

HELP US HELP

SUMMER/FALL NEWSLETTER 2021



IN THIS ISSUE...

- Christmas Wish Campaign
 - Our People
 - Veterans
 - Children
 - Scholars
 - Exciting News
 - What's Next?
-

THANKS! FROM HELP US HELP

This has been another challenging year for many. Help Us Help is proud to tell you about all of the amazing work our team has been able to accomplish thanks to our generous donors. We are eternally grateful for your support - Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

As the 2021/2022 Holiday Season approaches, we ask for your continued support as we kick-off Help Us Help's Christmas Wish Campaign. Read on to learn more about our upcoming plans and how you can get involved.

help us help u

CHRISTMAS WISH CAMPAIGN

While disappointed that the pandemic continues to prevent us from being able to host an in-person Winter Camp in Ukraine, we are excited to announce *Help Us Help's* Christmas Wish Campaign!

Year after year our *Help Us Help* family has helped make the Christmas wishes of children and veterans in Ukraine come true. We are asking you to join us once again.

This Holiday Season, help us grant the Christmas wishes of Ukraine's children, scholars, and veterans. Continue reading to find out more!

The first 50 people to donate \$150.00 or more will receive a pack of 16 Holiday Cards hand-drawn by Ukraine's children living in residential institutions! Be sure to include your complete mailing address when making your donation.



CHRISTMAS WISH CAMPAIGN

Holiday Card Variety Pack



CHRISTMAS FOR 1500 CHILDREN

With your help, we will grant the wish of a "Winter Camp 2022 Program" for children living in Ukraine's residential institutions.

GOAL: \$8,000



The program consists of two parts:

- 1) "holiday" humanitarian aid delivery that includes warm winter clothing and hygiene products.
- 2) An educational story-book work-book, which focuses on teaching important lessons regarding the COVID-19 pandemic as well as Ukrainian Holiday Traditions in a fun and interactive way. This year, we aim to reach **1500 children** with this program!



VITALIY AND OLENA'S FOSTER HOME

GOAL: \$10,000



Help our former program participants, Vitaliy Gandzha and Olena Zavolokina finish building a home to the standards social services require, so that they can foster orphan children from Ukraine and save them from the same fate that they had growing up in the system.



For more information about *Nashi* visit:

www.nashi.ca

NASHI'S SAFE HOUSE

GOAL: \$15,000

With your help we will be granting NASHI's wish of a transport vehicle and educational materials for vulnerable girls living in the NASHI Safe House. NASHI is a charity based in Saskatchewan that raised funds to build *The Maple Leaf House* in Ukraine - a safe place for at-risk girls in Ukraine to live. The vehicle we hope to gift them is necessary for transporting the girls to places such as school and medical appointments.

VETERANS

GOAL: \$5000



We are granting the wish of a third "Mobile Support Services for Veterans" vehicle! Join us in continuing to support the programs that Veteran Hub offers in helping veterans and their families.

www.veteranhub.com.ua



OUR PEOPLE

Board of Directors

With most members of our Board of Directors returning for the 2021-2022 year, we said farewell to our Treasurer, Gregory Ciupka.



Gregory has been a volunteer with *Help Us Help* since the 1990s, delivering humanitarian aid to orphanages in Ukraine. In 2020, we had the pleasure of welcoming Gregory into the Board of Directors and as our Treasurer, where he played an essential role in our organization. We are so grateful to Gregory for the work and dedication that he has put towards *Help Us Help*, and we wish nothing but the best for him as he moves to British Columbia.

On June 23, 2021, at the 2020 AGM we also welcomed our new Board Member, Tatiana Tonkovich.



At the first board meeting following our AGM Tatiana was elected to serve as the Treasurer for *Help Us Help* in 2021-2022.

We want to wish Tatiana a very big welcome to the *Help Us Help* family. We look forward to working with her as we continue to serve vulnerable populations in Ukraine

Committees

Help Us Help currently has the following committees of the board:

- Investment committee
- Finance committee
- Fundraising committee
- Children and Scholars committee
- Veterans committee

Thank you to our Board Members and volunteers who have graciously agreed to sit on these committees and help us work towards our mission and vision!

Do you have time and expertise to share with us? Would you like to get involved? Consider joining one of our many committees! For more information please contact: executivedirector@helpushelp.charity

OUR PEOPLE

Farewell, Good Luck, and Thank You to Tanya Bednarczyk!

