

Reflecting on the busiest year in our history



Leadership Message

The need for our emergency services continued to grow this year as we saw an alarming 1 in 7 residents of Niagara Falls turning to us to help meet their basic needs. Our capacity to fulfill this need was stretched, and we realized we needed new approaches to help us ensure that none of our neighbours went hungry.

In September 2023, we launched a new satellite food bank in Chippawa Presbyterian Church. This initiative reduced transportation barriers and better serves the Chippawa community. This location is open every Wednesday from 1-6 pm, which are extended hours from our main location to improve our program accessibility. Our delivery service expansion now includes seniors and families with young children (under school age), along with those experiencing physical or mental health barriers. Both initiatives were made possible with a Government of Canada Community Services Recovery Fund grant, administered by United Way Niagara.

Our new refrigerated truck finally arrived and enabled us to pickup and distribute more emergency food. We continued to grow our collaboration with Feed Niagara, sourcing additional funding for bulk food purchasing, and access to off-site storage. This helped us distribute a record amount of over 1.1 million pounds of food to our Niagara Falls neighbours.

We entered into another contract with Niagara Region for homelessness prevention as members of a consortium partnering with; Community Care St. Catharine's and Thorold, The Hope Centre, Community Care West Niagara and The Salvation Army Fort Erie. Despite the housing crisis, our small but mighty housing team was able to support 547 families at risk of homelessness, resulting in many success stories in securing affordable housing for clients.

Our seasonal programs for Christmas and Back to School saw record breaking numbers of families helped with grocery gift cards for their holiday meal and gifts for children. New backpacks, running shoes and school supplies prepared students for the school year launch.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible partnership and generosity of our community partners, donors and volunteers, and the commitment of our staff and board of directors. Our community is truly at work to keep our neighbours fed, housed and healthy.

With gratitude,



Irma Sebastiano, Chair



Pam Sharp, Executive Director



Land Acknowledgement

At Project SHARE, we acknowledge the Niagara Region is situated on treaty land. This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. There are many First Nations, Métis and Inuit from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today. Project SHARE stands with all Indigenous peoples, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.

About Project SHARE

MISSION:

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

VISION:

To end the struggle against poverty and empower people in need in Niagara Falls.

2023-2024 Board of Directors

Chair: **Irma Sebastiano**

Vice Chair: **Anna Luciano**

Past Chair: **Brian Pellow**

Treasurer: **Mick Wolfe**

Secretary: **Trent Dark**

City Council Representative: **Ruth Ann Nieuwesteeg**

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Board Member: **AJ Heafey**

Board Member: **Aly Kassam**

Board Member: **Dinesh Parakh**

Board Member: **Deanna Seguin**

Board Member: **Justin Trasmundi**

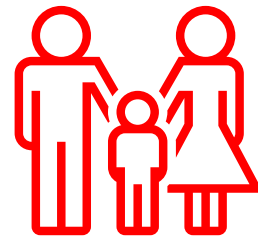
Board Member (until July 2023): **James Rocca**

Board Member (until October 2023): **Perry Wong**

2023-2024 Impact Statistics



- **20 % Increase** in people served vs. prior year
- **4,740** people accessed our services for the **first time**



120 families on average per day,
accessed our essential support services



- **7,251 households** were supported through **73,613** program visits
- **1,655,255 pounds** of emergency food distributed



