



# ISOLATED SENIORS

*COVID-19 has hit Greater Victoria Seniors harder than most, but your donations are helping to change lives*

Research has linked social isolation and loneliness to higher risk for a wide range of physical and mental conditions. When COVID-19 hit, many already isolated and vulnerable senior populations were left even more so.

“Our biggest fear with COVID was could we do enough to help those seniors whose lives had been impacted most during this challenging time,” said Tom Arnold, Director of Development for the Eldercare Foundation. “For our long-term care residents, social isolation and lack of physical activity can lead to rapid mental and physical decline, so enabling them to connect with families, and access online exercise programs and entertainment has been critical to keeping them healthy and strong.”

The Eldercare Foundation is dedicated to providing medical equipment and facilities and other related support programs, activities and services for seniors as well as helping to promote healthy living among seniors.

When COVID-19 hit, local long-term care facilities were forced to close to outside visitors to prevent the spread of the virus. This meant that residents were suddenly cut off from family visitations and from group therapy programs that help them maintain their physical strength and mental well-being.

As a result of funding from United Way and the Government of Canada’s New Horizons for Seniors Program, Eldercare was able to purchase cell phones and tablet computers to keep 700 residents at five local long-term care facilities connected with their families through phone chats and video calls, and able to access online entertainment and activities, during the pandemic.

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Greater Victoria

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“COVID-19 could have been a disaster for Greater Victoria’s long-term care residents and their families. Fortunately, thanks to the funding provided through the United Way, we were able to help in some very significant ways,” said Arnold.

Isolation is an #UNIGNORABLE issue United Way is working with local residents to try to reduce. Thanks to the generous donations from community members unleashing their Local Love, United Way is helping to promote a community that is a more inclusive and connected place to live.

For Recreation Therapist Denese Alexander at the Glengarry Long-Term Care Facility, the effects of the United Way funding have been felt in very real ways.

“Currently with COVID-19, one of my main roles has been to assist residents to continue staying connected with their families. I have accommodated these needs through phone calls, virtual visits (facetime, skype, zoom) and window visits. Ensuring the residents are able to maintain connection with their families/friends has a real impact on their well-being and overall mental health,” said Alexander.

Your donations are making an impact on people’s lives all over the Greater Victoria area, and in their wake what is left is gratitude and changed lives.

“From the bottom of my heart, thank you. I am so fortunate to work at Glengarry and see the residents we serve benefit from the services the United Way funds. I get to see the smiles and hear the laughs of the residents who continue to enjoy life while they are engaged in the daily programs and services that are offered. I get to see the relief and the appreciation expressed by family members who feel thankful their loved ones are in a facility where they know they are well cared for and loved.”



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