’t want people sharing drinking fountains and some of the places on the street that people may access might be closed. To be able to get water bottles safely to people on the street to keep them hydrated is enormous for us.”

In the last two decades, over three million bottles of water have been distributed through the project.

