

MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**Operation Good Grinch Rallies North Shore to Save Lives
of Homeless in Extreme Winter Weather**

WEST VANCOUVER B.C., December 14 2016 — As an Arctic outflow sets its teeth into the Lowermainland, the Dundarave Festival is working with local business leaders in Ambleside and Dundarave Villages, schools and parishes to save lives. The need is urgent, lives are at risk, as data compiled by the BC Coroner shows there has been a 70% increase in the deaths of people living homeless since 2013. Operation Good Grinch challenges a community that has already this season donated over \$30,000 to the Lookout Society's North Shore Shelter to donate new underwear, wool socks and toiletries. The Dundarave Festival is the principal celebration of arts and culture in West Vancouver through the holidays. Since 2008 its Forest of Miracles has raised over \$275,000 for the North Shore Shelter.

The Good Grinch will collect these “comfort gifts” on Saturday December 17th, from Noon at Vancity Ambleside & Hollyburn Pharmacy, 1:30 pm at Westerleigh PARC, 2:30 pm at Delanys Dundarave, and 4:00 - 9:00pm at the Dundarave Festival's Christmas Wassail and Bonfire Night.

“One of the most important things for us to do in Advent is the works of mercy,” said Fr. Gary Franken, pastor of St. Anthony's Parish and Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Vancouver. “Who are we if we don't open our hearts, especially now, to the members of our community who are most in need?”

“It is so important for all of us, business leaders included, to be part of the solution in this extreme weather emergency,” said Robin Delany, owner of Delanys coffee houses. “We can bring comfort and joy to the most vulnerable members of our community.”

“Something as simple as a toothbrush allows us to build a relationship with someone who's homeless,” said Bailey Mumford, Manager of the Lookout Society's North Shelter. “Throughout my career, I've seen how this can result in a permanent exit from life on the street or in the bush.” The Shelter is seeing unprecedented demand for its emergency weather beds, and anticipates having to open its secondary site for the very first time.

“We have to recognize that people who are struggling to find stable housing, or indeed have lost their housing, are still members of our community,” said the Dundarave Festival's Michael Markwick. “We cannot have a sustainable, inclusive and vibrant community without them.”

“We're committed to working together with our community partners to help find solutions that provide access to safe housing and food for all members of our community,” Elisabeth Geller, Vancity Ambleside Branch Manager.

“We're proud of the work the Dundarave Festival is doing to celebrate the true spirit of West Vancouver,” said West Vancouver Mayor Michael Smith. “We should all be grateful for the opportunity the Festival has created to help us end homelessness one person at a time. Everyone should make a donation to support the work of the North Shore Shelter.”

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