

I am happy to report that to date, we have received 4 donations from Ontario councils totalling \$1,200!

In her March 5th communique, Maire Rackley also announced that if the goal for Pieta Bhavan is reached and there are surplus donations, the League would support an additional CNEWA project called "Feeding Support for Catholic Schools in the Adigrat Diocese located in Tigray Region, Ethiopia".

I know that councils are not currently meeting but please be sure to let your diocesan community life chairperson know if your council has already made a donation directly.

COVID – Impact on the Marginalized.

As CWL members, we are acutely aware of the social injustices in our society. We have always been advocates of and champions for the marginalized and vulnerable.

In this regard, COVID has exposed the many inequities that have long existed in our communities. Especially hit are the communities that are socially and economically disadvantaged. Now, Canadian charities, agencies and not-for-profit organizations are busy trying to meet the increased economic need and human support needed brought on by this pandemic.

In the following, I have listed some of the sectors of our society, how they have been impacted by COVID-19.

The Aged and Those in Nursing Homes – Across Ontario nursing homes have been the province's deadliest epicentres for the COVID-19 pandemic. The daily news is filled with details listing the serious gaps and issues in long term care homes. However, this is not the first time that issues in these homes have been reported to the government. Therefore, going forward it is most important that we remain vigilant to ensure that the government remains accountable and follows through on their promises to improve these conditions.

Single Parents – As more restrictions apply, single parents, who are primarily women, may find it especially challenging to navigate thorough these difficult times. As daycares and schools close, many parents have had to stop work in order to care for their children at home and may not have additional monetary, family or community support to get them the supplies they need. Some grocery stores are asking that babies and children not enter the stores which leaves the single moms with limited options. If you know of anyone in your neighbourhood in this position, be sure to check in with them. I am sure that even an opportunity to simply chat with another adult would be a welcome break.

Women and Children Fleeing Violence – For those who experience domestic violence and abuse at home, isolation can be very dangerous. Some shelters have closed, and, in some cases, community support may be out of reach. With the abuser at home full time, it may make fleeing impossible.

For those children being abused and with schools closed, teachers are no longer able to monitor for signs of abuse in the homes. Support agencies claim that reports of abuse have greatly decreased. This is very worrisome, as it is highly unlikely that the child abuse has suddenly stopped. It's important that as a community, when things start to open again, that we keep our eyes open and be aware of such situations.

I also encourage everyone to take the time to check out the website <https://canadianwomen.org/signal-for-help/> . This website contains important information on the signal for help that we should all be aware of. It is a silent signal for help needed.

People in Housing Need – As Canadians face sudden layoffs and fears of an economic recession looms, worries of an increase in poverty become a reality. As poverty increases, homelessness will also rise. For those that are already homeless, following public health guidelines to stay at home becomes impossible. As some shelters have closed and others become more crowded, social distancing and self-isolation is also impossible, for this vulnerable population. This may make some less likely to seek shelter for fear of exposure to the virus.

People Facing Food Insecurities – Some food banks have closed; daycares and schools have closed, and people are without jobs and/or facing decreased incomes. This in turn means more and more people may face food insecurities. For those who are already food insecure, the situation may now be worse and meals and basic food may not be accessible. Search out the food banks still open in your communities. If possible, add a few extra items to your next shopping list and drop them off at your local food bank.

People with Disabilities – This vulnerable sector faces barriers in many forms and in many places daily. Unfortunately, not all communications surrounding COVID-19 have been done in an accessible format and not all services including health and delivery are accessible. Refilling a medication, getting groceries or even fresh air, may not be possible.

With people's daily lives being turned upside down, anxiety and stress will affect all of us. For people with mental health issues, isolations may worsen existing conditions. Unfortunately, many do not have the means or support to help them through these challenging times. If you are aware of those in your community that may be struggling with the above and if you are able, reach out. If you yourself can't assist, put them in contact with someone who can.

Indigenous Peoples – A lack of access to adequate health care, which is already an issue in many Indigenous communities, may make the residents more vulnerable and potentially at greater risk to the virus. In northern, more remote, isolated, and urban Indigenous communities where overcrowding and housing issues already exist, the health risk may be even greater. Let us continue to monitor to ensure that the government follows through on their commitments to assist the Indigenous.

Migrant Workers – Temporary foreign workers are essential to the country's food supply. Yet for some farms, bunkhouses often make it impossible for the workers to comply with social distancing. Labour advocates warn that the living conditions are contributing the virus's spread on farms across the country. In Ontario, the advocacy group *Justice for Migrant Workers*, has identified the housing issues to the premier. Going forward we can monitor how the Ministry of Employment and Social Development Canada responds to these issues.

The above lists just a few of the groups impacted by COVID 19 and certainly in some of the small ways that we can all help. Although we all recognize and are grateful for the efforts our governments have made during these difficult times, we must ensure that going forward as we emerge from this crisis, that legislation, policies, services and programs continue to support the most vulnerable Canadians.

With Prayers and Blessings, Stay safe. Keep well.

Mary Capobianco

Attachment:

Parish Members	Outreach to Community	Initiatives and Projects
Increased Callers List to connect with members who don't or can't attend meetings, shut-ins etc.	Prepared meals for patients who go home after surgery.	LOL Mondays -Ladies Out Luncheon for those in parish that live alone; last Monday of the month elders join other CWL members for Rosary for Peace followed by a luncheon by either going out or having pot luck at parish.
Arranged rides for members to attend meetings.	Drive/ Accompany people to their doctor appointments, treatments etc.	Companions on the Journey - pair elder members of the parish with young families for prayer focus. Young families grow in faith and companionship grows.
Created email distribution lists to keep in touch via email.	Christmas cards sent to the military away from home for the holidays.	3-IN-1 Club - No membership fee required. Only a commitment - each week to call 3 people who you aren't usually already in touch
Bring CWL families together by organizing events; family BBQs, Euchre parties, Bingos, Movie Night.	Made gift bags for Street Mission, cosmetic bags filled with items for local shelters, family help centres,	Masks for COVID - Many parishes have reported that their members have either initiated and/or participated in supplying materials for, sewing, compiling and distributing of masks in their communities.
Hand delivered cards and baked cookies for visits to housebound members.	Organized potluck dinners at retirement homes.	Extensions for Masks - One parish reported an initiative to crochet "extentions" for the masks for their local hospital. The extensions make the masks easier to wear for longer
Made and distributed lap blankets and prayer shawls to shut-ins.	Knitting groups made hats, scarves, mittens for various groups throughout the city.	Food Bank Drive-By / Drop Offs - participation in community food bank drive-by event.
	Knitted groups made items to be sent to Catholic Missions.	
	Used eyeglasses collected for Canadian Food for Children.	
	Picked up elders who needed rides to Mass.	
	Blessing Bags were filled for the homeless shelters.	
	Errands run for the homebound and shut-ins.	
	Prayer shawls and lap blankets brought to Nursing homes as	
	Phone calls to recent widows.	
	Food- drive collections for local Food Banks.	