



2019-2020

Annual Report

 Project
SHARE
Our Community At Work

www.projectshare.ca

(905) 357-5121



3771
households served



6766
individuals served

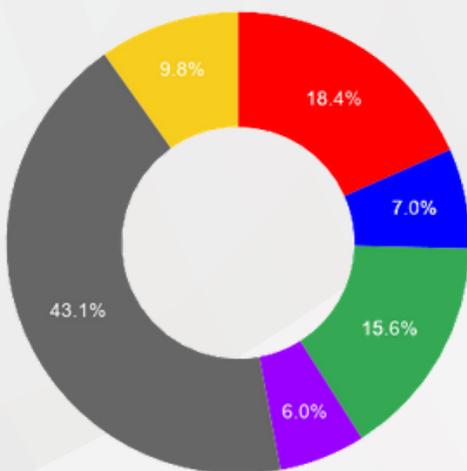
28% of households have 1 or more children

22% were **NEW** households and individuals accessing Project SHARE services

20% indicated special dietary needs like diabetes, gluten-free, vegetarian, halal, etc.

24% required specific items like baby food or formula, diapers, Ensure and hygiene products.

32% are 18 years and under



- 0 - 11 years (1,428)
- 12 - 16 years (544)
- 17 - 18 years (1,215)
- 19 - 25 years (468)
- 26 - 59 years (3,350)
- 60+ years (761)

Message from the chair

While the past year brought many unforeseen challenges, it was truly my honour to be the chair of Project SHARE working with a dedicated board of directors to lead our agency to alleviate food insecurity and homelessness in our community.



One of the pillars of our mission is to adapt our services to respond to changes around us. I am very proud of how our staff adapted to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring our essential services were still offered to those who rely on us in a safe, contactless way.

I am grateful for the incredible generosity we received from our community this year. In these unprecedented times we saw such overwhelming kindness to our neighbours in need. We were fortunate to participate in free community grocery giveaways and provided more food than ever before to help ensure none of our neighbours went hungry.

Our community truly is at work. We can't do this alone and will continue to rely on our community partners, donors, staff and volunteers to provide emergency support services to over 100 families every day who are less fortunate in Niagara Falls. While we continue to endure tough economic times, we know our community is going to need us now more than ever.

Together we can end the struggle against poverty and empower those in need.

Irma Sebastiano, Chair



VISION To end the struggle against poverty and empower those in need.

MISSION Project SHARE provides essential support services that improve the lives of Niagara Falls individuals and families in need.

VALUES We believe in

- Interacting with all members of our community with dignity, respect, compassion and understanding.
- Working as a team and with our community to provide whatever help is needed.
- Providing services based on inclusivity, equity, cooperation and collaboration.
- Growing an effective organization through open communication and fiscal and social responsibility.
- Investing in opportunities for our staff to develop their roles.

Message from the executive director

To say the last fiscal year was challenging would be a great understatement. We experienced a change in leadership in the last half of the year and were faced with a pandemic in our last quarter. As we navigated through uncharted waters, our teamwork and commitment to our clients was stronger than ever. We operated without volunteers on site for several months with staff leaving their regular office jobs to sort and distribute food in our warehouse. We saw firsthand the amount of work typically done by our volunteers when we had to operate without them!



Our creativity resulted in a new format for clients to access our services in a safe, physically distant way which has been replicated by food banks in other communities. The way we delivered services was different, but we never shut down and worked hard to ensure our emergency services were available for our neighbours in need. We stepped up to extend the Out of the Cold Shelter into April and increased this program to become a 24 hour support.

Our community continued to rally behind us and the exceptional generosity we received helped us increase our capacity for the future needs of our clients. We secured funding for two new projects, a new refrigerated van and an expanded walk-in fridge and freezer. These will enable us to continue to provide client-centred services beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is my absolute pleasure to lead such a wonderful team of compassionate staff to help our most vulnerable community members. While we don't know what the future will bring, I am confident that together we can meet the challenge. Our community is at work and I am so grateful to be a part of it.

