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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

URGENT APPEAL

Massive increase in need leaves 822 children on wait list for back-to-school support

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Ottawa, ON – 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 \(SISS\)](#). Backpacks are filled with all the school supplies a child needs for the school year, according to ODSB guidelines.

This year, the need for this program has skyrocketed. Families across Ottawa are asking for assistance to send their children back to school, and many of them face a daunting waiting list.

“So far, we can help about 2,500 children on our list,” said Cindy Smith, executive director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange, “but we’re still working on taking the last 822 names off our wait list. We are so thankful for our supporters in the community, but even we couldn’t have predicted such a high need this year.”

A record 38% increase in requests for assistance has the Caring and Sharing Exchange working around the clock to help families in need. An additional 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies are needed this year to meet the need through SISS, a significantly higher number than in 2017.

“The need in Ottawa is growing,” said Cindy, “and we hope the community can come together to help even more children wanting to start the school year on an equal footing with their peers.”

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 for the year, which means they triple donation dollars through their SISS program. The Exchange also improves the efficiency of back-to-school assistance city-wide through their innovative Coordination Service.

“Every year, our Coordination Service helps us eliminate hundreds of duplicate applications for back-to-school assistance,” Cindy explained. “We do this by working with agencies and organizations across Ottawa that offer this kind of support. Any money we save in the community is reinvested to help the next child on our list.”

For those wishing to support the program, donations can be made online at www.CaringandSharing.ca or by calling 613-226-6434. Donation bins for school supplies are also in many Ottawa Public Library locations across the city. For more information on the organization’s most-needed items and where to donate, please visit their website.

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. Over 20,000 individuals living in Ottawa accessed their programs in 2017.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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