

## Toronto Star invests in Investigative Journalism Bureau's collaborative reporting model

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**TORONTO, Ontario (October 15, 2021)** –The Toronto Star is furthering its commitment to powerful collaborative journalism through a \$100,000 contribution supporting the Investigative Journalism Bureau (IJB), a pioneering non-profit newsroom based at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

The IJB, which launched last fall in partnership with the Dalla Lana School's journalism programs – the Fellowship in Global Journalism and the Certificate in Health Impact – brings together professional and student journalists, academics, researchers and media organizations to tell deeply reported stories in the public interest.

The Toronto Star, Canada's largest daily newspaper, was the founding media partner of the IJB, which was conceived by Star investigative journalist Robert Cribb.

To date, nearly 20 IJB investigative pieces, including a ground-breaking inaugural series that received national journalism award citations in Canada and the U.S., have been published in the Toronto Star.

This donation will bolster and expand the IJB's innovative research and reporting model and extends Torstar's historic commitment to high-impact investigative journalism in Canada.

"Strong, public service investigative journalism has helped reveal and tell the most crucial stories of our time, while being increasingly under threat by the financial challenges of the industry," said Jordan Bitove, Publisher of the Toronto Star. "The Star's support of IJB's ambitious mix of journalism mentors and students, as well as academic and legal expertise, is a commitment to the importance of relevant investigative journalism today, and the development of top investigative journalists of the future."

The IJB's first project — <u>Generation Distress</u> — delves into the youth mental health crisis across North America in a series of print, video and audio stories. The series shed new light on a public health crisis having profound impacts on a generation of young people using thousands of documents, a continent-wide public opinion survey and detailed interviews with more than 200 young people, family members, educators, academics and health experts across Canada and the U.S.

It was the largest ever cross-border journalism investigation in Canada, involving more than 80 senior reporters, editors, academics, researchers, designers and students from the Toronto Star and 10 universities across the continent including the City University of New York, Temple University, the University of Missouri, Syracuse University, Stanford University, the University of British Columbia, Ryerson University, Carleton University, the University of King's College and the University of Toronto.

The series received strong reaction from academics, clinicians and the public and was <u>a finalist for the prestigious</u> <u>CJF Jackman Award for Excellence in Journalism</u>. Other stories in the project published by student reporters from the City University of New York won the U.S.-based Investigative Reporters and Editors' student award this year.

The Toronto Star and IJB have collaborated on several investigations over the past year, including a deep dive into increasingly deadly street drugs driving Canada's opioid crisis, an investigation that published new evidence of elevated levels of cancer-causing radon gas in Canadian homes and a data-driven analysis of lead levels in drinking water at Ontario schools and daycares that pose serious ongoing risks to young, vulnerable minds and bodies.

"The unique collaborative investigations model we have developed through years of experimentation has the power to gather powerful new information and tell deep stories while training the next generation of investigative reporters," said Cribb.

"The Star's vital role in this work is helping us bring together sharp thinkers focused on matters of vital public importance to produce compelling work that opens minds, advances understanding of complex issues and pushes for public policy reform."

The IJB/Star partnership is proving innovative in other ways.

The IJB/Star worked with the University of Toronto's law school to create a media law course led by Cribb, Star media lawyer Emma Carver and distinguished Canadian media lawyer Iris Fischer, which started in September 2021. A feature of the course will allow students to take part in future real-world IJB investigations.

"The IJB is a core part in the kind of journalism innovation that we're doing at the Dalla Lana School," says Robert Steiner, Assistant Professor at Dalla Lana and Director of the Dalla Lana Fellowship in Global Journalism. "We're teaching journalism disciplines to people with advanced knowledge of complex subjects, so that they can shape the public discussion more effectively than they could by just writing opinion pieces."

## **About the Toronto Star:**

The Toronto Star, founded in 1892, is read in print and online (thestar.com) by 5.0 million readers every week. The Toronto Star is a part of the Torstar Group's Daily News Brands, which includes The Hamilton Spectator, Waterloo Region Record, St. Catharines Standard, Niagara Falls Review, Peterborough Examiner as well as Toronto.com and The Kit, a fashion and beauty publication.

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