



**CONTACT:**

Madeline Ravich

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

(773) 339-3600

mravich@cceh.org

***be homeful for the holidays drive raises \$61,537 to help local families remain housed  
1,000 Paddington™ plush bears “raised” for-children in CT shelters***

**Hartford, CT, January 13, 2020-** The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness is pleased to announce that everybody’s favorite bear, Paddington™, has helped to raise \$61,537 in funds to make it possible for local families to remain housed.

This holiday season, the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness joined forces with CT REALTORS® Foundation and United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut to engage businesses and communities around the state in holding “bear-raiser” drives to help local families remain housed. Thanks to a generous sponsorship from CT REALTORS® Foundation, for every \$25 donated, a Paddington plush bear was gifted to a child in shelter for the holidays. This allowed funds raised to go towards emergency funds to divert families from shelter.

The results were dramatic, with bears raised for every child who spent their holidays in a local shelter. CT REALTORS® led the way for the fifth year running, raising more than \$60,000 through drives held by local REALTOR® associations, member firms and members.

Volunteers from CT REALTORS® held Paddington bear-raiser drives that generated more than \$60,000 and delivered gifts to more than 30 family shelters in every corner of the state. Nearly every child in shelter this holiday season received a bear to snuggle with just before the Christmas holiday.

“This campaign matters more than ever,” said Sandy Maier-Schede, Chair of CT REALTORS® Foundation. “Having a home has never been more important, and we are proud that REALTORS® have stepped up to end homelessness for children in our state.”

“What we are doing is working,” said Dr. Richard Cho, CEO of the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness. “Even with COVID staring us in the face, we are seeing the lowest number of families in shelters in history--- a testament to the impact that the shelter diversion funds raised by CT REALTORS® are making.”

For pictures from this year's holiday campaign, please visit @behomeful at [www.facebook.com/behomeful](http://www.facebook.com/behomeful) and [www.instagram.com/behomeful](http://www.instagram.com/behomeful).

To learn how you can get involved in the *be homeful* project, visit [www.behomeful.org](http://www.behomeful.org).

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*This year's be homeful for the holidays campaign is made possible through the generous support of CT REALTORS® Foundation with additional support from the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut.*

### **About the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness**

CCEH represents more than 100 members – emergency shelter providers, transitional housing providers, community and business leaders, and strategic partners – who share the goal of ending homelessness. In partnership with communities throughout the state, CCEH advances this goal through leadership, community organizing, advocacy, research, and education. In 2015, CCEH launched the *be homeful* project to help stamp out family homelessness for good by ending homelessness one family at a time. In partnership with businesses through the state, through the *be homeful* project, money is raised to increase shelter diversion, allowing struggling families stay in the comfort of their home. According to research, the best way to help people is to keep them out of the shelter in the first place. Remarkably, through this project, it only costs on average \$1000 to help a family at risk of homelessness remain housed.

### **About the *be homeful* project**

CCEH started the *be homeful* project to respond to the lack of funds available to help families at the front door of shelter. The primary goal of this project is to raise emergency funds that case workers assisting clients referred by 2-1-1 can access to assist with one-time expenses that will be the difference between whether a family enters the shelter system or is able to remain housed. CCEH is fortunate to be partnered with the children's book character Paddington, who is helping raise awareness about the impact homelessness has on young children and engage kids, families, and communities in lending a hand to families facing homelessness.

### **About the CT REALTORS® Foundation**

The CT REALTORS® Foundation is a 501c3 charitable corporation whose mission is “To be good neighbors to our members, our communities, and the world. REALTORS® Care.” Its activities include but are not limited to providing scholarships, disaster relief funds, and hunger/homelessness prevention efforts. For more info, visit <http://www.ctrealtors-care.org/>.

### **About United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut**

United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut brings together people and resources committed to the well-being of children and families in our community, where opportunities are available for every child to succeed in school and for every family to achieve financial security. For more information, visit [www.unitedwayinc.org](http://www.unitedwayinc.org).

### **About Paddington**

For over 60 years, British-born writer Michael Bond has delighted children and families all over the world with his stories about Paddington, the bear from Darkest Peru famous for his love of marmalade. Paddington is popular with both children and adults who feel affection and warmth towards him. The kindness and humour in the Paddington stories is the cornerstone to their enduring popularity.

Paddington's adventures have been adapted several times for television and at the end of 2014 Paddington made his debut onto the big screen, a further film Paddington 2 followed in 2017 with a third in the works. The movies were produced by Studiocanal, part of the international content and media group Vivendi. In 2020, a brand-new Paddington TV series designed for a pre-school audience, *The Adventures of Paddington* launched on Nickelodeon, introducing the brand to a whole new set of fans.

You can catch-up with Paddington's many adventures on:

Twitter & Instagram @paddingtonbear

Facebook.com/PaddingtonBear | dailymotion.com/Paddington | YouTube.com/Paddington

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