Pam Sharp, Executive Director

2019/2020 board of directors

Chair: Irma Sebastiano
Vice Chair: Anna Luciano
Past Chair: Brian Pellow
Treasurer: Mick Wolfe
Secretary: Trent Dark
City Council Representatives: Carolyn Ioannoni and Lori Lococo
Directors: Julia Fabiano, Jim Ferraro, Italia Gilberti, Paisley January-Pool, Ryan Serravalle and Tom Snodgrass

2019/2020 Project SHARE staff

Diane Corkum/Carolyn Bones-Poley, Executive Director; **Pam Sharp**, Director of Community Engagement; **Lauren Lewitzky**, Fundraising Events Coordinator; **Cathy Robertson**, Financial Administrator; **Rachel Muscat**, Administrative Assistant; **Carrie Zeffiro**, Community Development; **Jo Low**, Volunteer & Wellness Coordinator

CLIENT SERVICES

Joseph Veltri, Client Services Manager; **Kate Adams**, Intensive Case Facilitator; **Fran Berry**, **Hayley Evans**, **Pat Inneo**, **Chantell Jolivet**, **Mel Mason** and **Carole Wallwork**, Homelessness Prevention Workers; **Spencer Wylie**, Program Coordinator; **Janet Morettie**, Food Room Coordinator

WAREHOUSE

Adam Warriner, Warehouse Manager; **John Morse** and **Shane McKee**, Warehouse Co-Administrators; **Cari Allan**, Recycling Program Coordinator

STUDENTS & SEASONAL

Jamal Anwar, Amina Boufridi, Ema Hallam

OUT OF THE COLD SHELTER STAFF

Maria Bonadio, Liam Bradshaw, Madalyn Digman, Rachel Edralin, Ashley Fairchild, Grant Fairchild, Stephanie Farquharson, Russell Golding, Tammy Goodman, Daniel Harrison, Kyle Knizat, Brandon Markarian, Mel Mason, Michael McGarvey, Katherine Sheehan, and Brooklyn Snodden



After over 30 years of service to Project SHARE, members of our staff, board and the community gathered to celebrate Diane Corkum's retirement. We wish Diane the very best, and thank her for her many years of service and dedication to helping those less fortunate in our community.

Project SHARE is ensuring financial capacity to provide well-rounded programs and services

In addition to emergency food services, Project SHARE offers **16** additional programs and services that help empower those in need.

Emergency food program



92.5% of households access this program
840,891 lbs. of food was distributed

Housing support



471 or 12.5% of households received support with utility payments
750 or 20% received support with transportation (to access emergency food program)

Community gardens

Project SHARE manages three community garden sites, offering 145 garden plots that are used by Project SHARE and Niagara Falls families to grow their own produce. Our volunteer & wellness coordinator provides support for gardeners and coordinates community events including spring planting days, fall harvest and a vendor booth at the Niagara Falls farmer's market. DeVries Fruit Farms donates fresh fruit that is used to prepare fresh fruit treats to sell at the market. The proceeds are then used to purchase more fresh produce from market vendors for our emergency food program. Our community garden program was funded in part by United Way Niagara special projects funding and CannTrust. The garden produced more than 3,500 pounds of fresh food that was distributed through our emergency food program.

Client quote: "The garden is wonderful. I have no way to grow fresh produce as I live in an apartment and there is no outdoor space. I lost my job of 21 years recently and I'm getting back on my feet with a new career. The ability to grow so many vegetables in the garden has been a great help. I have spoken with other gardeners and learned a lot. Next year, I hope to be even better at gardening and able to donate some of my harvest back to Project SHARE."

