



IMPACT REPORT

2024-2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

We are proud to reflect on a year of growth, resilience, and deepened connection within our community. In 2024, our shared mission—to uplift and support women experiencing or at risk of homelessness—has expanded beyond the gift of a Shoebox. Together, we are creating powerful moments of healing, empowerment, and human connection.

Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our volunteers and the generosity of our supporters, more than 39,000 women across Canada received Shoebox gifts this year. Each one served as a meaningful reminder that these women are seen, valued, and never alone. These small but heartfelt gestures continue to spark hope and restore dignity in the lives of those facing extraordinary challenges.

Responding to Urgent Needs with Innovative Programming

The social challenges across Canada remain both urgent and complex. With more individuals turning to the charitable sector than ever before, our organization has taken bold steps to respond not only with compassion but with innovation.

In 2024, we proudly launched the Health and Wellness Series, a new initiative designed to support women’s physical, emotional, and mental well-being through accessible, community-based programming. Covering topics such as nutrition, mindfulness, stress management, and self-advocacy, the series provides participants with practical tools and a renewed sense of agency. Feedback from our pilot locations was overwhelmingly positive, confirming the strong demand for safe, inclusive spaces where women can build skills and prioritize their wellness.

This year, we began scaling this program across Ontario, with plans for national expansion in the years ahead. We are especially focused on reaching women from equity-deserving communities, recognizing that mental health challenges are not experienced equally. According to Mental Health Research Canada, women — particularly those who are racialized, newcomers, or living with disabilities — are at significantly higher risk and often face additional barriers to care.

Our programming helps close this gap by offering trusted, trauma-informed support and connecting women to long-term community resources. Every workshop represents a step toward not only improved wellness, but renewed confidence, connection, and opportunity.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

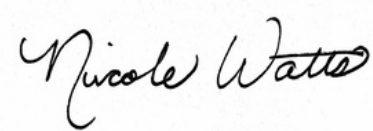
Looking Ahead with Purpose and Hope

As we reflect on another impactful year, we are profoundly grateful for the continued support of our national network of donors, partners, volunteers, and community champions. Your unwavering belief in our mission enables us to grow, adapt, and stand alongside women when they need it most. Together, we are building more than programs — we are fostering a movement rooted in empathy, respect, and empowerment. The road ahead is full of promise, and we are honoured to walk it with you.

Sincerely;



Rosie Smythe
Executive Director



Nicole Watts
Board Chair

A Legacy of Leadership and Empowerment: Farewell to Our Board Chair

After eight years of dedicated leadership on our Board of Directors (2017–2025), we bid a heartfelt farewell to our Board Chair, Nicole Watts. Her unwavering commitment to women’s well-being and empowerment has left a profound and lasting impact on our organization and the communities we serve. Nicole’s vision, passion, and guidance have helped shape who we are today, and her legacy will continue to inspire our work for years to come.

With mixed emotions, we also bid farewell to the wonderful Allie Page, who concludes an incredible nine years of service on our Board of Directors (2016–2025). A steadfast supporter and collaborator since the early days of The Shoebox Project, Allie has generously shared her time, energy, and expertise to help guide and strengthen our organization.

Nicole and Allie’s unwavering commitment has left an indelible mark on our work and mission. Their leadership has helped shape a more compassionate and connected community for women across Canada.

With heartfelt thanks from all of us at The Shoebox Project.



OUR MISSION

To **uplift** and **empower** women who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness through inkind support, education and community participation.



OUR APPROACH

1. Through volunteer-led gift drives that benefit women who are impacted by homelessness, we build compassionate and connected communities.
2. By distributing essentials of daily living to shelters and community agencies, we support women and gender-diverse people facing income inequality.
3. By building awareness and educating youth, we challenge stigmas, fight discrimination, and promote equity.



OUR VISION

To foster **equitable communities** where all women are seen, valued, and treated with dignity and compassion.



ABOUT US

The Shoebox Project for Women is an unaffiliated, non-religious, Canadian charity that supports women experiencing or at-risk-of homelessness. Through our work, we celebrate resilience and diversity, we build awareness, challenge stigma and promote equity.

Headquartered in Toronto, Ontario, the organization is led by an Executive Director, one permanent staff member, and up to five part-time staff members, according to the season. We are guided by our knowledgeable Board of Directors, comprised of twelve seasoned professionals in key areas (Governance, Finance, and Communications, to name a few). With a presence in every province across Canada, our Local Chapters are founded and driven by passionate volunteers. Each Chapter is led by a Local Coordinator who, on behalf of The Shoebox Project and with the support of seasonal volunteers, collects gifts and essentials from members of the community and distributes them during our seasonal drives.

