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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** – Sept. 26, 2024

## **United Way Peterborough & District presents the 2024 Scholfield Award of Community Distinction**

*Recognizing the outstanding volunteer contributions of Paul Armstrong and the impact of his work in the Peterborough Community*

**PETERBOROUGH, ON (September 26, 2024)** – Since 2004, United Way Peterborough & District has celebrated and recognized outstanding volunteer contributions to the City and County of Peterborough through the annual **Scholfield Award of Community Distinction**. The award was established to recognize an individual or organization who, through their excellent leadership or outstanding contribution has demonstrated the ability to mobilize positive change within our community.

In 2004, Paul and Ina Scholfield were the first recipients of this award. The Scholfield's have been long-time philanthropists and community builders. Through their generosity and commitment, they lead by example, typifying the spirit of community building. Other recipients of this award include Marion Burton, Faith Dickinson, Stephen Kylie, Marie Bongard, Sharon Courts, Paul Lafond, People First, John Martyn, Bill Strode, Roy Brady, Survivors Abreast, John McNutt, Special Olympics Peterborough, Carol's Place, Jim & Katie Stewart and Kathi Curtin Williams.

Today, at their Stewart Street office, United Way Peterborough & District announced the 2024 recipient of the award. The Scholfield Award sub-committee selected **Paul Armstrong** as the recipient of this year's award. Nominees were evaluated based on their achievement, commitment, and leadership in addressing community needs or issues; the impact of their efforts; their innovative, unique or exemplary approach; and their success in mobilizing members of our community. Nancy Fischer, the chair of United Way's Community Impact Committee, introduced Paul Armstrong and his contributions to the community.

Fischer shared her long history working alongside Paul Armstrong during her career with City of Peterborough. Fischer and Armstrong first met in 2002 on a housing committee where he sat on the education subcommittee. From there, the first edition of *Housing is Fundamental* was published in 2005, with the 19<sup>th</sup> edition set to be released by United Way this fall, authored by Paul Armstrong.



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“Paul has tirelessly and tenaciously promoted information about the housing market to make sure it gets out into the community,” reflected Fischer. “For me, it isn’t important to recognize what a person does, but who they are. Paul is tenacious and respectful, showing us how advocates can work together with government for a better Peterborough.”

Paul Armstrong reflected on his work on research and advocacy over the last several decades. “The United Way is near and dear to my heart,” he opened. “Volunteers gain a sense of fulfillment from their work, but it isn’t possible to do this type of work without an avenue for it. United Way has provided me with this avenue and the opportunity to continue to do this work.”

CEO of United Way Peterborough & District Jim Russell said, “I have known Paul for 13 years. First and foremost, Paul is a strong advocate and champion for housing within Peterborough. Most noteworthy is his continued commitment to produce the annual *Housing is Fundamental Report* on the cost and availability of housing in Peterborough. Paul is thoughtful, intelligent, passionate about social justice and is well deserving of recognition and accolades.”

When presented with any challenge, Paul Armstrong diligently and capably problem-solves and fully embraces myriad possibilities. His innate curiosity and wide range of skills enable him to be a valuable social justice advocate. It has been said that “Actions speak louder than words”. Paul has consistently demonstrated, throughout his life, that communication, research skills, listening to all perspectives and sharing ideas are crucial to move forward for positive change. Paul’s tireless involvement (2002-present) for the betterment of Peterborough and County includes...

- Joined Affordable Housing Action Committee (AHAC) in 2002, a committee of the City and County of Peterborough
- Chaired the Community Education Sub-Committee of AHAC
- Researched, authored and produced the annual public report, “Housing Is Fundamental” from 2005-present (“Housing Is Fundamental” is an annual report to Peterborough City and County communities bringing awareness of severe, ongoing housing deficits within our community)
- After AHAC dissolved in 2017, continued to produce “Housing Is Fundamental” for the United Way of Peterborough and District
- “Housing Is Fundamental” has been referenced in numerous other reports including academic research
- Responded to many media requests and appeared on Global television
- Numerous presentations to City Council and County Council and other entities beyond Peterborough



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- Accepted many invitations to speak at community agencies and other community organizations
- Advocated for renter households, spending excessive proportions of household income on housing costs
- Advocated and secured rent supplements over many years
- Advocated on behalf of the homeless and marginalized for supportive housing
- Worked with other community agencies including Community Counselling and Resource Centre (CCRC), Peterborough Public Health, United Way
- Currently a member of the Community Advisory Board of United Way
- Researched living costs and assisted in producing numerous “Living Wage” documents for the United Way in conjunction with the Ontario Living Wage Network
- Advocate and committee member for Basic Income Peterborough Network
- ALL work related to housing affordability awareness and poverty reduction continues to be voluntary

The award presentation ended with reflection on the housing market over the previous years. Paul Armstrong described how the housing situation “a barometer for what is going on in our society.” Updated findings about our local housing market will be described in the 19<sup>th</sup> edition of *Housing is Fundamental*, which is set to be released this fall.

### **About United Way Peterborough & District**

United Way Peterborough & District works with individuals, organizations, and key partners to build and strengthen our community bringing people and resources together to facilitate change. Our vision is a future where people are self-sufficient in a community where individuals live with hope, dignity, and a sense of belonging.

Stay up to date by following our social media channels – [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#), or visit [www.uwpeterborough.ca](http://www.uwpeterborough.ca).

### **About Housing is Fundamental**

This research report series frames housing as fundamental to wellbeing. Its integration into all other areas of life prompts an examination of the interplay between housing and income, nutrition, health and the capacity to participate in the marketplace. The role of housing market dynamics in poverty and marginalization are examined by author Paul Armstrong. Threaded throughout these documents are implied calls for change.



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To view United Way Peterborough & Districts archive of Housing is Fundamental reports, please visit: <https://www.uwpeterborough.ca/our-research/>

A new Housing is Fundamental report will be released in fall 2024.

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