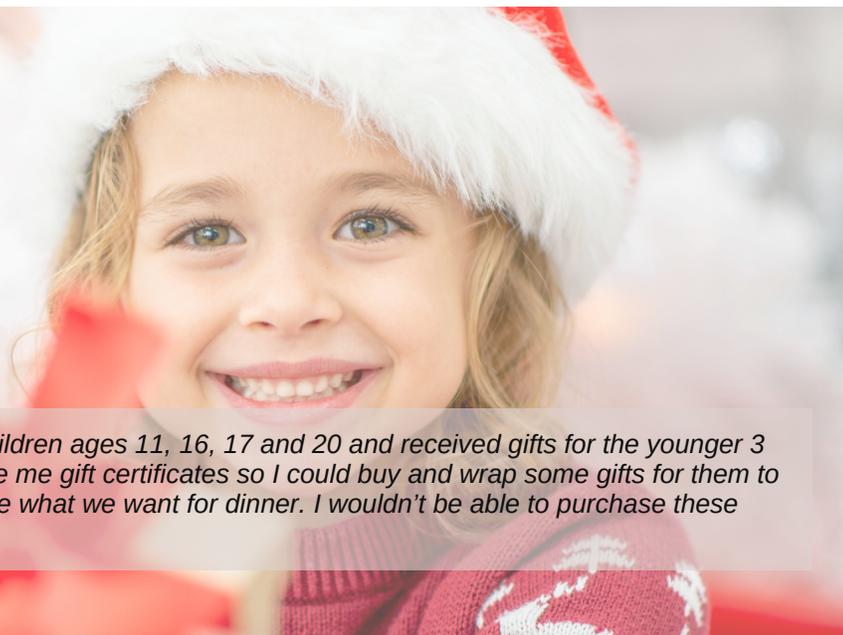


Christmas meals and gifts

56% of our clients (3,832) accessed our Christmas program

1,482 children received Christmas gifts

In addition to gifts delivered directly to families by sponsors, 8,103 lbs. of toys and 1,019 lbs. of clothing and knitwear and \$5,985 in gift cards were distributed



"Project SHARE helps a lot of families. I have four children ages 11, 16, 17 and 20 and received gifts for the younger 3 through the Christmas Program. Project SHARE gave me gift certificates so I could buy and wrap some gifts for them to put under the tree, and a grocery gift card to purchase what we want for dinner. I wouldn't be able to purchase these without Project SHARE. It really, really, helps a lot."

Out of the Cold shelter

With a goal of providing safe refuge from winter weather for those experiencing homelessness, Project SHARE, Niagara Region, The Branscombe Family Foundation, City of Niagara Falls and St. Andrew's United Church partnered to implement a pilot Out of the Cold shelter program. 2,700 safe sleeps were provided during the year. In addition, the program quickly grew to include a regular meal, job search support, housing support and clothing. More than 3,000 referrals were made to mental health, trauma and addictions programs and services. The program evolved to a 24-hour operation during the COVID-19 pandemic from March 20 to April 10. The program was deemed a successful and essential need in the city.

2020 concluded our 2-year pilot project and we shared the lessons learned which will result in this necessary program continuing under the leadership of Start Me Up Niagara, an experienced shelter provider.

This project helped collect and share learnings with Niagara region staff who will be working with existing shelter providers to advocate for housing and shelter supports. We are pleased to have partnered also with the Niagara Regional Native Centre, Niagara Regional Police, the Bridge Church and many other businesses, donors and volunteers.

Snacks and sneakers

286 children received support from our Snacks 'n Sneakers program. Children ages 4 - 17 received sneakers and a backpack full of school supplies and snacks to get their school year off on a positive start. Parents tell us that back to school can be just as stressful as Christmas. Thanks to the support of Canadian Tire Financial Services (CTFS) Jumpstart program, local churches, businesses and donors, Niagara Falls kids in need got to pick out their shoes and backpacks just like their peers at school.



286
children received support

Project SHARE is building a strong staff development program to ensure client needs are met

Volunteer program

Project SHARE relies on the support of our volunteers. In a typical year, volunteers provide knowledge, skills and time that account for the equivalent of close to 7 full-time positions. Volunteers play a key role in our operation. They help clients navigate our food room while selecting their groceries, sort and prepare food, assist at events, fulfill various tasks important to the success of our Christmas program, and work in our community gardens.

During March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic safety measures caused us to change the way we operate. In an effort to meet lockdown measures and reduce the contact exposure within our facility, volunteer opportunities were put on hold. We are so appreciative for the dedication of our volunteers. They are vital to supporting Project SHARE and helping to make our programs and services be a success.



12,184

volunteer hours supported Project SHARE

\$220,774

value of volunteer time contribution at Niagara's 2019 Living Wage rate of \$18.12.

David S Howes Fund grant for volunteer development

In January 2020, Project SHARE received funding from the David S. Howes Fund through the Niagara Community Foundation to implement a volunteer development program. The grant supports a volunteer coordinator who will survey our current database of over 900 volunteers and create a manual and training program that outlines volunteer roles in our programs and services and will include additional support resources including mental health, accessibility and diversity training. This program will roll out over the next year.

Project SHARE is ensuring widespread awareness of services and increased participation in fundraising initiatives

#OurCommunityatWork is raising awareness and funds for Project SHARE all through the year. We are honoured to receive support from events taking place in our community. If you have an idea, we'd love to hear from you and would be happy to help get you started.



Kettlebells 5th Annual Tug of War

Amount raised: \$4,293.40 in monetary and food donations
Each summer, Kettlebells hosts this contest of strength at Oaks Park, in support of Project SHARE programs.



Commisso's 9th Annual Anniversary Food Drive

Amount raised: over \$24,000 in monetary and food donations.
Commisso's Fresh Foods hosts a food drive to celebrate their anniversary each November. 100% of the proceeds support Project SHARE.



