



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2022 RINGS IN BLEAK FOR GTA HOMELESS

TORONTO – January 7, 2022 – A new year should be a time of celebration and hope for better things to come. Sadly, we welcomed 2022 as a new year of increasing COVID case counts, lock downs, winter weather warnings and impeding restrictions that continue to have disparate effects on the homeless population. On any given night, 10,000+ people in the GTA are homeless or experience homelessness. With shelters reducing bed capacity for social distancing, as well as the closure of a number of drop-in facilities and donation sites, the already insurmountable challenge for outreach and social workers to provide humanitarian relief to those in need is disparaging. In an act of benevolence, community-minded partners *Fortigo Freight Service*, *Toronto Police Services 13 Division*, and *The Bargains Group*, will facilitate the distribution of 3,000 *Winter Survival Kits* during the 23rd annual *Engage and Change's Project Winter Survival* to over 200 social service agencies, homeless shelters, and outreach relief agencies for allocation to those most vulnerable across the GTA and surrounding areas: **Saturday, January 15, 2022; 12 pm – 68 Tycos Drive** (rear of building), **Toronto**.

THE GIFT OF SALVATION

“The growing plight of our city’s homeless goes from critical to deadly during the volatile winter season,” said Jody Steinhauer, President of *The Bargains Group* and *Project Winter Survival* founder. “Ongoing city cutbacks mean increased numbers in need of warmth and shelter are left to fend off the elements as best they can. COVID has further exacerbated the life and death balance for the homeless who often have higher rates of respiratory illness with little to no access to clean water and sanitation outlets. They are at greater risk of contracting the highly transmittable virus with no reprieve.” For those less fortunate, a mere \$70 donation per kit to *Project Winter Survival* translates into a lifeline of hope against the threat of death.

Each Winter Survival Kit contains such items as sleeping bags, clothing, and personal and health care items that often make a difference between life and death. Since its inception in 1999, *Project Winter Survival* has assembled and distributed more than 43,000 winter survival kits to GTA and surrounding area homeless. For more information or to make a donation, visit www.engageandchange.org

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MEDIA SCHEDULE: 68 TYCOS DRIVE, TORONTO (REAR OF BUILDING)
12:00 pm - Press Conference
- Livestream: <https://www.facebook.com/engageandchange>
12:30 pm - Agency Pick-up

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