March 18, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Peter Theisen, CEO, United Way of Whatcom County
Email: ptheisen@unitedwaywhatcom.org
Phone: (360) 733-8670

Whatcom County Philanthropies raising funds to respond to COVID-19

The Chuckanut Health Foundation, United Way of Whatcom County, Lha’q’temish Foundation and the Whatcom Community Foundation are mobilizing philanthropic resources in response to COVID-19.

“While the scope and scale of needs – financial and otherwise – resulting from COVID-19 are still unclear, we know that they will be significant,” said Peter Theisen, CEO of United Way of Whatcom County. “That’s why the local philanthropic community has come together to allocate and raise funds so that the many organizations working tirelessly to serve and support local communities have the resources they need in these extraordinary circumstances.”

Funds will help ensure that people, especially those experiencing racism, homelessness, financial distress, isolation, mental health challenges and other barriers to health and wellness, can get nutritious food, childcare, mental health support, safe housing and many other essentials. Mauri Ingram, CEO of the Whatcom Community Foundation, added, “We are all reimagining our roles – how do we work together and put our collective resources to work in ways that effectively adapt to the current environment. We ask everyone to do whatever they can to chip in because we can all do something meaningful. And we’re optimistic because in general, the people of Whatcom County are generous, neighborly problem solvers.”

“Caring for our most vulnerable – older adults and people with chronic health conditions - and doing what we can as a community to slow the spread of this virus and not overwhelm our hospital system is of utmost importance,” says Heather Flaherty, Executive Director of the Chuckanut Health Foundation. “I am heartened to see Facebook groups like Bellingham Covid-19 Community Helpers and others on the Nextdoor emerge to help with individual needs and we want to do what we can to support those grassroots efforts.”

In addition to giving, the four organizations encourage people be kind to one another (racism, xenophobia and bias only contribute to the problem and cause added harm) and to follow public health guidance by practicing social distancing, handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes with tissues, checking in on neighbors, supporting local businesses, and staying informed through credible sources like the Whatcom County Health Department. To learn more about giving options to aid the local COVID-19 response, go to: Emergency Recovery Fund: COVID-19 at the United Way of Whatcom County

The Resilience Fund at the Whatcom Community Foundation
(A partnership between the Lha’q’temish Foundation and the Whatcom Community Foundation)

Covid-19 Relief and Response Fund at the Chuckanut Health Foundation

You can also find fund links and additional information at www.whatcomcenterforphilanthropy.org.

###