



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

URGENT APPEAL

Over 3,200 Ottawa students are in need of back-to-school assistance!

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Ottawa, ON –

Believe it or not, students are about to return to school! Since 2011, [The Caring and Sharing Exchange](#) has provided thousands of children in need with backpacks filled with school supplies through their [Sharing in Student Success program \(SISS\)](#), and this year is no exception. Shopping for school supplies is a luxury that many families cannot afford. This program aims to relieve parents of this financial burden, providing their children with the tools to succeed in their education on an equal footing with their peers.

There are 3,204 children who have requested back-to-school assistance from the Caring and Sharing Exchange, and the organization is 80% of the way to providing for each student on their list. They are reaching out to the Ottawa community to ask for immediate support so that they can send every student on their list back to school equipped to succeed.

“For families in need, shopping for school supplies is something they just cannot afford, especially with the current dramatic increased cost of living,” said Cindy Smith, Executive Director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange. “Compared to the past three school years, which were plagued by the effects of COVID-19, this year has the potential to resemble the normalcy of pre-covid times. We want to give the children of these families something to look forward to as they begin a more normalized school year. A new backpack full of supplies may not seem like much, but to a child who would otherwise go without, it makes all the difference!”

Through their relationship with retail partners, the Caring and Sharing Exchange spends one-third of the retail cost of a backpack complete with school supplies, which means they are able to triple donation dollars to their SISS program. The Exchange also improves the efficiency of back-to-school and Christmas assistance city-wide through their innovative Coordination Service, which has saved the community almost \$500,000 over the last five years.

“We save the community money every year through our Coordination Service, which helps us eliminate hundreds of duplicate applications for back-to-school assistance,” Cindy explained. “We work with agencies and organizations across Ottawa that offer similar support, reinvesting duplicate dollars to help the next child on our list.”

For those wishing to support the program, donations can be made online at www.CaringandSharing.ca. If you have school supplies to donate, please contact the Exchange directly at referrals@carinandsharing.ca. For more information on the organization’s most-needed items and where to donate, please visit their website: www.caringandsharing.ca.

ABOUT THE CARING AND SHARING EXCHANGE

The Caring and Sharing Exchange serves Ottawa families facing economic hardship through their holiday and back-to-school assistance programs. Through their unique Coordination Service, the Exchange works with hundreds of its local agency partners to cross-reference clients and eliminate duplicate applications for assistance. Funds saved by eliminating these duplicate applications are then redistributed into their programs, to serve even more people. 22,413 individuals living in Ottawa accessed their programs in 2021.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
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