



ANNUAL REPORT | 2024-2025





the Caring
and Sharing
Exchange

People helping people since 1915

Échange
cœur
et partage

L'aide et l'entraide depuis 1915

OUR MISSION

To provide our neighbours in need with relief and dignity during difficult times of the year in the most fair and efficient way possible.

OUR VISION

A caring and sharing community where individuals and families receive the coordinated support they need at Christmas and other times of the year.

OUR PROGRAMS

- The Christmas Exchange
- Sharing in Student Success
- Coordination Service

Board of Directors 2024-2025

Executive Committee

Megan O'Meara, President

Lily Grudzien, Vice President

Kurt Anderson, Treasurer

Keith Archer, Secretary

Cindy Smith, Executive Director (ex-officio)

Board of Directors

Kelly Adkin

Roxane Deschênes

Erin Dowe

Jennifer Imerson

Ryan Saunders

Hazem Shayah

Bianca Vodden



Staff 2024-2025

Cindy Smith, Executive Director

Heather Fraser, Director of Resource Development

Rebecca Nagrodski, Program Manager

ChrisAnn Alvarez, Program Assistant (Oct - Dec)

Laila Essoufyani, Program Assistant (Nov - Dec)

Razika Zair (Nov)

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Megan O'Meara, President of the Board

The Caring and Sharing Exchange has always been rooted in community—both in the people we serve and the people who make our work possible. Over the past year, we once again saw increased in demand for our services, reflecting the rising cost of living and the challenges many in our community continue to face. And yet, we rose to meet that need, thanks to our generous donors, dedicated volunteers, and tireless staff.

In 2024, the Sharing in Student Success Program provided 5,489 children with backpacks filled with essential school supplies, ensuring they started the school year ready to learn and thrive. Now fully expanded to include students through Grade 9, the program continues to support families during what can be a financially stressful time of year.

Through the Christmas Exchange Program, we helped 29,216 individuals by providing holiday hampers or gift vouchers—bringing comfort, connection, and much-needed support to those in need during the holiday season.

Behind the scenes, our Coordination Service once again helped avoid duplication in services, saving the community \$195,229—resources that were redirected to help even more people.

Earlier this year, we saw a significant transition in the organization's leadership. In April 2025, we said goodbye to Cindy Smith, who served as our Executive Director for 12 years. Her vision, compassion, and steady leadership helped shape the organization into what it is today. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank her for her incredible contributions and wish her all the best in her next chapter.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome Zuzanna Kucharski as our new Executive Director. She brings a deep commitment to the community and a fresh perspective to the role. I am excited to collaborate with her as we build on our strong foundation and continue to evolve to meet the needs of those we serve.

Thank you to our exceptional staff, our volunteers, our community partners, and our supporters. Your efforts, energy and generosity are what allow this small organization to have such a big impact. And to my fellow Board members—thank you for your insight, passion, and unwavering commitment to our mission.

It is a privilege to serve as President of the Board, and I look forward to another year of working together to care and share with our community.

THE CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE PROGRAM



Once again, thanks to our incredible donors, sponsors, and volunteers, the Caring and Sharing Exchange was able to provide holiday cheer, and alleviate financial strain during the holiday season, a time of year that can be particularly challenging for many Ottawa individuals and families in need.

We were able to provide all 29,219 individuals on our list with means to enjoy a warm festive meal, by delivering a food hamper or a redeemable gift voucher. Thanks to the community for helping to ensure that all our neighbours in need were able to experience the joy and warmth of the holiday season.

2024 Christmas Exchange by the numbers	# of families	# of individuals
Assisted through the Sponsor-a-Hamper Program	1,514	7,445
Assisted through a redeemable gift voucher	7,900	21,774
Total assisted through the Caring & Sharing Exchange	9,414	29,219

I am deeply humbled and grateful for this gift of food security that your program is assisting us with and the many donations that make it possible. My kids are teenagers now and it has been getting quite hard to provide for them as the cost of everything has gone way up. It sometimes becomes a choice between paying rent or paying groceries. We have been going without extras these days.

Thank you and all the donors who make it possible to help feed the families of the communities that are currently facing very challenging times."

