

MEDIA RELEASE

August 25, 2015

Mayor, volunteers pack over a thousand backpacks for kids!

Earlier today, the staff of *the Caring and Sharing Exchange*, along with Mayor Jim Watson and kind volunteers including Bell and Giant Tiger employees, representatives from the Fund for a New Generation and community volunteers packed hundreds of backpacks for children in need all across Ottawa. This year's event was generously hosted by Westgate Shopping Centre.

The Sharing in Student Success program has been providing grade appropriate stuffed backpacks to thousands of children in our community for five years. For the last two years, this program has helped every child in need of assistance. Last year, this amounted to 1,519 children!

This program receives donations from individual donors, foundations, and businesses including Bell, CAA North & East Ontario, the Fund for a New Generation, Giant Tiger, Innovapost, Staples (Carling Avenue), and Telus. The contributions from these sources have ensured that more than 1,400 children will receive a backpack this week, but there are still children waiting to be helped.

"We have been very fortunate to gain support for this program from both individuals in our community as well as many businesses, said Cindy Smith, Executive Director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange. "Despite the incredible generosity of these groups, we still need the community's help to provide assistance to the nearly 200 children currently on our waiting list."

With September only days away, the Caring and Sharing Exchange is looking to the Ottawa community to help them eliminate their waiting list for the third year in a row!

"While this program is only five years old, this year is actually the hundredth anniversary of our organization as a whole," said Smith. "We are truly hoping to make this a year full of successes across both of our assistance programs, and we hope that Ottawa will help us achieve this goal!"

Help bridge the gap!

If you are interested in donating to the Caring and Sharing Exchange, visit CaringandSharing.ca or call the office at 613-226-6434 for more information on how you can help. If you would prefer to donate supplies, visit the website for a complete list of the most needed items, as well as a list of library drop-off locations.

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The Caring and Sharing Exchange, also the home of the century old Christmas Exchange Program, helps families in need during both the Christmas and back-to-school seasons. Its Coordination Service verifies names of clients registered by hundreds local agencies in order to eliminate duplicate applications and redistribute funds accordingly to help more families.

For further information, contact:

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