



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

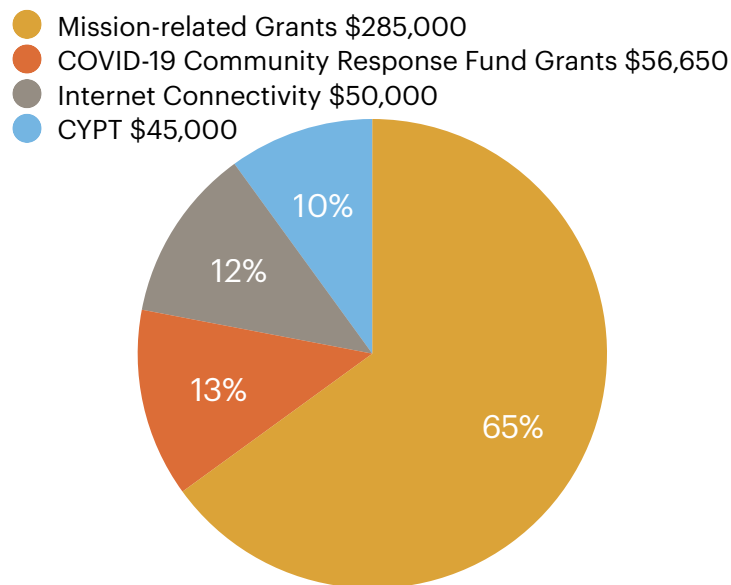
# **2020**

# 2020 IN REVIEW

The pandemic disrupted lives the world over in profound and unexpected ways. People in Waterloo Region and Canada were impacted by fear, mental and physical health challenges, strained relationships, job loss, and the loss of loved ones. Like others, our community was also confronted by the systemic challenges of inequality and racism.

The Foundation responded in 2020 to the challenges of the pandemic by:

- affirming and continuing our mission to support vulnerable youth in Waterloo Region
- collaborating on the COVID-19 Community Response Fund
- joining other funders to fund critically needed access to the internet for marginalized communities
- providing major funding for youth engagement work through the Children and Youth Planning Table



The Astley Family Foundation granted \$436,650 to organizations in Waterloo Region for programming as well as general operating dollars. We continue to listen and learn from our community to address needs locally so we can be a part of creating an inclusive and equitable community here in Waterloo Region.

## SIGNATURE

Jennifer Astley-Kinsey, Executive Director

Robert Astley, Director

Judith Astley, Director

Derek Astley, Director

## SUPPORTING VULNERABLE YOUTH

Early in the pandemic, the Foundation concluded that the best way of supporting vulnerable youth was to provide unrestricted grants to organizations that serve youth. We didn't call for applications, rather we spoke to recent grantees to learn what their needs were due to the pandemic and granted our funds based on those identified needs. The 2020 grants were used in whatever fashion the organization deemed best. Many of the organizations decided to use the funding to continue their youth programming, albeit, virtually.

The Foundation granted \$285,000 to support vulnerable youth in 2020 to the following organizations:



## COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND

As an urgent response to the needs of the not-for-profit social services sector, the COVID-19 Community Response Fund was launched by United Way Waterloo Region Communities. The Astley Family Foundation joined this collaborative effort, along with the Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, Social Venture Partners Waterloo Region, The Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, The Fairmount Foundation, and Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation.

In April 2020 the Response Fund distributed over \$800,000 to 43 charities in response to applications for support. Our contribution was \$56,650.

This funding was provided to charitable organizations working with vulnerable populations across Waterloo Region. It assisted organizations that expressed urgent need to continue providing frontline social services through essential programming, mental health and wellness supports, shelter, as well as health and safety for charitable frontline workers.

This urgent collaborative effort recognized that with the challenges of physical distancing, spiking unemployment rates and increased demand for their services, charities would be busier than ever responding to critical needs in our community, while also facing reduced fundraising opportunities. The seven funders came together, creating one brief application in order to streamline the process, and to determine how best to allocate funds.

This support helped ensure local charities' service continuity and ongoing operations.

## INTERNET ACCESS FOR MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Thanks to the contributions of four local partners – the Astley Family Foundation, the Cowan Foundation, the Fairmount Foundation, and Lyle S. Hallman Foundation – access to the internet for elementary and secondary students through devices like hot spots and high-speed modems, and monthly service fees, were covered from April 2020 through to the end of August 2020.

With the abrupt closure of schools in the Region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) worked to find ways to support e-learning for their students.



As a part of this effort, 4,500 households (1,500 in WRDSB and 3,000 WCDSB) in the Region were identified as requiring financial support in order to provide children and youth with access to technology through devices, primarily Chromebooks, to support their e-learning needs. This grant ensured that students were given devices in order to continue their schooling.

Additionally, approximately 900 students needed internet access (500 in WRDSB and 400 in WCDSB) through cell phones with data plans.

## STRENGTHENING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT (CYPT)

Youth are valuable partners to address and make decisions about issues that affect them personally and our community.



We know that giving youth a voice leads to increased well-being, improved academic performance, broader social networks and enhanced leadership skills. Across the community, youth

engagement improves program effectiveness, promotes innovation, increases community reach and promotes a culture of inclusiveness and diversity.

Therefore, the Astley Family Foundation made a three-year commitment of \$90,000 a year to the Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT) to hire a Youth Engagement Lead to advance the work the CYPT has been leading in the area of meaningful youth engagement in Waterloo Region. The first semi-annual instalment of \$45,000 was paid in 2020. Joana Lincho was hired in 2021 to fill the position.

Part of this role involves researching and testing how to engage marginalized youth and keep them engaged.

There will be four key areas of focus - research/evaluation, communications/capacity building, social planning and project management - and the responsibilities in each key area would be in the area of meaningful child/youth engagement and adult allyship.