

# TED ARNOTT, MPP WELLINGTON-HALTON HILLS

## Keeping in Touch – Update 2021



Dear Friends in Wellington-Halton Hills,

Like so many of you, when I reflect back on the year 2020, there is much I want to forget.

We have all been impacted by COVID-19. On every continent, in every country, every governmental authority has been challenged to respond: to keep their citizens safe, keep their health care systems from being overwhelmed, and keep their economies functioning. No one has had all the answers. No one has been able to predict what will happen next.

Here at home, the pandemic upended our lives in ways we could have never imagined. As it drags on in the bitter cold of winter, we are tired of the restrictions, the upheaval, and the uncertainty. We just want it to be over.

But in many respects, we are truly all in this together. We all have anxious moments. We all wonder what the future will bring. We all have felt the cruel sting of social isolation. And, we all have longed for the day when we can visit and embrace family and friends again.

This hard winter will soon turn to spring. And just as we know spring will come, we know the end of the pandemic will someday come. We know not when, but we know that things will gradually begin to return to normal. The resilience, compassion, patience, courage, and gratitude that have brought us thus far will multiply as we rebuild our communities. We will build a province that is better, fairer, and stronger; the Ontario we have always envisioned.

The development of safe and effective vaccines is the most important scientific achievement of our time, and represents light at the end of the tunnel. While the rollout will seem slow, the vaccines will be manufactured and distributed as fast as humanly possible. The people who need vaccines the most will receive them first, as it should be.

In the meantime, the advice of our public health officials continues to ring as a clarion call. Heeding the rules will bring the pandemic to an end sooner.

- Stay home as much as possible-If you can't stay home, wear a mask and give others 2 metres of space
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly
- Get a test if you need one
- Download the COVID-19 Alert app on your phone

As always, my staff and I are here to help any way we can on matters involving the Provincial Government. We continue to seek to ensure your voice is heard at Queen's Park. Please feel free to contact us when you need us.

Let us make 2021 a year we will always remember, not for shattered dreams, but for renewed hopes.

Keep well, stay safe, and take care.

Sincerely,

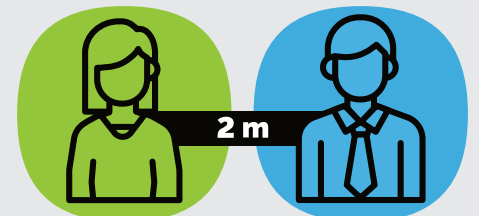
**Ted Arnott, MPP**  
Wellington-Halton Hills



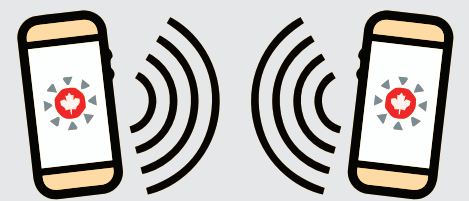
**Wash hands frequently.**



**Please wear a mask.**



**Practise physical distancing.**



**Download COVID Alert to be notified if you may have been exposed to the virus.**

## Contact Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott



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## WELLINGTON–HALTONHILLS CARES

We have all come together to overcome the challenges presented by COVID-19, and we are fortunate to have so many great organizations in Wellington–Halton Hills that have continued to provide assistance to those in need. Here is some insight into what these organizations do and how some of them have managed in 2020 and beyond.



**BIG ASSIST** – More than ever, in 2020 our communities came together to raise funds for local organizations. Although our usual charity events have had to adapt to meet public health guidelines, events like the McGinn Brothers Big Assist have continued to find fun ways to fundraise.

### RISING TO THE CHALLENGE—EAST WELLINGTON COMMUNITY SERVICES

The pandemic introduced unimaginable scenarios that have left many wondering where to turn in times of need. With its history of responding to community needs since 1984, East Wellington Community Services (EWCS) is proving its resiliency.

EWCS' small, passionate team continues to provide quality services with some modifications. EWCS operates two food banks, transportation services, seniors' programs, a Youth Centre, outreach for those at risk of homelessness, or mental health and addiction issues... Simply put, they are a key support for the vulnerable, no matter their age, within our community.

COVID-19 has brought about funding challenges. Fundraising events were shut down and there was uncertainty about how program funding would be affected. But during these challenging times our community came together. It gave EWCS the energy to keep going and the ability to meet the needs of the ever increasing demands on their services. Without the generosity of individuals, local businesses, schools, churches, service groups, government programs and more, providing these services would not have been possible. COVID-19 may be our biggest challenge but with the support of this caring community, EWCS is rising to the challenge.

### ADAPTING IN THE FACE OF CHANGE—LINKS2CARE

In the face of ongoing risks and challenges presented by the pandemic, Links2Care continues to identify evolving needs and develop innovative ways to help our community members live their lives safely and comfortably at home.

To maintain vital social connection, Links2Care transformed the Seniors Friendly Visiting Program, offering people of all ages information, referrals and a caring mental health check-in through regular Phone Assurance calls.

