



The

EXCHANGE

News

FALL 2016



All 2,065 children on the list received back-to-school assistance

In 2016, the Sharing in Student Success program saw a record 30% increase in the number of requests for back-to-school assistance. Jumping from 1,582 kids in 2015 to 2,065 kids in 2016, the increase in need was overwhelming.

After speaking to some of its partner agencies, the Caring and Sharing

Exchange identified a key factor behind the increase.

“After speaking with our partners, we discovered that many of the new children this year were from Syrian refugee families,” explained Cindy Smith, Executive Director.

As an example, the Somali Centre for Family Services referred approximately 60 children in 2015, but this year submitted over 300 names, with more than 95% of them identifying as Syrian refugees.

“We had anticipated an increase of some kind due to the influx of Syrian refugees that has occurred over the last year, but we did not expect the demand to rise quite that much,” said Smith.

As the number of names on the waiting list began to rise, the Exchange put out an urgent appeal to the community. The response was unbelievable.

“We were truly humbled by the incredible response of the Ottawa community,” said Smith. “At one point we had more than 850 kids on our waiting list, and yet by the time the program ended, we had helped every single child on our list for the fourth year in a row!”

This year’s success was made possible through the support of many organizations, including Bell, CAA North & East Ontario, Giant Tiger, Hill+Knowlton, Innovapost, Lumentum, NAV Canada, Ottawa Community Foundation, Ottawa Community Housing Foundation, Ottawa Public Library, Staples (Carling Avenue), Telus, Twice Upon a Time, and Quickie, in addition to many individual donors community-wide.



The team from Bell Mobility poses with stuffed backpacks at the 2016 Backpack Stuffing Day.

Christmas Exchange Program prepares for jump in number of requests

Last Christmas, the Caring and Sharing Exchange had two incredible reasons to celebrate. First, 2015 marked the 100th anniversary of the Christmas Exchange Program. Second, for the first time in recent years, not a single person was left on the waiting list come Christmas Day!

Christmas 2016 by the numbers

This meant that all 16,012 individuals who turned to this program for help received Christmas assistance in the form of either a festive food hamper or a redeemable gift voucher.

Of these 16,012, nearly 2,000 were seniors and more than 7,000 were children, representing more than half of those who were in need of assistance.

In addition, more than \$100,000 was saved through the century old Coordination Service (see reverse for more details on this important initiative).

“We are incredibly proud to have been able to help everyone on our list during our 100th year,” said Smith. “Now we can only hope to continue on this success as we enter our 101st Christmas season.”

Increase likely for Christmas 2016

After witnessing a 30% increase in the number of requests made through the Sharing in Student Success Program, the Exchange is readying itself for a big jump in the demand during the holiday season as well.

“If we see a 30% increase for this program too, we will be facing a list of more than 20,000 names this Christmas,” said Smith. “We truly hope that if this does happen, we will still be able to leave no one behind this holiday season.”

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



A young volunteer adds butter to one of more than 700 hampers that were packed and delivered on Hamper Packing Day 2015.

Just like Santa, we are making a list and checking it twice!

Through its Coordination Service, the Caring and Sharing Exchange works closely with many different agencies city-wide that provide assistance and/or request assistance for their clients. During this process, the Exchange collects the names of the individuals other organizations are helping, as well as the names of the individuals who are seeking assistance.

The names are then cross-referenced in order to verify that all clients in need are matched with an organization providing assistance, **AND** that no client is being helped by more than one organization.

By running these "duplication checks" the Exchange can ensure assistance is distributed fairly and evenly within the community.

By eliminating duplicate applications, the funds that may have

provided one family assistance via two separate organizations can now be sure to provide help for two different families! This helps cut down on waiting lists and ensures that the most people in need are able to enjoy a memorable holiday meal with their loved ones.

Over the last three years, these duplicate checks have saved the community nearly two million dollars!

This Coordination Service is the backbone of the Exchange, and was also part of the reason for the Christmas Exchange Program's creation back in 1915. There were many who were in need of help at Christmas, and there were others looking to donate, and so a central list was created so that no one would be left behind.

The Exchange also works closely with the Salvation Army's Toy Mountain Program, and is responsible for the intake for the program in addition to

performing duplicate checks on toy assistance in Ottawa.

"The same people who need help with food assistance often need toys for their children as well," explained Smith. "By filtering the toy registration through our database, we can crosscheck all of this client information and eliminate even more duplicates."

Last year, the Exchange found 1,167 duplicate food requests and 1,014 duplicate toy requests. The elimination of these duplicates saved the community \$268,800 and allowed those funds to be redirected to those on the waiting list for assistance.

With the potential increase in demand for assistance this year, it is likely that the number of duplicates found will also rise.

"This service is what makes us truly unique in our community," said Smith. "We provide this service to our fellow agencies free of charge so that together we can all help more of Ottawa's individuals and families in need."



Testimonials from Grateful Recipients Sharing in Student Success

"I just wanted to take a moment and thank the Caring and Sharing Exchange for their kindness. My daughter started JK this year and she couldn't have been happier than to be doing so with her new beautiful Elsa backpack. She was very excited to show it to her friends at school! She couldn't be any prouder of her new backpack! We are very grateful for your gift."

- Mother of a backpack recipient

Christmas Exchange

"We would like to say a very big thank you for making a wonderful difference in our maiden Christmas celebration in Canada. The hamper really made our celebration, and the kids were really excited. Thank you very much and blessings to you and your families. We appreciate you all and wish you a Merry Christmas!"

- Thankful hamper recipients

"We are grateful to the hamper kindly provided to us. We were able to celebrate a beautiful Christmas dinner thanks to you. We were accompanied by a newcomer family to Canada. Thanks so much!"

- Recipient family

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.

Kindness Week in Ottawa to celebrate its 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

In 2013, the Caring and Sharing Exchange became the new home of Kind Ottawa and the Kindness Week initiative. Created by Rabbi Reuven Bulka, this program focuses on recognizing acts of kindness in our community and promoting kindness city-wide.

Each year, Rabbi Bulka and Cindy Smith present Kindness Awards to both children and adults who are doing amazing things to spread kindness.

The 10th annual Kindness Week will take place February 17-24!

To stay in the loop, visit www.KindOttawa.ca or find us on social media:

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