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Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness launches *be homeful for the holidays 2020*
Heart-warming campaign gives people a way to offer homes and hope amidst the pandemic



Hartford, CT, November 13, 2020 - The search is on for volunteers who want to help make sure that homelessness is a thing of the past this holiday season.

The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness has announced that it will once again be joining forces with the CT REALTORS® Foundation and United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut to engage people throughout Connecticut in holding Paddington “Bear-Raiser” drives to help local families. Paddington™ is CCEH’s official “Spokesbear” for the *be homeful* project, which engages kids, families, and communities in learning about how homelessness affects local children and taking action to help.

From now through December, for every \$25 donated, a cuddly Paddington plush will be gifted to a child in a Connecticut shelter. Thanks to a generous sponsorship from the CT REALTORS® Foundation, funds raised can go directly to provide much-needed emergency “shelter diversion” funds that frontline workers can access to help local families remain housed. Drives can be held virtually using badges that volunteers can download and share on social media.

“It’s amazing to think that this campaign has helped spread holiday cheer to more than 5000 children and give homes to more than 1000 families,” said Sandy Maier Schede, 2020 CT REALTORS® Foundation Chair at the CT REALTORS® Foundation’s annual Board of Director’s meeting, where Connecticut’s real estate community launched its annual association-wide Paddington bear-raiser. “Having a home is more important than ever now, and as REALTORS® we are delighted to be giving people across Connecticut a way to join us in keeping local families safe at home during the pandemic.”

As part of this year's campaign, businesses, congregations, and communities will be able to hold virtual "Paddington bear-raiser" drives to help a local family. For every \$25 raised, a local child in shelter will receive their very own Paddington bear soft toy; for every \$1,000 raised, a local family will be able to avoid the trauma of homelessness altogether. Kids will also be able to join in the holiday spirit, holding virtual Paddington "marmalade coin drives" in honor of Paddington's favorite food.

"The groundwork that the REALTORS® has helped us lay over the years has positioned us to be able to help families remain housed during a time when it is especially dangerous to stay in congregate settings," explained CCEH CEO Dr. Richard Cho. "We are truly grateful to the REALTORS®, United Way, and all the many groups who have helped local families by holding Paddington bear-raisers over the past five years."

"This family-friendly campaign is designed to engage kids of all ages in ending family homelessness," said Madeline Ravich, Development Advisor, who leads the *be homeful* project. "We love working with volunteers who share our passion for making sure that every family has a place to call home."

Kids, families, and communities interested in holding bear-raiser drives can visit behomeful.org to get started. Contact Madeline Ravich at (773) 339-3600 for more information.

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.

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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