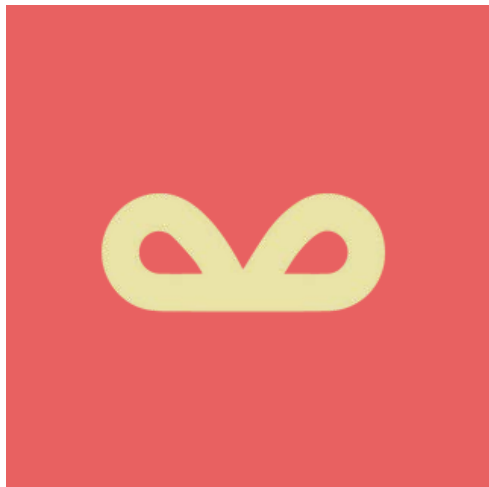
Our signature Shoebox Gift Holiday Drive is designed to foster a more compassionate and connected community, promote equity for all, and inspire recipients with resilience and motivation to thrive. Our overarching goal is to uplift and empower women through in-kind support, education, and community engagement.

Beyond the holiday drive, we are committed to expanding our vision of equitable communities through a newly developed and piloted series of supportive workshops. These workshops help women adopt lifestyle changes that promote physical and emotional well-being. Our goal is to create an inclusive program where all women feel seen, valued, and treated with dignity and respect.

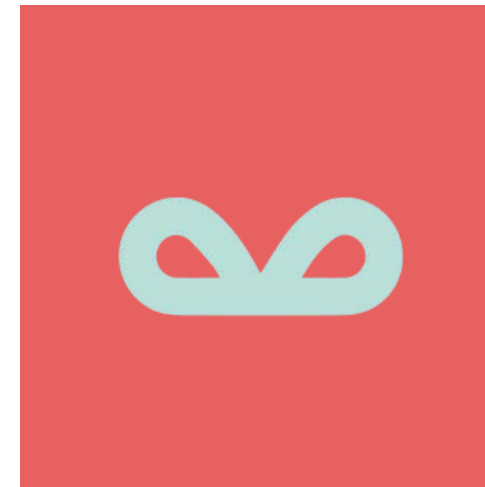
This comprehensive, holistic model enhances access to vital community programs, support systems, and services, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of belonging. Through collective learning and shared experiences, participants build confidence, self-advocacy skills, and a renewed sense of purpose—enabling them to fully engage in society.

ABOUT US

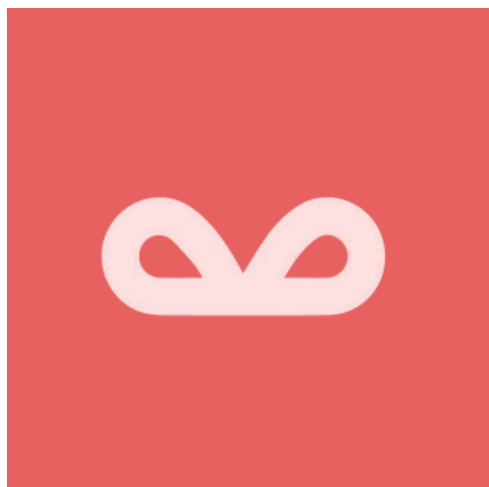
Over the years of serving our community, we have seen firsthand how Shoebox Gifts positively impact both the physical and mental well-being of their recipients. Each carefully selected item holds deep meaning and contributes to their sense of dignity, self-worth, and hope:



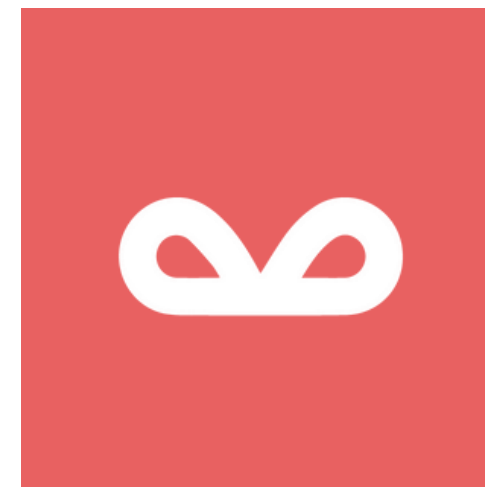
Basic hygiene essentials empower recipients to care for themselves, boosting confidence and self-esteem



Small luxuries—such as lip gloss, nail polish, and mascara—allow for self-expression, helping recipients feel valued and special, an essential step on the path to recovery



Personalized, **handwritten messages of support**, often the most cherished part of a Shoebox Gift, deliver compassion and encouragement from a caring member of their own community, fostering a sense of belonging and resilience



Finally, by **encouraging donors to create gifts** with their own personal touch and heartfelt messages, we deepen their connection to the women they support. This not only humanizes and destigmatizes homelessness but also strengthens our community's sense of empathy and solidarity.

2025–2026 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Continuing to our 2025–2026 strategy we continue to build and expand The Shoebox Project's work and maintain the services and programs that our stakeholders value most. Our critical priorities for the coming years will ensure that we meet the growing need from our community partners, adapt and respond to the evolving economic climate, and continue to operate an effective, accountable, and sustainable organization.

