



“United for BC Wildfire Recovery”

For Immediate Release

July 21, 2017 – NANAIMO, BC - As fires continue to devastate British Columbia, United Ways across BC, including United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island (UWCNVI) are mobilizing efforts through “**United for BC Wildfire Recovery**”, a national initiative preparing for the recovery and rebuilding of communities across the province. Launched earlier this week on July 18th, “**United for BC Wildfire Recovery**” is a campaign to raise funds for important social services to support those who have been badly impacted by the wildfires.

United Ways across Canada learned much from the experience of Alberta United Ways during and after the Fort McMurray fires. This knowledge is guiding the planning and responses of all United Ways in BC including the creation of the “**United for BC Wildfire Recovery**” campaign.

“Our colleagues at United Way Thompson Nicola Cariboo are working with Emergency Operation Centres and the Canadian Red Cross and are accepting donations to support the immediate needs of evacuees,” says Signy Madden, Executive Director of United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island. “Emergency needs are crucial. However, we also know that many people will need additional help once they are past the worst of the emergency and there will be extra pressure on services that United Ways normally fund. The **United for BC Wildfire Recovery** is set up to fund those next level of services to support devastated families and we encourage people to give.”

Donations are urgently needed for basic social needs like finding permanent housing, food assistance, trauma and mental health supports, and rebuilding social infrastructure. Funds raised through this initiative will stay in BC to support the greatest needs of affected communities including if other communities in BC are impacted by fires this season. Donations can be made or you can sign up to volunteer for recovery efforts at www.unitedforbcwildfires.ca.

United Way’s information and referral initiative, bc211.ca, has recently expanded to cover the entire province, including here on the island with live web-chat and enhanced. Bc211 has augmented its services this summer with information on wildfires and latest updates to augment communication channels and support the immediate needs of those in crisis. Bc211 is an online web service that functions as a search platform with thousands of programs and services at just a click away. This free service provides a gateway to community, social, non-clinical health, and government services connecting people to information about basic human needs such as housing, food banks, shelters, services for children, youth and families, mental health and addictions and much more. Bc211 is funded by donor’s dollars to local United Ways like UWCNVI.

United Way inspires people from all walks of life to come together to raise funds, volunteer and spur policy and attitude changes that lead to lasting change in our entire region. We are working to make our communities the best they can be by focusing resources to combat poverty, help children and youth and build strong communities.

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For more information, please contact

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