
Sector News Digest - January 26, 2021

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This week: record-breaking online giving; the pandemic and economic racism; vaccination for Indigenous communities; and the sector's kudos for the new U.S. president.

Giving it up for 2020

Despite a grim economy and much hardship for many non-profits, online giving turned out to be a bright spot in a tough year. CanadaHelps [reports](#) that Canadians donated more than \$480 million to charities using the organization's platform in 2020, a stunning increase of 116% over 2019. "While 2020 will be remembered as a year filled with enormous challenges, it will also be remembered as a year where we saw incredible amounts of generosity from coast to coast to coast," the organization notes.

More than 1.1 million Canadians, an increase of 95% over 2019, donated through the CanadaHelps platform. Thirty-one "Cause Funds," which included the [Black Solidarity Fund](#) and the [COVID-19 Healthcare & Hospital Fund](#), raised nearly \$7 million.

In an [August 2020 op-ed](#), CanadaHelps CEO Marina Glogovac suggested it was time for those with means to do their part: "There is an incredible opportunity right now for Canadians who are financially stable to step up and contribute to charities," she wrote. Perhaps some of them were listening.

Bern on a wire

["Hope is the thing with feathers"](#) – or, maybe these days, mittens.

Many organizations in Canada's non-profit sector were quick to celebrate Joe Biden's

inauguration last week. The David Suzuki Foundation [applauded Biden's rejoining](#) of the Paris Climate Agreement. [Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta](#) tweeted "[Madame Vice President](#)" above a [photo grid](#) of Kamala Harris's all-male predecessors. The Ontario Black History Society [posted Amanda Gorman reading](#) "The Hill We Climb." [Nature Canada](#) joined the [Bernie Sanders meme craze](#), featuring the mitten-clad Vermont senator surrounded by chickadees in [birdlike repose](#) and, later, "[Bern on a Wire.](#)"

The pandemic and economic racism

A new report by the Broadbent Institute – [Addressing Economic Racism in Canada's Pandemic Response and Recovery](#) – concludes that COVID-19 "doesn't choose its victims on its own"; instead, the very structure of Canadian society is to blame.

According to [Toronto Public Health](#), the report points out, Black and Brown populations comprise 36% of the population yet represent nearly three-quarters of COVID cases. In contrast, White individuals account for half the population but just one-fifth of total cases.

The authors conclude that "resolving the immediate problem of racial inequities in COVID-19 outcomes requires us to rectify the long-term, deeply entrenched issues of systemic racism in Canada – particularly, racism against Black, Brown and Indigenous people."

Indigenous communities and immunization

Elisa Levi, a member of Chippewas of Nawash and a [Yellowhead Institute Research Fellow](#), says Canadian health policy officials should adopt "an equity-based approach to immunization," especially concerning Indigenous communities. In a [recent article on First Policy Response](#), Levi notes that "equity seeks to increase access to immunization services to reduce health inequities without further stigmatization or discrimination."

Levi offers a timely reminder of the history of medical-related traumas endured by First Nations, such as segregated "[Indian hospitals](#)," the testing of tuberculosis vaccines that were withheld from Indigenous patients, and "nutrition experiments" performed by government scientists without consent. "Indigenous people have good reason to distrust government," she says.

The colour of giving

According to a [recent Toronto Star article](#), inequities mar Canada's fundraising landscape. A report commissioned by the Foundation for Black Communities – [Unfunded: Black Communities Overlooked by Canadian Philanthropy](#) – found that between 2017 and 2018, just six of 40 of Canada's leading foundations made grants to organizations with a focus on the Black community. The report adds that 63% of Black community organizations that responded to the survey said they will run out of funding by March 2021.

Some members of the Black community will discuss these issues on February 24, when Ryerson University hosts a series of panel discussions called [Generous Futures: Black Voices Leading](#). The talks will "explore the critical role of Black leadership in the future of charitable giving" and the "importance of investing in Black-led businesses, supporting Black voices in boardrooms, and giving to Black-focused initiatives to [effect] meaningful change."

Other organizations include the Vancouver-based [PuSh International Performing Arts Festival](#), in partnership with the [Pacific Legal Education and Outreach Society](#) (PLEO), which will host an online [Board Table Disruption](#) on February 3 to examine “the archaic ‘one-size fits all’ mode of operating that inhibits social progress, and recognition of marginalized people.”

