



GIVING TUESDAY: MERIDIAN EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS TOUCH THE LIVES OF 8,000+ ONTARIANS

Toronto, ON (December 1, 2020) – Meridian’s latest giving initiative is providing its branch employees and Members a chance to ‘pay it forward’ to grassroots community projects and local charities of their choice through donation give cards. The cards, available in increments of \$5 and \$10, have a total allocation of \$60,000 from Meridian. So far, Meridian’s initiative, launched on November 9th has touched the lives of more than 8,000 Ontarians.

Meridian employees who received \$5 give cards were asked to share three giving cards of \$10 each with Members who were able to donate to a pre-selected group of community projects delivering a wide range of programs and services in 15 communities across the province, or other charities they chose.

“We all have a role to play, and together, we can contribute in a meaningful way to build healthier communities,” says Wanita Fonseka. “The power of small collective giving is truly uplifting and speaks to the power that every individual has to make things better. This campaign resonates strongly with our commitment to continue working together with communities by giving our Members the opportunity to determine how the funds should be donated since they know what the communities they live, work, and play in need most.”

The 15 community projects pre-designated by Meridian as beneficiaries by the program are all actively supported by employees. They include:

- Broken Spoke Bicycle Program at Port Colborne High School (Port Colborne) – a program to refurbish bicycles to provide enjoyment and transportation for those less fortunate
- Helping Womxn Now (Ottawa) – a 45-minute virtual session to help womxn dealing with the impact of COVID-19 create an action plan for their most pressing concerns
- Chapman House (Owen Sound) – Hospice Heroes help provide compassionate, dignified, patient-centered care to individuals with a progressive life-limiting illness
- Child & Advocacy Youth Centre (Simcoe) – provides children and youth a friendly, safe space to share their story with professionals, reducing trauma and improved mental health
- Autism Home Base (Durham Region) - serving autistic adults and their lifelong family caregivers with art, recreation and social programs
- Covenant House (Toronto) – reduces barriers to housing and offers young people the opportunity to develop life skills and practice their independence
- Juliette’s Place (Toronto) – a refuge for women fleeing domestic violence providing space in the Wellness Room designed specifically for women to reconnect, relax and rebuild
- Shakespeare in the Ruff (Toronto) - a professional outdoor theatre company working on a pandemic-responsive play that will be workshopped with actors this winter
- Lansdowne Children's Centre (Brantford) – offers recreational programs for children with special needs
- Food4Kids (Hamilton) - ensuring that no child goes hungry and supporting kids that are part of the Food4Kids program from elementary school well into high school.
- Children's Foundation of Guelph and Wellington (Guelph) – dropping nutritious food to children's doorsteps through its Food & Friends at Home program
- YWCA of Cambridge (Cambridge) - helping women become work-ready with access to a free pre-employment program
- Parkinson Society of Southwestern Ontario (London) – helping to provide speech language therapy through voice training
- Red Roof Retreat (Niagara Region) – helping to provide a safe and healthy environment for Red Roof’s Animal Care Program which provides programs to children, youth and young adults with special needs
- Pathstone Foundation (St. Catharines) – building and furnishing two outdoor all-season classrooms for children benefitting accessing their mental health services

“We have refurbished 11,200 bicycles who have been given to families and children in need, with at least 50 more that will be given away over the holiday season,” says Aubrey Foley, Program Coordinator for Broken Spoke. “Meridian came on board with our program just about one year ago with the vision that you can make life better for everyone if you share more, be more forgiving and give.”

Meridian partnered with Givesome, a giving platform built around the idea of giving a little and seeing the resulting good, to execute the giving program. Accepting only small donations of \$2, \$5, or \$10, givers donate to tangible community projects currently in the works. Donations are made easily online using a specific, personalized PIN. Authentic video footage of the completed project is sent directly to the giver, where they can see their project fulfilled. Beneficiaries receive 100 per cent of all funds raised.

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