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*For Immediate Release:*

## **Fighting Hunger by Putting Engineering Skills to the Test** 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Spaghetti Bridge Event Raises \$10,000 for Harvest Manitoba

During Provincial Engineering and Geoscience Week (PEGW) in March each year, volunteers from Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba can usually be found doing outreach work with local students, both through children's activities and the annual Spaghetti Bridge Competition, which attracted over 1000 participants in 2020. With the pandemic restricting in-person events this year, the Association made the difficult decision to cancel what would have been its 26<sup>th</sup> annual Spaghetti Bridge Competition this March.

Upon receiving the news, several teachers reached out to the Association looking for an alternative for what has become an exciting part of their curriculum. No stranger to virtual events, Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba pivoted to an online school-friendly format and four professional engineers volunteered their time to test trusses made from spaghetti and white glue by students ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 8.

In previous years, EngGeoMB staff and volunteers would spend a week hosting bridge breaking events at schools and Kildonan Place where hundreds of trusses would be challenged to hold the strongest load. This year, 192 trusses from 11 different schools were delivered to the office one week before the event so they could undergo their own quarantine period and participants were invited to watch the live event online on March 26.

To add competition to this year's event, teams from each of the 18 classes participating were vying to win the prize for being the best in their class. For the second year in a row, the overall top spot was awarded to a team from Dr. F.W.L. Hamilton School. Special congratulations go out to the Grade 4 team whose truss bore 140.7 kg of weight before breaking!

Students are not the only ones who benefit from the competition. The Association has donated thousands of dollars to Harvest Manitoba, previously Winnipeg Harvest, to offset the loss of edible spaghetti – a total of \$207,353 between 2010 and 2020. Because of Harvest Manitoba's buying power with other suppliers, this financial donation translates to tens of thousands of pounds of food feeding hundreds of families in Manitoba over the last decade. "We are so pleased to be the charity of choice for the annual Spaghetti Bridge Competition," said Keren Taylor-Hughes, CEO of Harvest Manitoba. "This year's fundraising event raised the equivalent of 3,817 lbs of food, which the Harvest Community Food Network will provide to thousands of students just like these to build a bridge to a healthier future."

"We were glad to be able to offer this opportunity to students and teachers again this year despite current restrictions," said Grant Koropatnick, P.Eng., FEC, Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba's CEO & Registrar. "Students used simple building materials, their imagination, and applied their classroom learning to build trusses that held a total load of **4,476.6 kg**. This translates into a donation to Harvest Manitoba of \$10,000 from EngGeoMB which will provide 2,985 spaghetti meals. We've had such a great response from our first virtual event that we're looking at adding a virtual event in 2022 while hopefully returning to in-person events at schools."

*The Spaghetti Bridge Competition was part of a series of events to celebrate Provincial Engineering and Geoscience Week (PEGW). The celebration is part of National Engineering Month, which takes place across Canada throughout March each year. PEGW also promotes careers in engineering and geoscience to young people of all ages.*

*Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba is a public organization charged with the governance and regulation of the practice of professional engineering and professional geoscience in Manitoba.*

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