Tanya Bednarczyk has been a part of the *Help Us Help* family since 2009! For over four years Tanya worked as *Help Us Help's* Country Director in Ukraine. She played a vital role coordinating efforts between Canada and Ukraine to ensure successful programming for vulnerable populations in Ukraine. Her passion for helping children, scholars and veterans was evident in every *Help Us Help* endeavour she undertook. She consistently brought laughter and spirit to *Help Us Help* camps, scholars retreats, and "The Return" veterans' retreats. Please join us in congratulating Tanya in the progression of her professional career and in thanking her for her years of dedication to *Help Us Help*!



Welcoming our new Administrative Assistant



We are so excited to announce that Zoriana Jacyla is joining our team as *Help Us Help's* Administrative Assistant! Zoriana is a recent graduate from York University - Glendon Campus specializing in French Studies with a Certificate in Bilingualism in both French and English. Alongside knowing French and English, Zoriana is fluent in Ukrainian and has been speaking it since childhood. She is very active in the Ukrainian community - she danced with Ukraina School of Dance for over 10 years and was the president of the Ukrainian Students' Club at York for her last three years of university. Passionate about Ukrainian culture, Zoriana's goal is to provide the best possible support that she can to vulnerable populations of Ukraine, and is very grateful that *Help Us Help* offers the opportunity to do so. She is very excited to start her journey with *Help Us Help*, and cannot wait to see what the future of *Help Us Help* holds.

OUR PEOPLE

2021 Summer Students

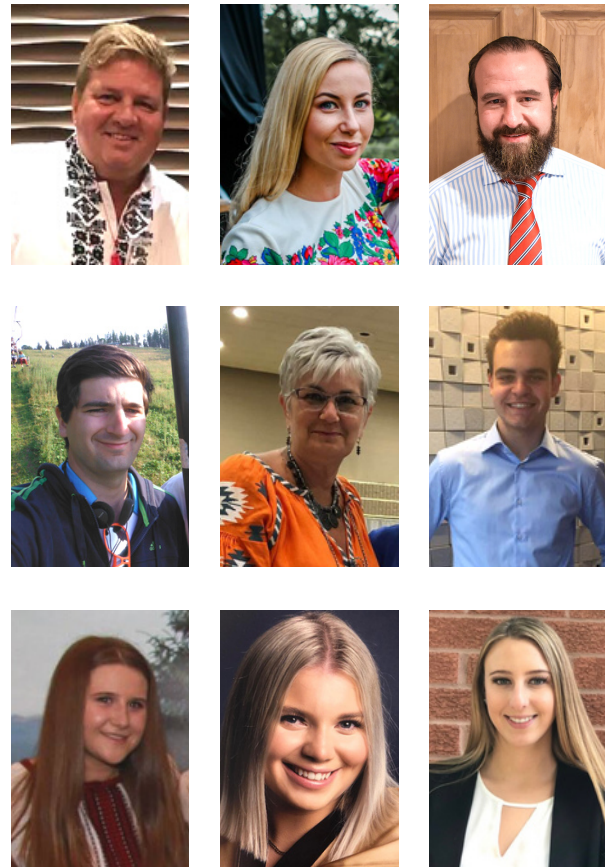


This Summer, *Help Us Help* had the pleasure of hiring three qualified students through the Canada Summer Jobs Program! Over the course of 10 weeks, these students took on various roles and responsibilities that helped establish a foundation for the upcoming year. Darian Sherbluk acted as the Public Relations Officer for the Veteran's Program, Taisa Mysakowec acted as the Project Administration Officer, and Zoriana Jacyla acted as the Administrative Assistant. We also had the opportunity to hire another student for the summer. Mickenna Ward joined the team as a Public Relations Officer. We are extremely grateful for Canada Summer Jobs, and most importantly these talented students for helping us grow the *Help Us Help* family.

