



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Algoma Community Foundation hires Founding Executive Director**

*New hire will be responsible for delivering new grantmaking programs across region*

**ALGOMA:** The **Algoma Community Foundation (ACF)**'s Board of Directors has announced that they have hired local non-profit professional Robin Sutherland as their Founding Executive Director.

Sutherland, who was raised on Chub Lake north of Thessalon, has held previous roles in the non-profit sector including Founding Artistic Director of Thinking Rock Community Arts, based in Thessalon, as well as General Manager of the ANCY (Arts Network for Children and Youth) and Manager of Marketing and Community Outreach for LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests) in Toronto. She has a Masters degree in Health, Community and Development from the London School of Economics and a BA in Arts Management from the University of Toronto, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Social Innovation from the University of Waterloo.

"We are thrilled that we have been able to recruit a local professional who brings such a breadth of experience in the non-profit and community organizing sectors for this role," says ACF Board Co-Chair Jessica Bolduc. "Robin's leadership abilities have been proven through her 12-year career that has seen her hold founder, executive and management positions with local, regional and national organizations in a variety of sectors. We are confident that she has the skills and experience necessary to build and strengthen this new local foundation from the ground up."

The Algoma Community Foundation is a new non-profit organization serving the urban, rural, remote and First Nation communities of Algoma District, whose creation was spearheaded by a coalition of caring citizens, with support from Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) and Green Shield Canada (GSC), starting in 2019, and is now governed by an eight-person Board of Directors. The organization is currently working toward obtaining its charitable registration status.

ACF is part of a national network of Community Foundations. Community Foundations in Canada are registered public charities that contribute to local initiatives by convening community actors around issues of local importance, capacity building, grant making, information gathering and sharing. Their work is supported primarily through donations and proceeds of an endowment. Until the ACF was created, Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma District was the largest area in Canada not served by a community foundation.

Community Foundations of Canada and GSC have played pivotal roles in getting the organization established. CFC has provided guidance, advice, training and professional development opportunities as well as connections to a national network of community

foundations to learn from. GSC has provided startup funding to the ACF to support critical health programs. As part of its commitment to social impact, GSC partners with community foundations across Canada to fund programs that improve access to mental and oral health care. The initiative resulted from a partnership with Hamilton Community Foundation to create a new model of corporate philanthropy that draws on the unique knowledge of local community foundations. ACF will be working with GSC to develop a local granting initiative around these issues in the near future.

“I couldn’t be more honoured to be taking on this role in helping this vital organization get off the ground and do the important work of serving the Algoma District.” says Robin Sutherland, Executive Director. “There are so many incredible nonprofits and charities working hard in areas like mental health, food security, anti-racism, the environment, and arts and culture across Algoma. I’ve been lucky to connect with many of them over the years through my previous roles, and I look forward to listening deeply to what is happening in the community and ensuring the foundation’s work is responding to those needs.”

The Algoma Community Foundation has already been partnering with other local and national groups to support these needs in response to the Covid-19 crisis. Since March 2020 they have distributed over \$300,000 to local charities serving equity-seeking groups who have been hit hardest by the pandemic.

This funding came from donations raised at the April 2020 “Come Together Sault” virtual concert fundraiser - held in partnership with SooToday and the Sault Area Hospital Foundation with additional funding from GSC - as well as two rounds of funding from the Government of Canada through the Emergency Community Support Fund, which was also administered locally by the United Way of Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma District.

Through these initiatives the Algoma Community Foundation has been able to provide financial support to 28 charities across the area that are doing incredible work in the areas of mental health, addictions and substance abuse, seniors programming, Indigenous culture-based wellness, food security, 2SLGBTQ+ supports, disability supports, newcomer services, and more.

More information about the Algoma Community Foundation - including updates on new granting initiatives - can be found on their website at [www.algomacommunityfoundation.ca](http://www.algomacommunityfoundation.ca). For specific inquiries Robin Sutherland, Founding Executive Director, can be reached by email at [robin@algomacf.com](mailto:robin@algomacf.com).

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**About Algoma Community Foundation:** The Algoma Community Foundation (ACF) aims to practice innovative philanthropy based in careful thought, strategic investment, social justice and relevant giving. We believe that a responsible stewardship of our environmental, social, cultural and economic diversity will create lasting change and loving relations for generations to come.

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