



Christmas Exchange Program prepares for its 100th holiday season

This is a very big year for the Caring and Sharing Exchange as they celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Christmas Exchange Program!

As they mark this important milestone,



the staff of the Exchange have high hopes for this year's program.

"This is a very exciting time for us," said Cindy Smith, Executive Director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange. "We are honoured to be marking such a momentous occasion in our organization's history and we hope Ottawa will help us celebrate by helping make this year's campaign a huge success!"

Each year, the Christmas Exchange Program

receives requests for assistance from approximately 20,000 individuals in need. Last year, this program ensured that 12,446 individuals were able to enjoy a festive meal with their loved ones, but unfortunately there was still a sizeable waiting list come Christmas Day.

This year, Smith and the staff of the Exchange are more hopeful than ever that the waiting list will be completely eliminated.

"For our 100th anniversary, we could ask for no greater gift than to meet the ever-growing need in its entirety, but we need the community's help to do it." said Smith.

Donations to the Exchange can be made at www.CaringandSharing.ca or by phone at 613-226-6434.

Just some of the hundreds of hampers that were packed and delivered on the annual Hamper Packing Day, December 19, 2014.

Another incredible year for the Sharing in Student Success program!

Just a few short weeks before the school year began, the Exchange was faced with a daunting waiting list for the Sharing in Student Success program.

"At one point, we had more than 500 children on the waiting list," recalls Smith. "We have been down to the wire in past years, but I was fearful we were not going to make it to our goal in time this year."

Fortunately, the Ottawa community heard the call for donations.

"The response we received to our urgent appeal was incredible," said Smith. "Within just a few days, our waiting list was more than cut in half, and by the time school began we were able to help all of the 1,578 children

on our list."

Each child received a backpack stuffed with grade appropriate school supplies, ensuring they could begin the school year on an equal playing field with their peers and ready to learn. This is the third year in a row that every child on the list has received a backpack.

"We are very proud of how successful this program has become in the course of the five years since we took it on," said Smith. "This is such an important program for our community and we are thrilled to be able to help these children succeed in the classroom."

This year's success was made possible through the support of many organizations including Bell, CAA North & East Ontario, the Fund for a New

Generation, Giant Tiger, Innovapost, Ottawa Community Housing Foundation, Ottawa Public Library, Nutrilawn, Staples (Carling Ave), Westgate, and Telus, in addition to many generous individual donors.



Mayor Jim Watson poses with two young volunteers at the annual Backpack Stuffing Day in August, 2015.

HOPE Volleyball and the Ottawa Police Gala support 2016 SISS program

The Caring and Sharing Exchange is very honoured to have been one of the chosen recipients for the 2015 HOPE Volleyball Summerfest as well as the 2015 Ottawa Police Gala.

The 2015 HOPE Volleyball Summerfest was a huge success, with a turnout of more than 10,000 players. This annual event began 34 years ago and has grown into the world's largest one day

Sergeant-at-Arms of the Canadian House of Commons and current Canadian Ambassador to Ireland Kevin Vickers.



Hundreds attended the event, which this year supported both the Caring and Sharing Exchange and the Ottawa Food Bank. Over the previous five years, this event has raised more than \$450,000 to support local charities here in Ottawa.

Funds received from this year's gala will also go towards the Sharing in Student Success Program.



Heather Fraser, Director of Resource Development (centre) and HOPE organizers and attendees on July 11 at Mooney's Bay.

volleyball tournament. Each year, six charities are chosen as recipients for this not-for-profit event. Funds received from this event will go towards the Sharing in Student Success Program.

The 6th annual Ottawa Police Gala took place on November 7th at the Shaw Centre. It was a spectacular event, featuring a keynote speech from Former

Caring Christmas Tree ceremony and the 28th Annual Running on Empties are coming up fast!

For nearly three decades the Caring and Sharing Exchange has been fortunate to partner with local Beer

Stores for its annual **Running on Empties** fundraising event. Each year, volunteers are stationed at every Beer Store across Ottawa asking patrons to donate a portion of their empties to the Christmas Exchange Program.

HELP US CELEBRATE BY SHARING YOUR STORY!

Are you a long time donor or volunteer of the Christmas Exchange Program? Do you have any special memories from your own experience with the cause? Do you remember your parents or even grandparents being involved with the Christmas Exchange over these many years that you would like to share?

We would love to hear from you! Please e-mail, call or write to us and we will share your stories of giving as our 100th Christmas season approaches!

E-mail:
communications@caringandsharing.ca
Call: 613-226-6434

Write: the Caring and Sharing Exchange,
P.O. Box 5167 Ottawa, ON K2C 3H4

Over the years, this event has raised close to \$350,000 towards the purchase of hampers and food vouchers for those in need. This year's event will take place on Saturday, December 19th.

The **Caring Christmas Tree** is a much newer fundraising initiative, beginning only last year. Lights on the tree will be 'for sale' for \$5 (or strings of lights for \$25 or \$100). As lights are sold, the tree will be gradually lit to show the progression of the fundraising efforts!

Last year, the tree brought in nearly \$15,000 for the Christmas Exchange program. This year, the hope is to raise even more funds as awareness about this new initiative grows within the



A child runs towards the Caring Christmas Tree moments after it was fully lit for the first time. December 17th 2014, Ottawa City Hall

community.

Access to the tree for this event is provided by the City of Ottawa, with tree lighting services generously provided by Nutrilawn's lighting service, Christmas Décor.

www.CaringandSharing.ca

Individuals and organizations who demonstrate active support for the Caring and Sharing Exchange and who pay a membership fee can become a member of C&SE. Membership benefits include voting rights at the AGM. For more information please contact Cindy Smith at director@caringandsharing.ca or call 613-226-6434 x.227.

Find us on social media to stay connected year round!

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