Tim Horton's Smile Cookies

Amount donated: \$22,816.70 in monetary donations.
100% of the proceeds of Smile Cookie sales during one week in September were donated to support Project SHARE and the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara.

smile cookie

Meridian Credit Union Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY)

Amount Raised: \$35,942 raised by 26 teams, 189 walkers and 529 sponsors and donors.

Coldest Night of the Year is an outdoor winter walk that raises awareness and support for emergency services and enables us to help Niagara Falls families and individuals who are living below the poverty line. Support from this event allows us to have fully trained social service workers who meet one-on-one with individuals to assess their situation and provide basic needs to keep them in secure and adequate housing and support them with housing searches and landlord/tenant relations.

Christmas at Project SHARE

BCM Insurance Good News Breakfast smashes previous record!

Amount Raised: \$229,000 in food, toys and monetary gifts

The BCM Insurance Good News Breakfast for Project SHARE was held on December 6 at the Greg Frewin Theatre. The 29th annual event was the culmination of a month-long campaign by students across the city and staff at small and large businesses, who collected toys, financial donations and food for the Project SHARE Christmas program. 30 local businesses and 10 schools participated in the Stuff the Bus challenge, collecting as much as they could to help those less fortunate experience the joy of the holiday season. 2019 was our most successful event yet, collecting over \$48,500, 50,687 pounds of food and 2,720 pounds of toys. The Christmas program supports almost 4,000 individuals with toys and gifts.



More good news from the north vs south challenge

Amount Raised: \$14,538 in food, toys and monetary gifts (included in the Good News Breakfast total above)

Canadian Tire & Food Basics teamed up for the sixth time to activate the “North vs South Challenge” with a goal to collect the most food, toys and monetary donations for Project SHARE’s Christmas Program.

The challenge was created by Chris Russell of Niagara Falls Transit, who saw the locations of Canadian Tire & Food Basics stores in the same plazas in two ends of the city to be a natural fit to pit the Montrose and McLeod Road teams against each other in a friendly competition. The North vs South challenge collected nearly \$15,000 in food and toy donations.

Niagara Falls Transit parked buses on site at both ends of the city that were stuffed with donations. Customers who made a \$5 donation at their local Canadian Tire store also received a ballot to win a Dyson Vacuum valued at over \$500! All donations collected were matched by Canadian Tire. Food Basics stores offered pre-packaged donation bags with Project SHARE’s most needed food items making it easy for customers to support the campaign.



Christmas family sponsors

Our Christmas Program provides holiday meals to families and gifts for children under 18 years old. Much of this support comes from donors who adopt or sponsor families who need a little extra help. During Christmas 2019, 1,853 families in need were sponsored by more than 150 community groups, churches, businesses and individuals.

When a sponsor registers for the program, they choose the number and size of families they wish to support. They are then matched and receive information about the children in the family so they can shop for gifts or gift cards.

Each family receives approximately \$25 per person for groceries and \$50 per child for gifts.

Project SHARE is maintaining physical space that ensures the efficient and effective delivery of services and programs



Food room expansion

On July 30, 2019, Project SHARE board members and staff welcomed members of the community into our building to help us unveil our new, expanded food room. The goal of the funding was to expand the capacity of the food room to accommodate more families at one time and to help us meet the need to provide more fresh, not just non-perishable food, to the community. The expansion allowed our food room to increase from accommodating 4 families at one time to now accommodating 7. Refrigerator and freezer space was also increased. Monetary support was received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the David S. Howes fund through the Niagara Community Foundation.

Pictured from left to right: Irma Sebastiano, Chair, board of directors; Diane Corkum, Executive Director of Project SHARE; Mayor Jim Diodati, City of Niagara Falls; John Carter, The Branscombe Family Foundation; Paul Mace - Ontario Trillium Foundation; Niagara Falls MPP Wayne Gates; and Bryan Rose, Niagara Community Foundation.

Recycling program

In February, 2020, Project SHARE finalized details on a new recycling program. Funded by the Niagara Community Foundation, an operating procedure was created to ensure Project SHARE follows best practices in recycling and diverting from landfills. A recycling manual was created and is now used to train all staff and volunteers working in our facility. As part of the funding, a program to divert food not suitable for human consumption to farmers to feed their livestock was also created.