- 2024 Christmas Exchange Recipient



THE SHARING IN STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM



Through the Sharing in Student Success Program, the Caring and Sharing Exchange was able to provide 5,489 students with a backpack full of all the grade appropriate school supplies necessary to thrive in school, regardless of their financial circumstances. In addition, through the innovative Coordination Service, the Caring and Sharing Exchange was able to eliminate 532 duplicate applications, saving the community \$34,229, which was then reinvested to help even more children in need.

We are so grateful to our generous donors and volunteers who directly impacted the lives of students by reducing barriers to education and allowing children from families in need to return to school on an equal footing with their peers.



We would like to express our deepest gratitude for your continuous support and attention. We extend our sincere thanks to the generous donors for their kindness and noble spirit. Your program has had a profound impact on my children, bringing joy and happiness to their weary hearts after enduring a war that deprived them of an entire academic year. During that time, they lost the essence of childhood and learned fear instead of security.

They went to school filled with excitement and pride, carrying their new school backpacks and its valuable supplies, full of hope that this academic year will be one of peace, calm, and safety, here in Canada.

~ Parent of 2024 Sharing in Student Success Program Recipient

THE COORDINATION SERVICE



Overall, the coordination service of the Caring and Sharing Exchange plays a crucial role in ensuring that their programs run smoothly, efficiently, and effectively, ultimately making a positive impact on the lives of those it serves. Through this service, the Caring and Sharing Exchange works with almost **200 community partners** to eliminate any duplications in assistance at back-to-school and Christmas time, saving the community \$195,229 in 2024 which was reinvested to help even more people in need!

2024 COORDINATION SERVICE RESULTS

PROGRAM	DUPLICATES	SAVINGS
CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE PROGRAM	1,610	\$161,000
SHARING IN STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM	532	\$34,229
TOTAL DUPLICATES ELIMINATED	2,142	\$195,229



Thank You To Our Agency Partners

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE:

OUR HEART & SOUL

Your commitment to making a difference in our community is what drives the Caring and Sharing Exchange forward!

OUR SUPPORT

Your hands-on involvement ensures that we can efficiently carry out our programs.



OUR RESOURCE MULTIPLIERS

Your contribution extends our reach and effectiveness, enabling us to help even more individuals and families in need.

OUR INSPIRATION AND EMPOWERMENT

You are role models of compassion and generosity. You inspire others to get involved and make a difference.

**WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO THE
268 VOLUNTEERS THAT DONATED
759 HOURS TO THE CARING AND
SHARING EXCHANGE THIS YEAR!**

Thank You!



EVENTS

37th ANNUAL RUNNING ON EMPTIES FUNDRAISER

Since 1987, the Caring and Sharing Exchange has partnered with the Beer Store to raise funds for the Christmas Exchange program by running a City-wide bottle drive. This year, the event took place at locations across the City on Saturday, December 21, 2024. In addition, for the month of December, Beer Store employees kindly asked customers at the cash to consider donating their empties in support of our Christmas Exchange program! Prominent community figures and Caring & Sharing Exchange followers helped spread the word, making the event a tremendous success. Thanks to many joint efforts, we were able to raise an incredible \$14,206!

In the last 37 years, Running on Empties has raised over \$454,000 and has helped provide thousands of individuals and families in need with much-needed support at Christmas time. Thank you to the Beer Store and our amazing supporters for making this event so successful!



CHRISTMAS CHEER 2024

The annual Christmas Cheer Breakfast took place on Friday, December 6, 2024, at the stunning Infinity Convention Centre, bringing festive spirit and goodwill to the community. This beloved fundraising event supports a variety of Ottawa-based charities during the holiday season and we are so grateful for the incredible support of our Christmas Exchange program. Guests enjoyed uplifting musical performances, entertaining guest speakers, and fun surprises throughout the morning. It was a heartwarming way to launch the Christmas season. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Christmas Cheer Foundation, its partners and supporters, and to all of the generous attendees who donated throughout the event.



FUNDRAISING

As we reflect on the past year, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the unwavering support and generosity of our donors. Their commitment to our mission has been the cornerstone of our success, enabling us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Their kindness knows no bounds. It's through their caring hearts and willingness to share that we are able to bring hope, comfort, and joy to individuals and families facing adversity. Whether it's providing a festive Christmas meal to our neighbours in need or ensuring all children can return to school in September well-equipped to learn and on an equal footing with their peers, our donors are creating opportunities for empowerment and their contributions have touched countless lives and inspired positive change in our community. Thank you!