To alleviate rising financial struggles, Community Support assists with income, housing, utility and mental health supports. Links2Care has hot and frozen meals, fresh and packaged food, toiletries, and other basic needs available at their offices, no questions asked. And thanks to an incredible outpouring of donations, this past holiday season was made more joyous for 400 children, seniors, and adults through the annual Holiday Giving gift bag distribution.

For seniors, the congregate dining program in local residences shifted to meet COVID-19 guidelines and individual Pop-up Meals from local restaurants were delivered along with crafts lovingly offered by EarlyON participants.

For the many people who are in isolation, have young children, are too vulnerable to get out on their own safely, and have no one else to assist them, Link2Care also created a Shop & Drop Service which delivers their list of grocery and pharmacy items right to their homes.

### WORKING TOGETHER—CENTRE WELLINGTON FOOD BANK

“What is it that makes the Centre Wellington Food Bank such a highly supported and respected entity within the community?” Their response: dignity, justice and hope. Families and individuals are able to shop on their own and choose the foods they feel reflect their needs and wants, and the market space is designed to be similar to a regular food market.

A wide variety of homemade soups, stews and cooked meals are prepared fresh in the commercial grade kitchen, a first-of-its-kind facility that has been used to provide workshops for other food groups interested in moving their operations towards Centre Wellington Food Bank (CWFB)'s kitchen model.

CWFB is also a major pioneer in sustainability through food rescue and recovery by collecting foods that don't sell, foods in damaged packaging and foods close to expiry for use in the market and kitchen. From the local Walmart store over 4,500 lbs of food per week is recovered and CWFB has the support of many different local food vendors, big and small, such as Little Caesars, Fergus A&W, FreshCo, Dar's, Fraberts, and Zehrs. The latest partner has also created a wonderful treat for shoppers: CWFB collects all the surplus ready-to-eat chicken from Guelph KFC outlets!

All this could never have been achieved without the solid support of the community.

### RECIPE FOR SUCCESS—GEORGETOWN BREAD BASKET

Food insecurity during a pandemic... imagine yourself in that situation. The amazing volunteers at the Georgetown Bread Basket (GBB) helped remove this burden for food insecure households. For various reasons, many volunteers were unable to come in during COVID-19. To keep up with the 17% increase in demand, GBB developed an online training program to recruit new volunteers. Many new and veteran volunteers also put in longer hours. Operations were completely reimaged with social distancing, increased cleaning requirements and occupancy limits in place.

With all the challenges came amazing ingenuity. Community members held driveway food drives. Businesses donated food and developed creative ways to raise funds and awareness for GBB. Volunteers came up with new ways of distributing food.

GBB distributed 310,783 pounds of food in 2020! That's an astonishing 35% increase over 2019. Challenges were also abundant. Sorting, storing and distributing this much food requires bags, boxes, space and time, all commodities which were in short supply. The volunteers made it all happen.

Success is completely dependent on the compassion and generosity of volunteers, the community and local businesses. Thankfully it's been outstanding!



Georgetown Bread Basket is entirely volunteer run. Though they now wear masks, volunteers are still happy to serve the community!



## STAYING FOCUSED-COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

The Community Resource Centre has been serving families and individuals in Wellington County for over 30 years. They have always strived for a community where everyone has a chance to succeed and over the years their programs have changed to meet community needs.

Currently the Community Resource Centre has 3 program areas each having specific services that are offered to families and individuals: The Outreach and Support program, licensed child care programs, and Early ON.

When the pandemic hit, the focus of their staff on the families and individuals did not falter. Everyone searched for different ways to serve as well as seeking out new needs for our community and adapting in many ways including:

- EarlyON moved all of its programming on line for children and offered support for families through phone calls, video chats and emails rather than in-person programming
- Outreach paused its Transportation program with volunteers but partnered with the County of Wellington to make use of the Ride Well Program to get people to and from essential appointments
- Child Care reopened as soon as possible to offer support to families while following all public health guidelines

All of this was possible thanks to the dedicated volunteers and staff at the Community Resource Centre and their continuing support of our community.



"Losing the means to manage your own transportation can have a devastating impact. You make a daily difference in the lives of those who need you so desperately."- EWCS Transportation Client

## COLLABORATION IS KEY-GEORGETOWN HOSPITAL

When times are challenging, the real heroes show up. COVID-19 has changed a lot of things. From buying groceries to getting a haircut and going to school - everything is different. Those who work in our healthcare system have worked through a year like no other, and for those of us who rely on our local hospital, we discovered the new meaning of hero.

We know that COVID-19 is especially dangerous for older adults, particularly those living in congregate settings. As part of a provincial strategy, Ontario's hospitals were asked to provide assistance to long-term care homes challenged by COVID-19. Under the leadership of Cindy McDonnell, Chief Operating Officer at Georgetown Hospital, Halton Healthcare has been instrumental in supporting several long term care homes during the pandemic. On-site testing, resident assessments and infection control education were just some of the supports offered. Halton Healthcare was also able to redeploy hospital staff into these homes to assist with comprehensive support plans for residents including physiotherapy that was so desperately needed following extended times of inactivity. When needed, the team was also able to facilitate admissions to Georgetown Hospital from these facilities to provide appropriate care to meet their medical needs.