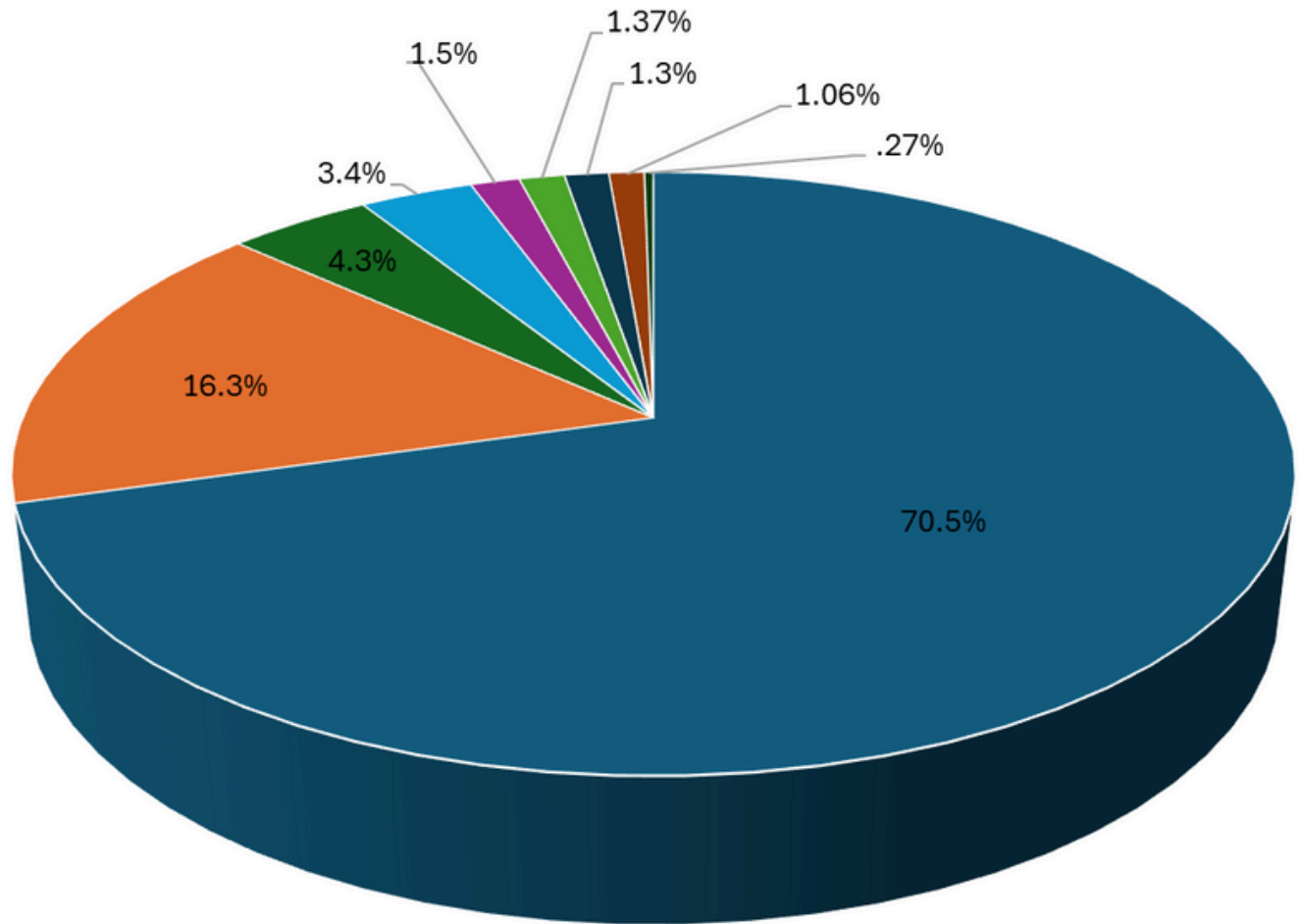
13,995 people were served last year which equates to...