Back to nature

As more and more Canadians flock to the out-of-doors as respite from lockdown blues, the Nature Conservancy of Canada is [asking visitors to parks and other natural areas to show more respect](#). Wendy Cridland, the NCC’s senior director of conservation in Ontario, noted “an increase in some non-permitted activities on our properties in recent months,” including off-leash dogs, fires, ATV use, and litter.

In other outdoor news, the Lawson Foundation announced phase two of its [Outdoor Play Strategy](#), investing \$4.95 million in eight projects – including \$450,000 to Newfoundland and Labrador’s [Cloudberry Forest School](#) – to benefit early learning and childcare across Canada. While [a host of researchers](#) point to the numerous benefits of outdoor play, the foundation’s report, [Increasing Outdoor Play in Early Learning and Child Care in the Context of COVID-19](#), cites [research by the Government of Canada Public Health Service](#) and the [Hospital for Sick Children](#) advising that getting outside is “a significant COVID-19 mitigation strategy.”

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Canada announced the 110 recipients of its [Go Wild School Grants](#) – twice the number usually awarded – thanks to [Living Planet @ School](#) partner Walmart Canada. Since 2015, WWF Canada has awarded 360 Go Wild grants for a total of nearly \$185,000. Successful applicants include Quebec’s Chapais Secondary School, which will use the funds to create an edible forest, and Manitoba’s [Wapanohk Community School](#), which will set up an outdoor classroom and share medicine wheel teachings.

If you are in the mood for some climate change conversation, tune in February 2 to [Carbon Cache: How Canada’s Natural Landscapes Can Help Fight Climate Change](#) – a panel hosted by *The Narwhal*. The event is part of an eight-part carbon change series funded by the [Metcalf Foundation](#).

The agenda features a discussion about the [federal government’s \\$3.9 billion commitment](#) to implement nature-based solutions and how [Indigenous protected areas](#) are an important part of this equation.

On that theme, [Nature and Carbon: Opportunities and Challenges for Indigenous Leadership](#), the first in a three-part webinar series co-hosted by the [Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership](#) and the [Anishnawbe Business Professional Association](#) will “explore how Indigenous communities could benefit from business opportunities related to land stewardship while reducing climate change impacts.”

A place at the rural (kitchen) table

The University of Guelph will host the [Rural Women’s Studies Association](#)’s 14th Triennial Conference in May. More than 140 scholars from 13 countries will present research based on the theme of [“Kitchen Table Talk to Global Forum,”](#) with a special plenary session addressing how COVID-19 has affected rural women.

In partnership with the [Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation](#), the [Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation](#)'s (CRRF) [virtual fall meeting](#) is entitled Creating Inclusive Economies: Building Bridges Between Public-Private-Civil Society Sectors. Stay tuned for more information.

Each year, the CRRF dedicates its February newsletter to emerging rural researchers and new community initiatives. [Former newsletters](#) have examined brownfield redevelopment and evaluated sustainable governance for non-profit organizations – a topic that has also [piqued The Philanthropist's interest](#). Click [here](#) to submit a profile to the CRRF.

Winter diversions

- Get ready for Black History Month with [a virtual kickoff](#) planned by the [Ontario Black History Society](#) on January 31 and a [Black History Month Art Auction](#), hosted by the Saskatchewan Network for Art Collecting to celebrate Black subjects in artworks by Black artists.
- Until February 17, the Boland Survey is asking for feedback to “help your nonprofit make informed comparisons and predictions on salary and human resource practices.” If you're a registered charity or non-profit organization with employees in Canada, click [here](#).
- David Yiptong of Platform Calgary will lead [Five Things Nonprofits Can Learn from Startup Culture](#) on Thursday, January 28.
- Paul Taylor, executive director of FoodShare Toronto, will speak virtually at the Centre for Social Innovation's [Next Economy Conversation](#) on February 4. He'll discuss food justice and how FoodShare has distributed one million pounds of fresh produce to Torontonians since the pandemic began.
- [Find out](#) if your organization is eligible to apply for a Safe + Stronger grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation. The deadline for applications is February 15.