Volunteer Awards

Much of *Help Us Help's* work would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our wonderful volunteers. This year, we are happy to have been able to honour some of our amazing volunteers with the Ontario Volunteer Service Award:

- Mark Keller - 25 years
- Anka Wrzesnewskyj-Cottrell - 15 years
- Andrew Potichnyj - 10 years
- Roman Kalyniuk - 10 years
- Danusia Wysochanskyj - 5 years
- Martin Lebed - 5 years
- Alexa Chartchenko - 5 years
- Lilijana Potoczny - Youth
- Taisa Mysakowec - Youth



VETERANS

12-hour Solo Cycle in support of PTSD Awareness



Help Us Help Board Member and Veterans' Program Director, **Andrew Potichnyj**, cycled solo for 12 hours non-stop (7am - 7pm) on Sunday, June 27, 2021! A huge thank you to all of our supporters who helped us raise **\$48,205!** *Help Us Help* is extremely grateful to our top donors, **Dr. Marie Bountrogianni** and **The Ihnatowycz Family Foundation**.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Day is recognized annually on June 27. In the week leading up to his 12-hour cycle on June 27th, Andrew raised funds for *Help Us Help* Programming that supports veterans and other vulnerable populations in Ukraine, many of whom are living with PTSD.

Much of *Help Us Help's* programming is designed to help veterans and members of other vulnerable populations in Ukraine manage symptoms of PTSD and other disorders, and learn how to cope with past trauma. Our mission is to ultimately provide the tools, training and resources to enable them to become fully contributing members of society.

Veterans' Program Research Project

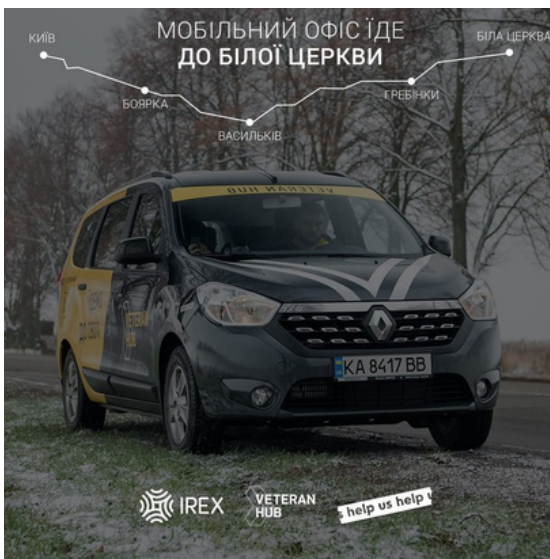
This Summer, *Help Us Help* conducted a research project evaluating the programming that we support through Veteran Hub. The research project consisted of a literature review, evaluating global trends in veteran support, and interviews with veterans and support staff at Veteran Hub. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the programming we support in Ukraine and to identify areas of improvement.

A huge thank you to **Darian Scherbluk**, our Canada Summer Jobs youth who worked on this project throughout the summer, and to Zoriana Jacyla who conducted virtual interviews with the veterans in Ukraine. We are also grateful for our collaboration with Veteran Hub on Veterans' programming as well as this research project. Follow us on social media and sign up for our e-mail newsletters to learn more about the project outcomes!

VETERANS

Third "Mobile Support Services Vehicle"

We are so excited to announce that, thanks to the generosity of our donors, *Help Us Help* is able to work with *Help Us Help UA* to purchase a **third vehicle** to support this program that is carried out in partnership with Veteran Hub and IREX Ukraine. This third vehicle will provide support services in the **Dnipropetrovsk region** of Ukraine. Through our "Christmas Wish Campaign" we will continue supporting all three Mobile Support Programs in all three regions!



Mobile Support Services for Veterans is a program that allows a professional support team, composed of a psychologist, a lawyer, and a case manager, to travel to remote areas in Ukraine. This team provides veterans with psychological, legal, case management, and employment support. The program targets veterans and their families who cannot physically travel or who live in remote areas, and consists of three stages.

- **Stage one:** Assessing the needs and living conditions of the veterans as well as providing them with information about opportunities available through this program
- **Stage two:** Determining how to provide the identified veterans and their families with personalized support
- **Stage three:** 8 months of consistent delivery of personalized support and community building activities.

Andrew Potichnyj, *Help Us Help* Veterans' Committee Chair, will be travelling to Ukraine in the near future to be present when the keys of the third vehicle are handed-off to the Veteran Hub professional support team!



CHILDREN

Second Annual Independent Move-A-Thon

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we replaced our Annual Ruslana's Summer Camp with the 2021 Independent Move-A-Thon.