*...*1 in 7 residents of Niagara Falls accessed our
Essential Support Services*

*(*based on 2021 Canada census, Niagara Falls population of 94,415)*

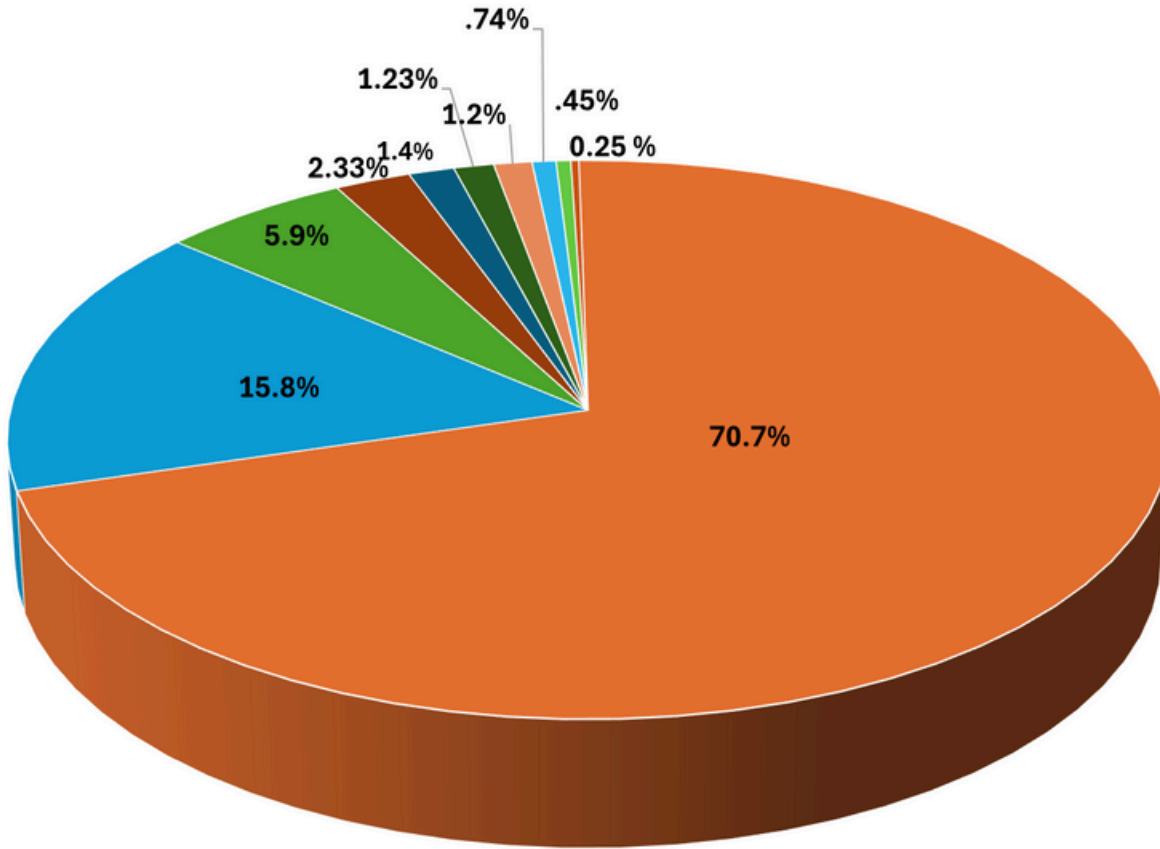
2023-2024 Financials



Revenue \$6,903,706

- Contributed Items (Food, Toys, School Supplies, Clothes, Gift Cards): \$4,864,905
- Monetary Donations & fundraising: \$1,123,341
- Municipal Grant: City of Niagara Falls: \$298,400
- Other Grants: \$235,765
- Federal & Provincial Grants: \$102,517
- Niagara Region - Housing Stability: \$94,353
- Utilities Programs: \$92,237
- Amortization of Deferred Contributions & Miscellaneous \$73,368
- Bingo/Nevada Tickets: \$18,820

2023-2024 Financials



EXPENSES \$7,080,076

- Contributed materials distributed to clients: \$5,005,375
- Client Services: \$1,121,481
- Employee Compensation: \$415,484
- Fundraising: \$165,718
- Depreciation: \$99,807
- Occupancy costs: \$87,302
- Office: \$83,291
- Maintenance: \$52,156
- Delivery Vehicles and Insurance: \$31,942
- Professional Fees: \$17,520

Donations making a difference

New satellite location in Chippawa:

In response to the drastic increase in the demand for our Emergency Food Program, a satellite location opened in September of 2023. This food room is set inside the Chippawa Presbyterian Church, at 8280 Willoughby Drive.

Open Wednesdays from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm with support from volunteers and Project SHARE staff. This location helps serve those within the Chippawa area, removing transportation barriers to the Stanley Avenue site.

The development and launch of the Chippawa location was supported by the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund.

Funded by the
Government of Canada's
Community Services Recovery Fund



New staff position, Volunteer Coordinator:

We welcomed Karen Misek to Project SHARE.

This role was made possible through a Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This role is pivotal as it oversees 345 volunteers who support warehouse and food room responsibilities at both locations.

Our Volunteer Coordinator also organizes volunteer availability for fundraising events, seasonal programs and food drives.

Karen recruits, onboards, schedules and supports all of our volunteers, and prepares a monthly volunteer newsletter.



New Project SHARE truck:

This addition to our food transport system improved our capacity to accept and distribute more emergency food. The refrigeration feature provides safe transport of fresh and frozen food. The built in loading equipment expedites product handling. The larger capacity allows more product per load, reducing total trips. The Chippawa site is now supplied in 1 trip, averaging 700 lbs. of food weekly.



Our Values in action

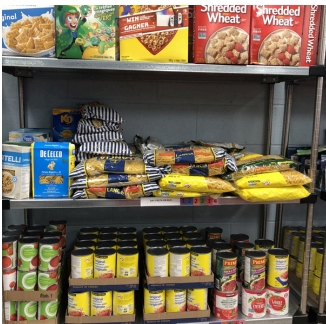
We believe in:

Interacting with all members of our community with dignity, respect, compassion and understanding.

Emergency Food Program:

Our Client Support Workers regularly meet with each client one on one, to connect them with all applicable programs and help meet their individual needs. We customize the food receiving experience to meet the diverse needs of clients, from individuals to families of various sizes. We strive to meet various dietary and cultural food requirements.

- over 1.1 million pounds of food was received, weighed, sorted and distributed
- an increase of over 94,000 lbs. from last year's Emergency Food Program distribution
- both food room locations offered staple items, fresh produce, and frozen options
- essentials such as diapers, feminine hygiene and personal care products were provided



Delivery Service Program:

Project SHARE food transportation drivers provided 721 deliveries to homebound residents. Fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable food were included in each delivery package. Personal care products supplied upon request and availability.

