

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Three local Northumberland organizations partner for knowledge exchange visit to Guatemala on gender violence prevention and response.

Cobourg, ON [June 04 2018] – Horizons of Friendship (Horizons), a non-profit international development organization with charitable status, has partnered with **Cornerstone Family Violence Prevention Centre (Cornerstone)** and the **Cobourg Police Service (CPS)** to lead a 10-day knowledge exchange to Guatemala, where strategies to prevent and respond to gender violence will be shared between the Canadian agencies, Guatemalan institutions and Indigenous Maya community leaders.

The exchange will be carried out as part of Horizons and its Guatemalan partner **PIES's** (the **Association for Health Promotion, Research and Education**) multi-million dollar project to enhance maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) for thousands of Indigenous Maya women, children and families in the province of Totonicapán, Guatemala.

The project, under a co-share funding agreement between the **Government of Canada** and Horizons, includes initiatives to help end gender-based violence with the support of and in close collaboration with Guatemalan Ministry of Health programming. Workshops with predominantly male Indigenous Maya K'iche' community leaders on eliminating violence against women, as well as training for formal health staff on responding to gender violence, are tackling an issue that has lasting effects on maternal and child health. Canadian exchange participants will be invited to observe project initiatives such as these and share their organization's expertise in preventing and responding to gender violence.

"Gender violence can lead to obstetric complications and low birth-weight babies," says Patricia Rebolledo, Horizons' Executive Director. "The exchange will allow Canadians from our local community to learn from their Guatemalan counterparts, and in sharing their own experience, impact gender violence and maternal and child health at a global level," adds Rebolledo.

"Participating in this knowledge exchange is very important to Cornerstone. If we want to help end domestic and gender based violence locally, we need to start looking at it from a global scale and working collectively to make this an issue of the past for all women, children and youth, no matter where they live," says Cornerstone Executive Director Nancy Johnston.

"We are excited to have the opportunity to learn from the Guatemalan partners about their experience with gender based violence and its impacts on maternal, newborn and child health, and share with them the Canadian experience and the issue with some historical perspective of what the journey has looked like for us as a nation and for Cornerstone as an agency," adds Johnston.

"This initiative will provide Cobourg Police Service an opportunity to participate in an international police exchange between police members and non-government organizations in Guatemala," says Chief Kai Liu, Cobourg Police Service.

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About Horizons of Friendship

Horizons of Friendship is a Canadian International development organization with charitable status founded in 1973, based in Cobourg, Ontario and built on one abiding principle: helping people help themselves. Working directly with grassroots partners, we empower local people to address needs in their communities and make social and economic change happen in a big scale.

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“In late 2016, the Cobourg Police Service was one of the first Canadian police services to implement the ‘Philadelphia Model’ as a best practice response to gender violence. This invitation to participate recognizes the strong community partnerships our members have developed. I fully embrace this unique two-way learning opportunity for our Service and project partners,” adds Chief Liu.

Horizons will share an in-depth presentation about the exchange and specific details about the itinerary at Cornerstone’s Annual General Meeting on **Tuesday, June 19th at 6:30pm at the Cobourg Public Library.**

To request more information, please contact:

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