The pandemic created the absolute need for the entire health system to work together as one. Halton Healthcare's collaborative and innovative response to the call for support is an exemplary example of what can be accomplished when we all work together.

We are forever grateful and humbled by the heroes among us.

## A CARING COMMUNITY-SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army has been ministering to the community of Georgetown/Halton Hills since 1992. From its beginnings, as well as being a church, it has offered support in many ways to families in need.

This past year has been a challenging one for everybody and the Salvation Army in Georgetown/Halton Hills has continued to try to help those in need.

In November and December approximately 100 families registered for Christmas Assistance. With a skeleton crew of staff and volunteers a drive through toy/food distribution event was organized. This was well received and families were very appreciative during these COVID-19 days.

Although funding created the greatest challenge, with COVID-19 restrictions limiting fundraising and suspending the annual Christmas Kettle Campaign, several community partners and individuals reached out in extraordinary ways to attempt to help with the expected shortfall in funding.

The Salvation Army continues to be very grateful to our generous community for their on-going financial support as they attempt to maintain the ability to help families in need to the degree they have been able to assist in the past.



Support from the community is essential to the success of programs like the Salvation Army's Christmas Assist.

## HEALTHCARE HEROES-GROVES MEMORIAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

January 25 marked the 1-year anniversary of Ontario's first COVID-19 patient. Staff and physicians of the new Groves Memorial Community Hospital have been working around the clock and have adapted quickly to the rapidly changing and uncertain circumstances. To say they are remarkable does not begin to cover the outstanding care, compassion and work they are providing to our community residents.

All our Wellington Health Care Alliance (WHCA) hospitals have remained open throughout this time, offering 24/7 emergency, surgical, and obstetrical care. In addition, they've opened several COVID-19 Assessment Centres in Fergus, Mount Forest, Palmerston and Harriston to provide testing. The health system response has been a true collaboration between hospital, primary, and community care providers.

In January, Caressant Care Arthur asked WHCA to temporarily take over their long-term care home in Arthur, which has been dealing with a major COVID-19 outbreak since mid-December. WHCA staff and physicians stepped up to the challenge and are working with Public Health and Ministry of Long Term Care to stop the COVID-19 outbreak, ensure all care needs of residents are being met, and stabilize staffing.

Everyone has a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Together, let's keep our communities safe.



Julaine Pletch, RN, Groves Memorial Community Hospital, provides a safety check on a colleague's PPE - picture provided by Greg Fess Photography.



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**ALL SMILES** –Ted joins Sabrina at Tim Hortons in Georgetown to decorate Smile Cookies. Over \$15,000 was raised for the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Halton. Thank you to Jodi and Jim Di Natale for the invitation and efforts to raise funds for our community!

## HAVE YOUR SAY!

Over the years that I have served in the Ontario Legislature, some of the best ideas for improvements in government policy have come from people like you. As we continue to use technology to keep in touch during COVID-19, I have made a survey available on my website for you to share your ideas at:

**[www.tedarnottmpp.com](http://www.tedarnottmpp.com)**

I hope you will take a moment to respond to this questionnaire. I can assure you I will read every response I receive, and it is my intention to bring a summary of the responses to the attention of the Premier and relevant Cabinet Ministers.

–Ted Arnott, MPP



## WELLINGTON–HALTON HILLS

A few years ago, an independent Electoral Boundaries Commission recommended new federal riding boundaries for the distribution of seats in the House of Commons in Ottawa. As a result of this process, the Province of Ontario received an additional 15 seats in time for the 2015 federal election. Ontario now has 121 Members of Parliament in the House of Commons, and following the June 2018 provincial election, the Ontario Legislature now has 124 seats. While the provincial riding boundaries in northern Ontario may be different than the federal boundaries, in southern Ontario the provincial riding boundaries are identical to their federal counterparts.

The riding of Wellington–Halton Hills is composed of the municipalities of:

- The Township of Centre Wellington (including Fergus, Elora and Belwood)
- The Town of Erin (including Erin and Hillsburgh)
- The Township of Guelph/Eramosa (including Rockwood and Eden Mills)
- The Town of Halton Hills (including Georgetown and Acton)
- The Township of Puslinch (including Aberfoyle and Morriston)



**JUST PEACHY** –Ted and Lisa took advantage of the beautiful fall weather to visit the Georgetown Farmers' Market, chat with local residents, and buy some fresh Ontario produce.



**LEST WE FORGET** – The Legislative Building is seen behind newly expanded Veteran's Memorial, which was unveiled on Remembrance Day 2020. The memorial recognizes the sacrifices of Canadians in war and peace from the mid-19th century to the present day. One of the new additions to the Memorial is a stone from an Inukshuk erected by Canadian Soldiers at the Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.



**FROM THE ARCHIVES** – MPPs Dave Levac and Ted Arnott congratulate Beverley Billingsley at the Guelph–Wellington Volunteer Service Awards in 2002. MPP Levac retired in 2018 as the longest serving Speaker in the history of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.