Over the course of two weeks, teams composed of community members in both Canada and Ukraine participated in a variety of activities to fundraise for *Help Us Help's* programming for vulnerable populations of Ukraine. Along with the individual volunteers, children from the Khoruzhivka Centre located in the Sumy oblast, and children in the Ternopil Residential School both took part in this initiative and participated in a day full of fun activities and sports organized by *Help Us Help* volunteers. This was a wonderful opportunity for children to keep fit, active, and healthy during the pandemic, and was well-received as an alternative to our Summer Camps.

With your support, and the admirable dedication of our volunteers, we raised **\$16,003!** Below is a general breakdown of our participant team's accomplishments:

- Anka's Team - \$10,076
- Veteran's Hub - \$1,605
- Help Us Help UA - \$325
- Team Victoria - \$210
- General Supporters - \$3,787

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed their time and effort in reaching our goal. Although Covid-19 has impacted everyone around the world, we are grateful that we had the opportunity to bring the community together.



CHILDREN

Baby Care Initiative



Many past program participants contact *Help Us Help* when they were starting families to ask for support. As a result, in 2014, *Help Us Help* packaged and mailed gently used baby items donated in Canada to these families-in-need to help curb some of the costs that come with having a child. Requests and demand continued to grow, and, in turn, *Help Us Help* started: *The Baby Care Initiative*.

Help us Help plans to launch a platform where all the families who have received help through the Baby Care Initiative can share insight, ask questions, and recycle their items with other group members. Program participants will be invited to attend seminars throughout the year where they will be able to learn more about the family unit and child care. Parents will have access to a paediatric nurse for check ups and to answer any questions that may arise.

Mariana's Story



"Ваше добре серце, великодушність, чуйність і доброта роблять життя кращим для сотень і тисяч дітей, які вирости в інтернатних закладах України." - Маряна

Mariana Mykhortova was born in 1994 in Zakarpatska oblast in Ukraine. Mariana endured many hardships at a very young age when her father suddenly passed away leaving her mother alone while struggling with addiction. Due to her mother's depression and alcohol abuse, Mariana was removed from her mother's care and placed in Perechynska Residential School.

Mariana met her husband Vasyl while in the orphanage, and once they graduated they decided to start a family of their own. The couple share three beautiful children, Nastia - 7, Bohdan - 5, and Andriy - 1. Mariana has been a part of the *Help Us Help* family since 2007 when she attended her first Winter Camp.

To date, Mariana and her family have received 3 parcels weighing a total of 68kg. The packages included: educational materials, hygiene products, clothing, household items and other humanitarian aid items.



SCHOLARS

Introducing: "We Are Capable"

As part of our Scholars Program, **Kostiantyn (Kostya) Halak** (Director of *Help Us Help UA's* Educational and Social Programs for Persons with Disabilities) has launched an essential program that supports individuals with disability status in Ukraine in their continued education. The purpose of the initiative is to create equitable opportunities for this group of vulnerable people.



In the weeks leading up to the launch, Kostya and the team at *Help Us Help UA* led a seminar titled "*Everyone is Capable*" at various universities across Ukraine to raise awareness about the Scholars Program and the new initiative "**We are Capable**". In total, 10 students have been accepted into the program, and are looking forward to participating in all aspects of it.

Meet *Help Us Help UA's* newest staff member



Kostiantyn Halak was born in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine. Born with a disability, he grew up an orphan in Oleshkiv Residential School. Throughout his formal studies, Kostya majored in Accounting and Auditing, graduating from the University of Economics and Law "KROK" in Kyiv. During this time, he worked as an accountant at the university in the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine. In 2019, he successfully defended his PhD dissertation on "Accounting for the costs of socially oriented activities of economic entities". After completing his PhD, he worked as an assistant rector for social communications at the University of Economics and Law "KROK". We are excited to welcome Kostya to *Help Us Help UA* as Director of Educational and Social Programs for Persons with Disabilities.

SCHOLARS

Our 2021-2022 Scholars

This year, *Help Us Help* and *Help Us Help UA* will have **56 individuals** participating in the Scholars Program. We will be welcoming **28 students** to join the **28 students continuing** the Scholars Program, including project participants of Kostiantyn Halak's new initiative, "**We are Capable**".

Help Us Help is honoured to be able to support so many young Ukrainian students in their professional development and their educational career thanks to our donors. We wish all of our new students a successful school year! Keep an eye out on our website and social media pages to learn more about them.