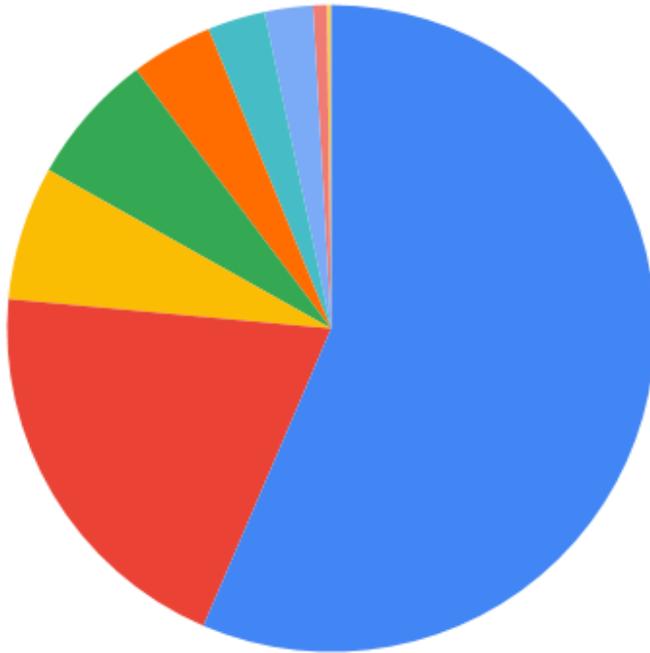
DID YOU KNOW?



Food Banks Canada publishes a guideline for safely distributing food past the best before date. Best before dates give consumers information as to when the product is at its best. It is not an indicator of food safety and Food Banks Canada indicates that non-perishable foods can be consumed up to a year past their best before date. At Project SHARE we will, if necessary, distribute non-perishable foods up to 6 months past their best before date.

This does not apply to perishables or foods with expiry dates.

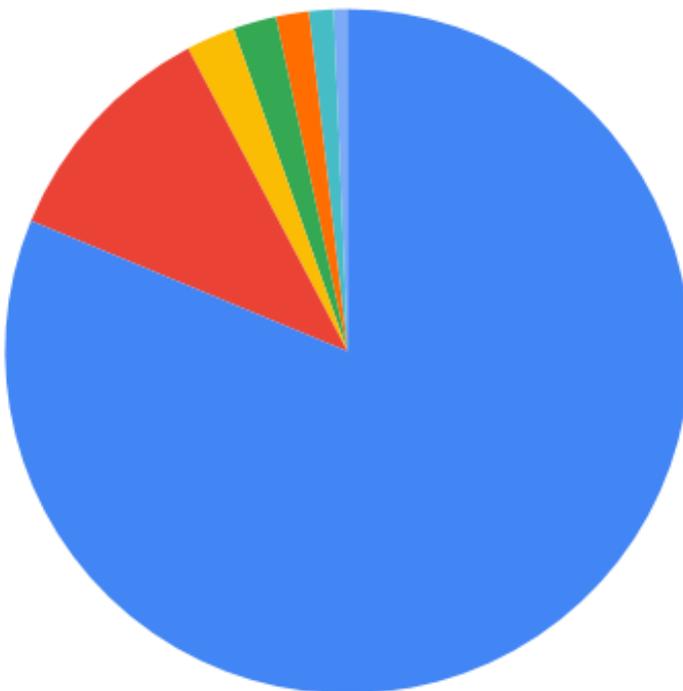
2019-2020 Revenue \$4,832,464



- Food, toy & clothing contributions 56.5%
- Monetary donations and fundraising 20%
- Niagara Region 6.5%
- City of Niagara Falls 6.5%
- Utilities programs 4%
- Grants 3%
- Federal and provincial government grants 2.5%
- Amortization and miscellaneous .5%
- Bingo and Nevada .5%

Project SHARE received over \$327,000 in one-time, pandemic emergency response funding between April 1 and May 31, 2020.

2019-2020 Expenses \$ 4,193,258



- Client services 81%
- Salaries and benefits 11%
- Fundraising 2.5%
- Occupancy and maintenance 2%
- Office and professional fees 1.5%
- Depreciation 1%
- Insurance and vehicle 1%

Programs and services

Food Security

Emergency food program

Clients can come once a month for a regular pick up of perishable and non-perishable groceries, and one bonus perishable pick up, including bread and produce.

Community gardens program

Volunteers and clients tend plots at Our Lady of Scapular Church, the Gate Alliance Church and Westlane Secondary School that grow food for our emergency food program as well as for their own needs.

