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## Sector News Digest - December 1, 2020

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**This week:** New ideas for corporate community investment, a seat at the cabinet table, Giving Tuesday news and the case for non-profit mergers.

### Wake-up call

A new study by Imagine Canada – [Wake Up Call: Navigating New Pathways for Corporate Community Investment in Canada](#) – outlines 10 trends identified by leaders in the non-profit world that define this period of “cataclysmic change.” The trends, which they label as “social shifts,” include racial justice, partnering for impact, and constant pivoting.

The authors note that while great economic challenges await, there are glimmers of hope. In terms of improving digital infrastructure, COVID-19 has ushered in long-overdue innovations, they write, quoting a [webinar](#) hosted by [Toronto Foundation](#) during which Kwame McKenzie, CEO of the Wellesley Institute, said, “We’ve been able to do things in six weeks that we’ve been trying to do for 12 years in health services.”

### A seat at the cabinet table

[Congratulations are pouring in](#) for [Niki Sharma](#), the former vice-chair of Vancity Credit Union and recently elected Vancouver-Hastings MLA who has just become BC’s first Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development and Non-Profits. [Premier John Horgan announced](#) what the [Vancouver Foundation called](#) the “historic appointment” on November 26 as part of his newly formed cabinet.

In a press release, [Vantage Point noted](#) the importance of Sharma’s appointment, saying it signals that the government “understands the critical contribution this sector makes to the

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wellbeing of people and communities across the province.” Alison Brewin, Vantage Point’s executive director, further [explores what it means](#) for non-profits to have a “home for the sector” in the BC Cabinet, a place to “unleash the potential of our hard work.”

### **Long-term care and second-wave isolation**

With the second wave in full swing and winter on its way, seniors, especially those in long-term care (LTC), face a “retreat into isolation,” according to [a recent article in Maclean’s](#). Laura Tamblyn Watts, CEO of [CanAge](#), fears for their well-being.

[Horror stories](#) about Canada’s LTC system have been making headlines since the beginning of the pandemic. The [National Institute on Ageing](#) (NIA) and [First Policy Response](#) recently hosted a [virtual panel](#) called COVID-19 and the Future of Long-Term Care. Dr. Samir Sinha, director of geriatrics for the Sinai Health and University Health Network in Toronto, highlighted the need for immediate action. Nearly 80% of COVID-19-related deaths have occurred in Canada’s LTC homes, with more than 8,000 dead.

The NIA has launched an easy-to-use and informative [assessment tool](#) to determine whether to visit vulnerable relatives or friends.

### **You get what you pay for on Giving Tuesday**

With Giving Tuesday upon us, a voice from the world of social enterprise offered a trenchant reminder to those making donations today about the whole murky question of how much of those dollars end up paying for operating costs. Arianna Hunter is founder of Before Coffee, a small non-profit that aims to shift the conversation about operating costs. As [she wrote in The Toronto Star](#),

“[I]t may seem logical that if you want to help end homelessness, as much money as possible should go into the pockets of people faced with homelessness. However, the concept of ‘going directly to the cause’ is the most insidious in the industry as it implies that all other costs do not support the cause, and in fact, take away from it.”

Hunter makes the point that well-trained staff in suitable offices with functioning internet access and effective marketing attract the funds that serve the cause, or not. “[Y]ou get what you pay for, and as a result the industry left in charge of solving our greatest social problems is understaffed, overworked, underpaid, outdated and probably working under a leaky ceiling.”

### **The joy of giving in a pandemic**

While the proceeds from this year’s Giving Tuesday fundraising drive have yet to be tallied, results have been pouring in from seasonal efforts by [Endow Manitoba](#) and other Western Canadian community foundations.

Endow Manitoba’s annual giving “challenge,” in which the network of 55 Manitoba community foundations “aim to increase their impact and advance the movement,” was extended from 24 hours to six days in mid-November, with strong results. Organizations such as the [Grandview and District Community Foundation](#) raised more than \$13,000 and [expressed gratitude](#) for the support.

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Other Manitoba organizations are also finding creative ways to light up the dark winter days. [Reston and Area Foundation](#), which is part of the Municipality of Pipestone, will participate in a [Holiday Light Up & Twinkle Tour Scavenger Hunt](#) – a “COVID-19 friendly outing for all!” (Sunrise Credit Union is also a sponsor.) Shelmerdine Garden Centre chose [Headingley Community Foundation](#) as one of five charities in the Winnipeg area to support with the proceeds of its [2020 Giving Tree Ornament fundraiser](#).

On the West Coast, the [Campbell River Community Foundation](#) is hosting [Hug in a Box](#) on December 20, the longest night of the year. The “hug” includes products from local retailers and all the fixings for an accompanying online show. For those not in the mood to cook, the [BC Interior Community Foundation](#) is partnering with Colombo Lodge to [offer take-home dinners](#) in January, featuring the lodge’s famous pasta dish.