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

The Caring and Sharing Exchange is not government or United Way funded. We rely on the generosity of individuals, businesses, foundations, service clubs, churches and schools to operate.



Churches & Service Clubs
2.6%

Events
3.8%

Businesses
13.7%

Foundations
12.6%

Individuals
67.3%

IN-KIND GIVING

Our sincerest thanks to all our Christmas Exchange Program Hamper Sponsors and to those who have donated school supplies and backpacks for our Sharing in Student Success Program. By taking the time to drop off your school supply donations, and/or by delivering hampers to families in need, you played a vital role in helping us meet the growing need. Your ongoing support fuels our passion and strengthens our resolve to continue making a difference.



IN-KIND DONORS

This list contains the following types of In-Kind donors:

- Sharing in Student Success: Companies that made an in-kind donation
- Christmas Exchange: Companies that sponsored 15+ hampers
- Other: Companies that donate their skills/systems to the Caring and Sharing Exchange

Alpha Auto Group
Carlingwood Shopping Centre
Coldwell Banker First Ottawa Realty, Brokerage
Ed Stevens, RPM Creative
Foxview Retirement Community
Giant Tiger
Kiwanis Club of Ottawa
Ladies Who Hamper
Landscape Ontario
Marriott Bonvoy
Ottawa Community Housing Foundation
St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church
St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church
TD Bank Group
Telus Ambassadors
Winners/Marshalls/HomeSense

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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The following individuals and organizations made contributions of \$500 and above to the Caring and Sharing Exchange during the fiscal period of March 1, 2024 to February 29, 2025. To all of our supporters, we express our sincere gratitude.

\$10,000+

The Beer Store
Christmas Cheer Foundation
Dan & Penny Dodge

Ottawa Community Foundation
TELUS Community Board

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Danbe Foundation Inc.
Erdelyi Karpari Memorial Fund
J. P. Bickel Foundation
Strategic Charitable Foundation
TD Bank Group

The Bloodroot Fund
Waste Connections of Canada Inc.
WCPD Foundation
Plus 1 Anonymous Donor

\$2,500 to \$4,999

Davis Agency, Hallmark Stores
Donna Cona Inc.
Heather & Andrew Fraser
Harry P. Ward Foundation
Katie Black Professional Corporation
Barry & Debbie Mersereau
Miller Waste Systems Inc.

K.M. Morrison
Valerie Parker
Rideau Park United Church
St. John The Apostle Parish
The Sharbot Group
Woodroffe United Church
Plus 1 Anonymous Donor

\$1,000 to \$2,499

A & M Shaw Foundation	Mary Gowan	Nancy Porter-Cathcart
Denise Allan	Josee Helie	Iola Price
Nora Beirne	T.J. Hicks	Q4 Architects Inc.
Thomas Bonner	Peter & Shirley Holt	Stephen Quick
Patricia Cocker	George Ireland	Elaine Rainboth
Malcolm Collins	Audrey Kenny	Jan Schuurman
Conlin Bedard LLP	Maureen Kidd	Dean Shaikh
Geraldine Cooney	Kiwanis Club of Nepean	Linda Shugart
Nancy Corbett	Leah Lepage	Cindy Smith
Christine Crossman	Elizabeth Margeson	St. Andrew's Church Women's Guild
Graham Dattels	David McAnich	Thales Canada -
District Realty Corporation	Michael Munroe	Defence and Security
Karen Doherty	Rebecca Nagrodski	Margaret Thomas
Emond Harnden	OTIP/RAEO Insurance Brokers Inc.	Patricia Ulch
Gift Funds Canada	Ottawa South United Force Academy	Jennifer Winters
Victoria Godfrey	Keenan & Maria Papps	David Wood
	Claire Pike	

