

## Community groups get boost from the Magna Community Fund

Ten local non-profits got a significant boost last week when they were announced as the 2024 recipients of the Magna Community Fund.

Among this year's recipients are Autism Ontario, Big Brothers Big Sisters Peel York, Blue Door, Clarico Place of York Region Inc., Cornerstone to Recovery, Margaret Bahen Hospice, Rose of Sharon Services for Young Mothers, Shine Through the Rain Foundation, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank, and Women's Support Network of York Region.

The Magna Community Fund was established by the auto parts giant and Neighbourhood Network to continue its support of local charities and non-profits since the company brought the curtain down on the annual Magna Wild West Hoedown, which routinely raised nearly \$500,000 shared between 20 to 30 organizations.

"Magna is proud to invest in programs and organizations that make a difference in people's lives, serve our communities, and help move us forward, for all," said Erin Cerenzia, Magna's Manager of Community Relations, in the announcement. "This year's Magna Community Fund recipients provide critical programs and services to support a wide range of causes, addressing food and housing insecurity, health and mental health services, accessibility initiatives, mentorship, and support for marginalized communities."

Over 6,000 residents of York Region and beyond will benefit from their work this year, said Magna.

Autism Ontario will use its share of the pot to expand a new program, Longo's Cooking Classes, and enhance existing social programs for adults, while Clarico Place will develop an app to "foster safe and inclusive interactions for people with disabilities/exceptionalities."

Blue Door, which provides shelter and housing services across York Region, will see their share of the Magna Community Fund go to the redevelopment of Kevin's Place, a 14-unit townhouse development in Newmarket to support families and individuals transitioning out of homelessness, while Shine Through the Rain will have more resources to "continue responding to urgent needs in the community, supporting families in crisis."

The fund will help mentorship programs as well.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Peel York will use their portion to enhance programs across York Region's northern six communities (Aurora, King, Newmarket, Whitchurch-Stouffville, East Gwillimbury and Georgina), particularly one-on-one mentoring initiatives, as well as their Go Girls and Game On programs. The Women's Support Network of York Region, on the other hand, will expand counselling services and enhance psychoeducational circle programs in response to increasing demand in the community.

As the affordability crisis continues, Rose of Sharon will use their contribution to finance their "Living & Learning Together in the Kitchen" Food Insecurity Program for marginalized families in the area; and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank will be able to support new and existing programs, including a Children's Snacks Initiative, a Period Health program, and an ongoing drive to stock "culturally appropriate food items to support our multicultural community."

Additionally, the fund will help Cornerstone to Recovery further its innovative Wellness Centre programs, while Margaret Bahen will use their dollars to "sustain and enhance the comprehensive care they provide, including operation of Doane House Hospice."

**By Brock Weir**