



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 21, 2017**

Volunteers to stuff thousands of backpacks for Ottawa children in need

OTTAWA, ON – On Tuesday, August 22nd, join [the Caring and Sharing Exchange](#), Mayor Jim Watson, corporate sponsor representative, and dedicated volunteers as they come together to fill **thousands of backpacks** for children from families in need. These backpacks will be distributed to agencies across Ottawa later in the week. The event will take place at Westgate Shopping Centre, who has generously provided space for the event for the third year in a row.

This year, the Exchange seeks to help **over 2,500 children** through its Sharing in Student Success program. Despite another significant increase in requests for assistance this year, they aim to provide enough backpacks filled with grade-appropriate school supplies so every child in need starts the school year with their heads held high, ready to learn. Currently, there are **more than 200 children still waiting for assistance**.

“Just last week, we had 450 children on our wait list,” says Cindy Smith, Executive Director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange. “Already that number has dropped, thanks to the amazing response we’ve received from the community so far. As donations continue to come in over the next week, we are very optimistic that we will be able to assist every child in need once again this year.”

EVENT DETAILS:

- What:** Staff, volunteers, Mayor Jim Watson, and other city officials prepare backpacks that will be distributed to families in need across Ottawa.
- Where:** Westgate Shopping Centre, 1309 Carling Ave., Ottawa, ON
- When:** Tuesday, August 22nd, 10am to 1pm – *Mayor Jim Watson will arrive at 10 a.m. with other city officials arriving at 11 a.m.*
- Why:** With **one in six Canadian children experiencing poverty**, this program helps provide relief and dignity to children from families in need, so they can start the school year on an equal footing with their peers.

Help us assist every child on our list once again this year!

Thank you so much to these generous sponsors: Bell, CAA North & East Ontario, Giant Tiger, Hill+Knowlton, Innovapost, Lumentum, Ottawa Community Housing Foundation, Ottawa Public Library, Staples Ottawa-Fairlawn, TELUS, Twice Upon a Time, Quickie, and the many individual donors across the community. It’s thanks to these wonderful supporters that **more than 2,000 children will receive a backpack filled with school supplies this year**.

If you’d like to help, **please make an online donation at www.CaringandSharing.ca or by calling 613-226-6434.**

About the Caring and Sharing Exchange

The Caring and Sharing Exchange helps Ottawa families facing economic hardship during the Christmas and back-to-school seasons. The Coordination Service verifies the names of clients registered by hundreds of local agencies to eliminate duplicate applications, redistributing funds to help as many families as possible.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

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