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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## URGENT APPEAL In-Kind Donations for School Supplies have depleted

August 17, 2020

Ottawa, ON –

It's official, students are returning to school this fall. 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 they are gearing up to deliver their program again this year. This program helps relieve parents of the financial burdens that coincide with back-to-school shopping, helping students in need return to school on equal footing with their peers.

In the past, they have depended on both monetary donations and in-kind donations to make their program possible. **This year, however, due to Covid-19 protocols restricting opportunities for in-person collections, they have not received enough school supply donations to provide for every child requesting assistance.**

**The Caring and Sharing Exchange is reaching out to the Ottawa community today to appeal for contributions to their program, to help subsidize the lack of in-kind donations received.**

"Back to school can be a daunting time for many families in need, and this rings even more true this year," said Cindy Smith, Executive Director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange. "With teachers in masks, a new curriculum being introduced, and a myriad of safety regulations being put in place, we don't want families having anxiety about whether they can afford school supplies for their children."

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 assistance city-wide through their innovative Coordination Service, which has saved the community over \$2.5 million over the past three years.

"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](http://www.CaringandSharing.ca).** If you have school supplies to donate, please contact the Exchange directly at [info@caringandsharing.ca](mailto:info@caringandsharing.ca). For more information on the organization's most-needed items and where to donate, please visit their website listed above.

### 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 2018.