Kyiv Scholarship Retreat November 6-7, 2021

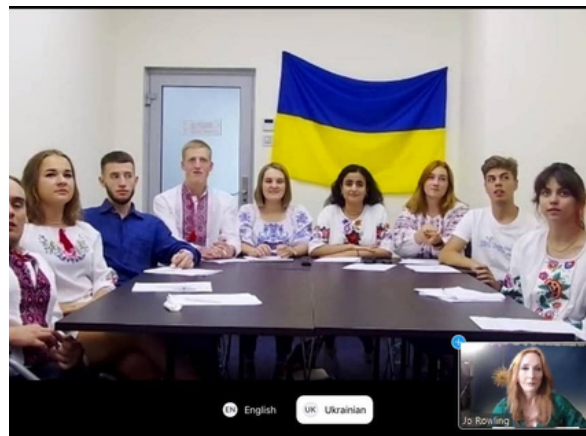


2019 - 2020 Scholar's Retreat

To kick off this year's Scholars Program, the students attended their first retreat in Kyiv, where they participated in workshops, got acquainted with the program and its participants, and went on various tours around the city. This was a great opportunity for past and present scholarship recipients to meet and discuss their experiences with the *Help Us Help* community.

Lumos Conference

Three of our Scholars - Kyrylo Nevdoha, Alina Hiba, and Volodymyr Stepanov - have joined the Lumos Research Committee founded by J.K. Rowling. Recently, they participated in a conference where they spoke about their research on the current state of children growing up within Ukraine's residential institution system. This was an amazing learning opportunity for Scholars, and allowed them to network with various research committees around the world.



SCHOLARS

Mental Health Hub

Mental Health Hub is an initiative created for Scholars that provides monthly group psychology workshops and individual consultations to any current Scholar, alumni or past camp participant. This program teaches Scholars on the importance of mental health and provides the necessary support for individuals. *The Mental Health Hub* is run by two professionally trained psychologists, Tetiana Sirenko and Lyubava Kazmirchuk. We believe that having access to mental health support is important and for that reason all participants have access to individual sessions with Tetiana and Lyubava whenever they need additional support or someone to speak to.

The Mental Health Hub is set to run until the end of 2021.

Donate to our Scholars Program to help us extend this initiative into 2022!



Meetings in Lviv



On Friday, September 17, *Help Us Help UA* and Anka Wrzesnewskij-Cottrell, Senior Program Director of *Help Us Help*, travelled to Lviv to meet with representatives from Lviv City Hall. They were taken on a number of tours and met with various organizations that are interested in possible future collaborations. On the same day, they also visited the Ukrainian Catholic University where Viacheslav Povsha and Kostiantyn Halak led a seminar about our current Scholars Program and the “We are Capable” initiative. To read more about the retreat, visit *Help Us Help UA* website: www.helpushelp.com.ua



EXCITING NEWS

Toronto Ukrainian Festival - First Place Prize

This September, *Help Us Help* participated in the window decorating competition in honour of the 25th Anniversary of the Bloor West Village Toronto Ukrainian Festival! We are excited to announce that we won first place and received a prize of \$500 that will go towards our programming.

We would like to thank Bloor West Village BIA, and JC Salons for offering their window, and our volunteers that came out to help decorate!



Virtual bbCon 2021

Help Us Help's Communications & Development Officer, Kira Antonyshyn, was invited to speak at the Virtual bbCon 2021 Conference in October 2021. Kira had the privilege of speaking about *Help Us Help's* success using Peer-to-Peer Fundraising. Kira spoke about her experience using JustGiving as a fundraising platform for *Help Us Help's* 2020 Independent Move-A-Thon.

A virtual conference slide for Kira Antonyshyn. On the left is a circular portrait of Kira, a woman with long blonde hair, smiling. The background is a gradient of blue and green with geometric shapes. On the right, the text reads: "VIRTUAL bbcon 2021" in white, "The Power of Peer-to-Peer Fundraising" in dark blue, and "KIRA ANTONYSHYN" in white. Below her name, in dark blue, is "Communications and Development Officer, Help Us Help".

VIRTUAL
bbcon 2021

The Power of Peer-to-Peer
Fundraising

KIRA ANTONYSHYN
*Communications and Development Officer,
Help Us Help*

WHAT'S NEXT?

