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November 2nd, 2016

Media Advisory
For Immediate Release

Help Starts Here - United Way and 211 Help Ontario Residents Navigate the Stress of the Winter Season

The winter months can cause both financial and emotional stress, especially for people living on a low income or coping with a change in their circumstances. "The winter season can be challenging for many of us, but it affects those living in poverty disproportionately," says Ron Dowhaniuk, Chief Executive Officer at United Way Cambridge & North Dumfries. He goes on to say, "the same is true for anyone who in a vulnerable situation, whether that is due to mental health issues, loneliness, or even a sudden loss in the family."

United Way is proud to support the 211 helpline, which provides individuals and families with the help they need to brave the winter season. Calling 2-1-1 is the easy way to access financial, emotional, and other supports in Ontario communities this winter, including right here in the Region of Waterloo.

By calling 2-1-1 from anywhere in Ontario, or visiting www.ontario211.ca, residents can access a wide variety of community services. Internet phone users can call 1-877-330-3213 and TTY users can call 1-888-340-1001. Community members can become connected to services as far-ranging as:

- **Community Volunteer Tax Clinics**, offering low-income individuals and families help to file their taxes.
- **Financial support with utility bills**, keeping heat on for families during the cold months of winter.

- **Holiday toy programs**, helping all children experience the joys of the holiday season.
- **Holiday meals and gift baskets** to combat the hunger and isolation that winter and poverty can bring.
- **Out of the Cold programs**, providing hot meals and/or beds to the homeless and hungry.
- **Snow removal** for seniors and people with disabilities.
- **Winter coats and boots for children**, to keep them warm through the cold of winter.
- **Support for the homeless**, including winter clothing, boots, sleeping bags and care kits.
- **Meals on Wheels and transportation assistance** for seniors and those with disabilities, helping them eat enough food through the winter and make it to critical medical appointments in any weather.
- **Friendly visits and calls** for seniors, keeping them connected and providing cheer during the holidays.
- **Recreation opportunities**, providing ways to make friends, get active and reduce isolation.
- **Mental health programs**, including distress lines, crisis programs, support groups and more.

2-1-1 helps to ensure that those living on a limited income and those dealing with challenging circumstances stay connected and healthy during the cold months. Here in Waterloo Region, 211 is delivered through a partnership between United Way Cambridge & North Dumfries, United Way Kitchener Waterloo & Area, the Region of Waterloo, and Ontario 211.

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About Ontario 211:

211 is a three-digit number that helps Ontarians navigate the complex network of human services quickly and easily, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in over 100 languages. Ontario 211 Services is a non-profit agency, established to develop and govern the 211 system in Ontario. 211 is supported by the Province of Ontario and Green Shield Canada, and is a proud partner of United Ways across the province.

About United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries:

Through constant outreach to the local area, United Way is focused on what our community needs most. We know that it is our mandate to

create a better life for everyone. This mandate is extended across our community priorities:

- From Poverty to Possibility
- Strong Communities
- All That Kids Can Be
- Volunteerism

Working in partnership with organizations across all sectors, and with support from thousands of individuals within the community, United Way gives hope, improves lives, and builds our community. To learn more, please visit our website at uwcambbridge.on.ca or call us at 519-621-1030.

For more information:

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