Housing Support

Housing and intensive case management

Assistance with the search for affordable housing, Niagara Regional Housing applications, referrals and transportation to emergency shelters.

Utility assistance programs

Emergency funding to prevent utility disconnection for gas or hydro. Other means of help include hydro deposit waiver letters along with referrals to partner agencies who may be able to assist further.

Ontario electricity support program (OESP) helps low income individuals with a monthly credit towards their hydro bills.

Healthy Living

Emergency prescription funding

A partnership with local pharmacies assists clients with emergency prescription expense once per year (pain-killers or narcotic products excluded)

Gift of Sight program

A partnership with Walmart to assist clients who are in need of eyeglasses without any other assistance available. The client pays for half of the cost for basic glasses.

Brushed Aside

The United Way Niagara brushed aside program helps clients in need of dentures or extractions with an interest free loan of up to \$1,000 with a minimum repayment of \$10 per month.

Streetworks partnership

Provides clients with harm reduction supplies. Staff are also trained on how to inject Naloxone which can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

Training and Education

Community garden workshops

Through the Westlane garden program, Project SHARE works closely with the horticulture class and Dig-It Team to introduce youth to farm and horticulture careers. Community Roots workshops teach children where food comes from and why it is important.

Client empowerment committee

A group of people with lived experience of poverty who use the services of Project SHARE meet monthly for discussions to improve the day to day lives of families who live on a low income.

Financial literacy and RentSmart programs

Ontario Trillium Foundation and Niagara Prosperity Initiative provided temporary funding to allow for basic budgeting, income tax and Canada learning bond training and workshops. The RentSmart program offered training to tenants on the basics of renting with a goal to helping people retain and maintain adequate affordable housing.

Miscellaneous

Christmas

The Christmas program provides a holiday meal and gifts for children.

Laundry program

Laundromat vouchers and laundry soap are given to families without facilities so they will have clean clothes and bedding.

Recreation funding

Project SHARE acts as a Canadian Tire Financial Services (CTFS) Jumpstart community ambassador by providing support for families who are applying for the individual child grant (for organized sports and recreation activities) on the Jumpstart website. Project SHARE also facilitates applications and referrals to the Bob Gale Recreation Fund, the City of Niagara Falls Activity Subsidy Fund, the Matthew Daniele Memorial Fund, PROKids, and KidSport Niagara.

Transportation funding

Assistance with the cost of transportation in the form of a gas voucher or bus ticket to a medical appointment once per year. Families can also receive a local bus ticket to return home after accessing monthly services.

Shoe boot program

In memory of Carmen Elefante, shoes and boots (both new and used) are given to people in need of proper footwear. This program is reliant upon donations and funding is limited.

Clothing referral

Partnerships with Goodwill Industries and St. Andrew's United Church Shoulder to Shoulder program provide clothing necessities.

Back to school program

Students receive shoes, backpacks, snacks and school supplies through Snacks n sneakers in partnership with Canadian Tire Jumpstart or supplies through private donors.

Provincial advocacy award

In June, we were honoured to receive a provincial advocacy award from Feed Ontario (formerly the Ontario Association of Food Banks) recognizing our client centred approach to service. We are so much more than a food bank! We offer 17 emergency support services to keep our neighbours fed, housed and healthy.



CASH VS CANS

We often get asked which is better, cash or cans? Let us tell you that we love both! Monetary and food donations are equally important to providing essential support services that improve the lives of Niagara Falls individuals and families in need.

CASH DONATIONS



allow us to purchase foods when donated food supplies run low or demand spikes

let us buy fresh foods and our most needed staples through bulk purchasing at a fraction of the retail cost

cover the additional costs of getting food into the hands of those that need it most (transportation, space, support)

FOOD DONATIONS



allow us to respond immediately to the needs of our community

collection events help us share important information about hunger in our community and give lots of people a chance to help

rally entire communities together to take action against hunger in an easy to understand way

Project SHARE relies on the support of donors, volunteers, third party event organizers and program funders. Thank you for the community support received throughout the year. This support helps us realize our vision to end the struggle against poverty and empower those in need.

THANK YOU!



The Branscombe Family Foundation



Special thanks to the more than 300 dedicated volunteers, like Marie, who support #OurCommunityAtWork everyday!



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Charitable Registration Number: 107861338 RR0001

Learn more about how you can help ensure none of our neighbours go hungry.

www.projectshare.ca/donate



@projectsharenf



@projectSHARE_NF



projectshare_nf



Project SHARE
of Niagara Falls