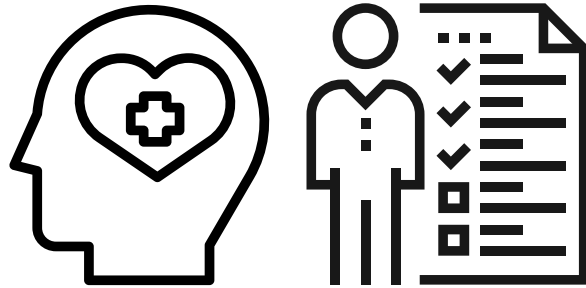
Online Education Portal

We are pleased to announce that *Help Us Help* and *Help Us Help UA* have begun working on a new project titled "Empowering Vulnerable Youth in Ukrainian Residential Institutions and Orphanages Through Online and In-Person Life-Skills Training Programs and Workshops" targeting able-bodied and disabled graduates from the institutional care system.

Ukraine has among the highest number of children living in orphanages/residential institutions in Europe (~100,000) with approximately 12,000 graduating each academic year. Upon leaving the institutions, most lack the skills and resources to transition into safe, independent living.

The institutional care system in Ukraine is not designed to look after parentless and neglected children's best interests and has limited resources to prepare them for the future. Graduates transitioning to independent living do not feel prepared to navigate challenges in life once they are no longer cared for by the state.

The goal of this project is to provide technical assistance to disadvantaged youth in Ukraine to live a financially sustainable and healthy lifestyle.



We will do this through the creation of knowledge products and tools which includes a curriculum that incorporates various workshops that prepare Ukraine's vulnerable youth for a financially independent and productive life in their community and civil society. The curriculum will include 2 courses (*A Life-skills, Health and Wellbeing Course* and *Pre-Adulthood Course*) with various modules that will be developed and made available on an online platform for vulnerable children to access anytime. The project will be implemented across 12 cities in 12 Oblasts across Ukraine.

Although still in the beginning stages, *Help Us Help* and *Help Us Help UA* are excited to announce that we have received funding from Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives, the US Ukraine Foundation and Buduchnist Credit Union, allowing for the implementation of the project to finally begin.

JOIN US!

Become a **Help Us Help Ambassador** by creating an online fundraising campaign!

Creating a birthday fundraiser is a great way to give back to a charity you care about on your special day. It works by choosing to raise money for **Help Us Help** and then asking friends and family members to forgo birthday gifts and donate to your fundraiser instead.

To start a fundraising campaign we recommend using the following platforms:

- **JustGiving** (www.justgiving.com) or the fundraising tool on **Facebook**

Please feel free to contact any **Help Us Help** staff member should you require any assistance with your fundraiser!



WONDERING HOW TO DONATE?

Donate ONLINE RIGHT NOW!

Visit: www.helpushelp.charity/donate

***Consider signing up to be a monthly donor. For \$150/month you could sponsor a Scholars*

SEND CHEQUES TO:

Help Us Help (Memo: *Select project*)
PO BOX 84600 PRO Bloor West,
Toronto, ON.,
M6S 4Z7

Our projects (for memo line):

- **Greatest Need**
- **Children**
- **Veterans**
- **Scholars**

Help Us Help has an office is at the corner of Jane and Bloor!

2445 Bloor St W #201
Toronto, ON M6S 1P7

Our office is currently closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is the generosity of individuals like yourself that allows us to keep working and inspires us to achieve even more in our charitable initiatives. Together we are fighting to ensure a better and brighter future for Ukraine's most vulnerable individuals.

YOUR LASTING LEGACY

Leaving a designated gift in your Will is one of the most special gifts you can give to a charity.

Leaving a legacy gift to **Help Us Help** is a promise to help form an ever-brighter future for Ukrainian children and veterans for generations to come. Call us for more information or visit our website to download your copy of a **Help Us Help Legacy Package**.

We've rebranded as **Help Us Help!**

Memo:
Indicate WHICH project
you are donating to

Donations over \$20 are eligible for a federal tax receipt.



MAILING ADDRESS:

PO BOX 84600 RPO BLOOR WEST
TORONTO, ONTARIO M6S 9Z9

OFFICE: 2445 BLOOR ST W #201
TORONTO, ONTARIO M6S 1P7

PHONE: 1(647) 406-4228

EMAIL: INFO@HELPUSEHELP.CHARITY



@helpushelp.charity



@helpushelp.charity

©2021 HELP US HELP