



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE DEADLY IMPACT OF COVID ON GTA HOMELESS

TORONTO – January 11 2021 – On any given night, 10,000+ people in the GTA are homeless or experience homelessness. Add to this the aggressive and novel Coronavirus that continues to have disparate affects on the homeless population, and the odds for survival among this indiscernible group favour mortality. With shelters reducing bed capacity to half for social distancing, as well as the closure of a number of drop-in facilities and donation sites, the already insurmountable challenge for outreach and social workers to provide humanitarian relief to those in need is disparaging. In an act of benevolence, community-minded partners *Strashin Developments, The Salvation Army, Fortigo Freight Service, Toronto Police Services 13 Division, and The Bargains Group*, will facilitate the distribution of 3,000 *Winter Survival Kits* during the 22nd annual *Engage and Change's Project Winter Survival* to 184 social service agencies, homeless shelters, and outreach relief agencies for allocation to those most vulnerable across the GTA and surrounding areas: **Saturday, January 16, 2021; 12 pm - 501 Alliance Avenue, Toronto.**

THE PRICE OF SALVATION

"The growing plight of our city's homeless goes from critical to deadly during the volatile winter season," said Jody Steinhauer, President of *The Bargains Group* and *Project Winter Survival* founder. "City cut backs mean increased numbers in need of warmth and shelter are left to fend off the elements as best they can. COVID has further exacerbated the life and death balance for the homeless who often have higher rates of respiratory illness with little to no access to clean water and sanitation outlets. They are at greater risk of contracting the virus with no reprieve." For those less fortunate, a mere \$50 donation per kit to *Project Winter Survival* translates into a lifeline of hope against the threat of death.

Each Winter Survival Kit contains such items as sleeping bags, clothing, and personal and health care items that often make a difference between life and death. Since its inception in 1999, *Project Winter Survival* has assembled and distributed more than 40,000 winter survival kits to GTA and surrounding area homeless. For more information or to make a donation, visit www.engageandchange.org

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MEDIA SCHEDULE: 501 ALLIANCE AVENUE, TORONTO (SIDE LOADING DOCK OFF ROCKCLIFFE DRIVE)
12:00 pm - Press Conference
- Livestream: <https://www.facebook.com/engageandchange>
12:30 pm - Agency Pick-up

MEDIA CONTACT:

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