



MEDIA RELEASE

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\$141,700 Government Grant Helps Community Rebuild from the Impacts of COVID-19 through Empower the North

Thunder Bay, ON – On Friday, MPP Kevin Holland formally congratulated the team at the Lakehead Social Planning Council on the work it's been doing since receiving a **\$141,700** Resilient Communities Fund grant from the provincial government's Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). The two-year long grant was awarded last March and on Friday, MPP Holland had an opportunity to meet with both the Lakehead Social Planning Council, as well as other local organizations involved with the new Empower the North initiative, including the United Way of Thunder Bay, the City of Thunder Bay, the Thunder Bay Public Library, and Thunder Bay Community Foundation.

"This funding will help to unite a network of community organizations, agencies and service providers in Thunder Bay to aid the city's recovery from the challenges encountered as a result of COVID-19", **said Kevin Holland, MPP for Thunder Bay – Atikokan**. "Together we are leveraging this support to pave the way for a brighter, more resilient future for our community, especially for the vulnerable residents who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic."

The grant is helping a network of community organizations, agencies, and service providers to promote collaboration in helping Thunder Bay recover and rebuild from COVID-19. Funds from the OTF grant are being used to help with two staffing roles to help with the Empower the North initiative. Funds are also being used by the Lakehead Social Planning Council for marketing and communications, assisting with rental costs for meeting spaces, and with some administrative costs as well.

"We are grateful for the funding as it offers an opportunity to report on the impact of the pandemic on all community sectors in Thunder Bay, including their services, staff, volunteers, and clients," **said Marie Klassen, Executive Director at the Lakehead Social Planning Council**. "The data will show service pressures and imminent changes to methods of delivery. The collaborative's objective is to collectively develop a framework that will help shape recovery and particularly on behalf of those who were disproportionately affected by the pandemic."

"Non-profit organizations across Ontario deliver programming that makes a difference," **said Neil Lumsden, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport**. "That's why funding that my ministry is providing through the OTF is so important. Our government wants to ensure that these programs and spaces remain the heart of communities across our province."

The Lakehead Social Planning Council is dedicated to building a better community through strategic alliances, social research and the provision of valid, reliable information. Lakehead Social Planning Council (LSPC), operating since 1963, works towards promoting social justice on behalf of marginalized individuals who may be experiencing disadvantage and inequality. For more information on the Lakehead Social Planning Council, please visit: www.lspc.ca

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The Ontario Trillium Foundation's (OTF) mission is to build healthy and vibrant communities across Ontario. As an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations, last year, OTF invested over \$110M into 1,022 community projects and partnerships. Visit otf.ca to learn more.