Nationally, CharityVillage has introduced a new [crowdfunding platform](#) in time for this year’s Giving Tuesday. The site promises more transparency, a larger reach, improved accessibility, and real-time results. “Organizations are keenly aware that the old ways of fundraising just don’t work anymore,” CharityVillage said.

### **Ontario’s Grinch-like budget**

[Ontario’s 2020 Budget](#) is looking a little Grinch-like, according to [an analysis by the Ontario Nonprofit Network](#) (ONN). While a \$680-million investment in broadband and supports for specific areas of the sector, such as sports and the arts, are welcome, the ONN took a dim view overall: “The bottom line: The Ontario Budget doubles down on health spending and support to business while overlooking the state of crisis facing nonprofits that are crucial to supporting the immediate and long-term needs of communities.”

When it comes to basic survival such as food security, advocates say communities are struggling. “We’ve never seen anything like this before,” Paul Taylor, the executive director of [FoodShare](#), told the [Toronto Star](#). The [Daily Bread Food Bank](#) says that visits are up by 5% over last year. Supermarket chains, meanwhile, reported hefty profits in their most recent quarterly earnings. Loblaw Companies Ltd., for example, posted income of \$342 million, according to the *Star*.

In Alberta, meanwhile, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) is encouraging residents and non-profits to provide [input for the province’s upcoming budget](#). “It’s important for nonprofits to put forward their policy priorities for the 2021 provincial budget and ensure that the nonprofit and charitable sector is not left out,” says the group, which is gathering feedback via [an online survey](#) until December 4.

### **Marriages of convenience**

As pundits [wonder whether the charitable sector will survive the pandemic](#), some organizations are merging to stay afloat. Two Alberta-based charities – [Making Changes](#) and [Dress for Success](#) – see joining forces as an opportunity to “improve efficiencies in program delivery, maximizing the quality and range of services offered and increasing the number of women served,” according to a press release.

[A CharityVillage article](#) by Tina Crouse, CEO of [ANSWER.it](#), highlights examples of other sector

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mergers: “When a merger is perceived not as closure but as continuation, miracles can still happen in the nonprofit sector,” she writes.

## **Goodbye, cheese log**

While the office Christmas party has been the [subject of Hollywood films](#) on more than one occasion, COVID-19 restrictions will prevent many falling-into-the-punch-bowl mishaps this year. CanadaHelps has an idea – [Holiday Party Heroes](#) – about how to put those unspent party dollars to use.

President and CEO Marina Glogovac is urging companies to “create significant community impact and become holiday party heroes for charities.”

There are many potential recipients, but one option includes a drive to help an organization that serves homeless and marginalized youth raise \$4 million to buy arts studios. Faced with skyrocketing rent, the Toronto-based community arts enterprise [SKETCH](#) has launched [Project Home](#) to “secure a legacy space” for programming that, over the past 24 years, has reached more than 13,000 youth.

Another youth-focused organization, the [Ripple Foundation](#), has just received funding from the Excellence in Literacy Foundation (ELF) and the S.M. Blair Family Foundation to “bolster its free creative writing programs to encourage creativity and literacy in youth across Canada.” Ripple pivoted to [virtual writing workshops](#) in April to survive what they describe in their press release as “a tough year.”

## **The cats still meow**

[Humane Society Dawson](#) in Yukon reported a break-in recently. Shelter coordinator Kath Selkirk told the [Klondike Sun](#) that some Facebook puppy posts may have led thieves to think they’d find cash on the premises.

The northern community, well known for its philanthropic spirit, is already rallying to support the shelter, with donations of fundraising items such as artwork and furniture and a free window replacement from a Whitehorse-based contractor. Fortunately, Selkirk told the *Sun*, it was only minus 15 Celsius that night and the shelter’s unadopted kitties survived the cold breeze blowing in through the broken window. The thieves, as the paper noted, “are in the doghouse.”

## **Other news...**

In collaboration with the [Network for the Advancement of Black Communities](#) and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Black Canadian Philanthropic Foundation is hosting town halls on December 3 and 5, in both French and English. For more information, click [here](#).

In consultation with Montreal’s [McConnell Foundation](#), PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) has just released [Navigating Uncertainty: Building Resilience in Canada’s Social Sector](#), the result of a series of interviews, roundtables, and a survey of more than 500 social-sector leaders from across Canada.

In partnership with the [Rural Research Centres Network](#), the [Canadian Rural Revitalization](#)

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[Foundation](#) profiled several rural research centres across the country in its [November newsletter](#), including Newfoundland's [Harris Centre](#), which recently launched an 18-month public dialogue “to create economic and social prosperity while mitigating and adapting to climate change.”

[Recreation Nova Scotia](#) and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association are conducting a survey about gender equity in recreational sport. Staff and volunteers working in recreational facilities are invited to [add their voices](#) until December 7.