\$500 to \$999

Margaret Ahearn	Bruce Connery	Gordon Paul Johnson
Susan Anson	Helen Creighton	KnowTech Solutions Inc
Kim Barnhardt	Wayne Crutchlow	Kim Kruk
Wayne Barry	Margaret Davies	Graham Ladner
Alexa Biscaro	Dennis & Eva Devine	Richard Lane
Borden Ladner Gervais LLP	James DeWolf	Anne Lawson
Vivian Brazeau	Robin Doner	Karen Legasy
Jennifer Brigandi	Colleen Edwards	Jean Liberty
Tony & Carol Brigandi	Diane Forestell	Roland L. Locas
D. Beverley Brock	Foxview Retirement Community	Margaret Loyer
Sheena Brooks	Keith Galley	Norman MacDonald
Jean Brunton	Betty Gauthier	John MacKenzie
Kim Cabana	Andrea Gibson	Scott MacKinnon
Harold Campbell	Jake Harding	Carol MacLeod
Janet Campbell	Jim Hayes	Myrna & Robert Mallett
Robert Cassidy	Mark Holmes	Wenda Martinho
Bruce & Heather Caswell	Hoopla Systems	Laura McBride
Judith Charbonneau	Thomas A. Houston	Bob & Marilyn McCaw
Charitable Impact Foundation	Jennifer Imerson	Gregg McCooeye
Garry Chase	IODE - Laurentian Chapter	James F. McGregor
John Comba	Bill Jack	Shawn McKnight
Karen Comber	Heidi Jackson	Julianne McLennan

\$500 to \$999 (continued)

J David Miller
Graham Miller
Miller Waste Systems- Markham
Kathleen Mitchell
Jane P. Morris
Lorne Munro
Annette Murray
Suzanne Nault
Barbara Newbegin
Ken & Christine Newport
Megan O'Meara
Tracy O'Meara
Ottawa Carleton Elementary
Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Darlene Parker
Brent Percival

Peter Ploegman
Gary Poole
Deborah Prescott
Daniel Racicot
Bernard Roach
David Robertson
Moiria Rushton-Marovac
Nick Sala
Kathryn Sauve
Joanne Scully
Maggie Selley
Elizabeth Shea
Claudette Simoneau
Laurie & Greg Singleton
David & Evelyn Smith
Nancy Smolkin
Joseph Stanford
Sandra Stevenson
Lorraine St-Pierre
SW2 Sales
Training and Coaching Inc.
Lola Sykes
Valerie Tait

Naween Thomas
David Tobin
Jennifer Tuthill
Martin & Mary Anne Van Gaal
John vanderWerf
Vans Pressure Cleaning Ltd.
W&W Dispute Resolution Services
Ken & Gail Wagstaff
Colette Watson
Marie Weerasooriya-Epps
Maxine & Edward Whelan
L.D. Whillans
Carole Workman
Bill & Ferne Wyman
Sharon Zakuta
John Zarecky



GET INVOLVED

DONATE

Choose to make a monetary donation to help us make a difference in the lives of Ottawa's individuals and families in need. You can donate by calling our office at 343-803-0708 or by visiting our website at www.CaringandSharing.ca.

When donating, you can choose to make your gift to the Christmas Exchange Program, the Sharing in Student Success Program, or to the umbrella organization, where funds will be allocated where they are most needed. To help even further, please consider becoming a monthly donor.

FUNDRAISE

Why not turn your next event into a Caring and Sharing Exchange fundraiser? We are grateful to the numerous individuals and organizations who host third-party fundraising events for our cause throughout the year. If you are interested in hosting an event, please contact our office at 343-803-0708 to discuss your great ideas with us!

Sponsor-a-Hamper is a great way to support a local family in need during the holidays. Get matched with a family and go shopping for their holiday meal—you put it together and deliver it directly to the family! To learn more, please visit our website at www.CaringandSharing.ca or email info@CaringandSharing.ca.

VOLUNTEER

We have a wide range of volunteer opportunities for those looking to contribute their valuable time to help further our cause.

Some of the opportunities available to motivated and engaged community members include: computer data entry; helping out at special events; making phone calls; and so much more!

Please contact us at 343-803-0876 or email info@caringandsharing.ca to discuss available volunteering opportunities with us.

STAY CONNECTED!

Connect with us on Social Media to stay up-to-date on current events



@CaringSharingExchange



@CS_Exchange



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Charitable Registration Number 13097 9172 RR0001