

September 9, 2022

Dear Friends, Supporters and Donors!

School started this week and it feels like September 1 should be New Year's! I trust that you had time for holiday or recreational opportunities to renew yourself body, soul, mind and strength.

Since my last letter to you in the Spring, a number of things have been happening with LEF in our local communities and in Princeton with the Recovery Team. Here is a synopsis:

1. We sent \$5,000 to the Princeton Recovery Team to coordinate a "weekly summer BBQ program for kids and teens" at the Community Pool and Skate Board setting. The November flood damaged the playground, water fun park and part of the outdoor hockey arena with the Swimming Pool being the popular place for youth this summer. Feeding the youth was a huge success creating a place to gather daily. We were in partnership with Feed the Hungry to make this happen. The Recover Team is going to have a Drop-in Centre for youth at a building that came available for them to use last year, primarily for clothing and food distribution, but now the place for games, socialization and food for after school kids and teens plus weekends. Families are overwhelmed by the plan which will reduce the loneliness and anxiety affecting their youth.
2. This summer saw an explosion of youth going to Summer Camps throughout the province. After 2 years of Covid, camps could now be activated. Camp registrations were full by the end of April in 90% of the camps. We were able to send teens to Chubb Lake Camp north of Quesnel in July plus counsellors and workers. The teens told me this was life changing and a place to make new friends. Thank you for providing the necessary funds, \$2,500, to make this happen. Next year we have to take action much earlier than this year.
3. Young families requiring assistance in providing groceries and back to school items for their children were referred to me. We provided Gift Cards to Walmart, Save On and Super Store to encourage them. This year is a very difficult time for underprivileged families with inflation, employment challenges and transportation struggles. You are helping LEF to take some of the bite out of their lives.
4. For the remainder of 2022 I am in discussion with principals, youth workers and counsellors in the schools to discover I can provide "overcoming life solutions for children and teens" through our various Christmas banquets for youth plus our Teen Mom Christmas event. These haven't happened since 2019.

I am meeting with the Indigenous Leadership in our community to discuss and assess what are the greatest needs among the youth and what do they feel is imminently requiring my input and provisions to begin the healing and encouragement so greatly needed in their communities.

LEF Board's and my primary purpose for the future is to embrace mental health solutions for children and teens. Coming alongside to assist and support families with Autistic youth is in the forefront. Youth suffering with anxiety and panic disorders is our priority in determining the right pathway, provisions and people to bring healing, health and peace.

September to December is where 70% of our expenditures happen. Your financial support is so very much appreciated and needed to empower LEF to achieve its vision, mission and purpose. We are also looking for new friends and donors to journey with us to increase our serve and solutions. Your donations via cheques are always received with gratitude. Donating through our On-Line System in our Website or FB page is growing in usage.

I am looking for volunteers to partner with LEF in our growth and development into new and challenging realms of charitable care. If you are interested in discovering how you can get involved, please contact me. I am specifically looking for professional counsellors, youth and family psychologists and mental health workers. People who have had experience in coming alongside Autistic youth and their families would be greatly valued. Volunteers are valued to assist in our various banquets and special events in the schools throughout the year as well as our Summer Activities and Programs.

Thank you so very much for your generous and faithful support of Life Exchange Foundation and our desire to enable "exchanging the life of pain and loss for the life of health, hope and peace" for the youth in our communities. You are a blessing not only to these but also to our LEF leadership and volunteers equipping us for the best provisions and solutions possible.

Rod Bitterman

Founder and Executive Director; LIFE EXCHANGE FOUNDATION