Deliveries encompass the following clients:

- individuals facing physical or mental health barriers
- seniors with limited external support
- families with children below school age

Client sent a note of thanks and photo of a dinner created from food items, delivered by Project SHARE.



*"Having to ask for help is difficult as I adapt to living on odsp. The food donations and deliveries I get from Project share really helps me create healthy meals. I'm grateful for the caring staff and volunteers."
-Anonymous client*

Our Values in action

We believe in:

Working as a team, within Project SHARE and with our community, to provide whatever help is needed.

Volunteers:

Our volunteer team are the everyday heroes at Project SHARE. Without their consistent support, we could not implement the extensive process of emergency food distribution.

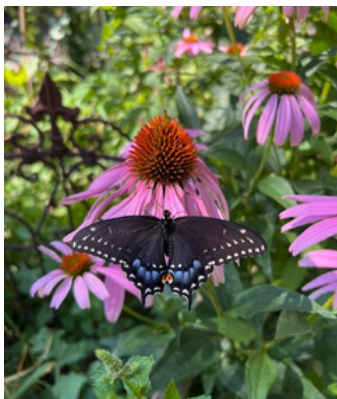
- 345 volunteers support both sites, fundraising events, seasonal programs and food drives
- 120 volunteers per week required to maintain the food bank by sorting, storing and shelving
- 21,126 total hours input, equals 10.8 full time positions or \$428,565.60* annual contribution (* as per 2023-24 Niagara living wage program at \$20.35 / hour)
- assisted clients one on one with the food room process & prepared pre-packed food boxes



Community Garden Program:

Our gardens harvest fresh fruit and vegetables, contributing to the Emergency Food Program.

- 2,563 pounds of fresh produce was grown in our gardens for our Emergency Food Program
- community volunteers help our staff plant, harvest & maintain the gardens
- 3 community garden sites, encompassing 160 individual garden plots located at:
Our Lady of Scapular Parish, The Gate Alliance Church and Westlane Secondary School
- garden plots are offered to local residents to grow their own fresh produce
- our gardens provide therapeutic settings and social interaction to improve overall health



Our Values in action

We believe in:

Providing services based on inclusivity, equity, cooperation and collaboration.

- our Housing Support Program helped 547 families with eviction & housing loss prevention
- staff provide individualized, ongoing case management to reduce barriers
- advocacy and referrals are made to additional community services including legal clinics
- collaborated with OESP (Ontario Electricity Support Program) assisting 189 families
- 101 families supported through NEEF (Niagara Emergency Energy Fund)
- 60 families supported through LEAP (Low-income Energy Assistance Program)

Project SHARE's Housing Programs are funded in part by:



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Our Values in action

We believe in:

Growing an effective organization through open communication and fiscal and social responsibility.

- our Client Support Workers meet one on one with individuals to hear their story and capture program feedback regularly
- formal client surveys are administered three times/year and results are carefully reviewed to ensure our services are client centered and meet their needs. This offers an open, confidential forum, to ensure their voices are heard
- staff participate in community networks with fellow service providers to collaborate, learn best practices and improve community service program delivery
- our Governance committee worked to implement requirements of ONCA (Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act)

Our Values in action

We believe in:

Investing in opportunities for our staff to develop in their roles.

- staff attended the Feed Ontario provincial conference & toured fellow food banks
- housing staff participated in the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness national conference
- First Aid training including CPR & AED completed by staff
- Sexual and Gender Diversity training completed by all staff
- Trauma Informed Care and Motivational Interviewing training was provided for Housing Services Manager to train fellow staff

Our Community at work throughout the year, supporting our clients through events and programs

Meridian Credit Union Coldest Night Of The Year

- 29 teams consisting of 200 walkers, braved the cold in support of our neighbours experiencing hunger and homelessness
- 11 local sponsors supported our event along with numerous individual and team donors
- this was our most successful CNOY event to date



Back to School Program:

- over 900 children received local donations to help them have a more confident and successful start to the school year
- new backpacks were filled with school supplies and snacks
- children age 17 and under also received a new pair of sneakers



Pack the Purolator:

- 8 local grocery stores promoted food donations from shoppers
- 8 Purolator trucks were filled with food donations
- 5,140 pounds of food collected in 1 day, along with monetary donations



Travelling Tapas:

- community members participated in a unique fundraiser experience where they travelled by bus to 4 participating restaurants to enjoy tapas
- participating restaurants donated all food ensuring 100% of ticket sales benefited our emergency support services



Christmas Program:

- our generous community made the holidays brighter for 6,000 people by donating funds, gifts and food
- over 3,100 pounds of toys and gifts were donated
- children 17 and under received gifts
- grocery gift cards were provided for families to purchase their own holiday meal



**IMPACT REPORT
2023-2024**

***Thank you to our many donors, sponsors and partners
who help keep our neighbours fed, housed and healthy.***