Opportunities

Strengthen Partnerships

We have been collaborating with like-minded organizations that will amplify our impact and drive sustainable change.

We are looking for community groups that will share our new skill building workshops with their client groups so that we have opportunity to build the capacity of both community members and partner organizations. Our focus will be on building long-term relationships rather than short-term engagements. This ensures ongoing support and collaboration for all stakeholders

Enhance Programs

Enhancing community programs can be a multifaceted process involving feedback from community members, innovative approaches to engagement, and the development of strategic partnerships.

We are working diligently for continuous improvement of our programs based on feedback and outcomes that will ensure we meet the evolving needs of our beneficiaries. By continuously engaging with the community and being responsive to their needs, we can enhance the effectiveness and reach of our community programs.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS WORKSHOPS

Launched last year, the Health & Wellness workshop series exceeded our expectations across several key areas. Satisfaction survey results highlighted the workshops as especially impactful, equipping participants with practical tools, strengthening community ties, and increasing awareness of local resources. **With more than 220 participants** many expressed how they valued the inclusive, accessible format and the safe space created for learning and connection.

The program advanced our mission to empower women through in-kind support, education, and community engagement. We look forward to building on this success and expanding our reach.

What Participants and Partners Are Saying

“Your program delivers essentials, but more importantly, it restores dignity, builds resilience, and empowers women.”

– Partner agency

“A powerful reminder that someone out there needs us.”

“These workshops build confidence and remind us we’re not alone.”





HEALTH AND WELLNESS WORKSHOPS

The Shoebox Project's Essential Needs Packages and Health & Wellness Series together offer a holistic, **empowerment-based approach** to supporting women facing systemic barriers such as homelessness, poverty, trauma, and social isolation. By combining immediate relief with longer-term educational and community-building strategies, our programming is designed to address both urgent needs and the root causes of marginalization.

Through our Health & Wellness Series, **women gain** not only **critical health knowledge** and **life skills** but also the **confidence** and **social support needed to take an active role in their own recovery**. Topics such as **nutrition**, **mental wellness**, **financial literacy**, and **self-advocacy** are delivered in a culturally sensitive, community-led environment—building resilience and fostering a sense of belonging.

Research consistently shows that women experiencing homelessness or precarious housing situations benefit most from interventions that integrate basic supports with access to health, education, and community engagement. According to the **Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, wraparound services that include life skills development and peer connection significantly increase housing stability, mental well-being, and overall self-sufficiency** (Gaetz et al., 2013). Similarly, the 2023 Women's Mental Health Report by Mental Health Research Canada highlights that women, particularly those from equity-deserving groups, face ongoing gaps in care despite high help-seeking behaviours, underscoring **the need for community-based, trauma-informed programming**.

Our goal for the workshops this year is to **collaborate with social service agencies across Ontario to become a recognized partner in supporting women's journeys toward renewal, well-being, and independence**. By equipping women with the tools to reclaim their voices and strengthen their connections to community, we help cultivate long-term, sustainable change—benefiting not only individual participants but the communities they rejoin as confident, engaged, and contributing members.



The Shoebox gift reminded me I wasn't invisible. But it was the **workshop that changed everything**.

I finally felt like I had tools to take back control of my life, and I met people who truly understood me.

– Program participant

OUR IMPACT

IN 2024:



39,000

Shoeboxes gifts delivered to women.



\$183,000

Worth of additional gift cards and essential products donated.



460+

Women’s shelters and community agencies supported across Canada.

SINCE 2011:



402,000

Shoeboxes gifts delivered to women.



\$2.6M

Worth of additional gift cards and essential products donated.



620+

Women’s shelters and community agencies supported across Canada.



OUR 2024-2025 LOCAL CHAPTER COORDINATORS

ALBERTA

Heidi Haggard – Calgary
Monique Schilperoord – Edmonton
Helen Thompson – Lethbridge

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Alison Skrepneck – Campbell River
Marisa Bertoli – Kamloops
Taylor Bertoli – Kamloops
Marika Soleil – Kelowna
Laura Kelsey – Nanaimo
Kathy Howarth – Richmond
Karen Fisher-Hagel – Richmond
Shenuri Murdoch – Vancouver
Deb Schenk – Victoria (South Vancouver Island)

MANITOBA

Lindsay Flint
Nina Migalski

NEW BRUNSWICK

Jane McLaughlin – Miramichi
Jessica Hanlon – Saint John

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Morgan Smith – Bay of Islands
Caitlin Lyall – St. John's

NOVA SCOTIA

Catherine Sinclair – Halifax

ONTARIO

Thuy Vanherk – Brampton
Kerri Murphy – City of Kawartha Lakes
Jordan Clancy – Durham Region
Mélanie Massé – Glengarry-Prescott-Russell
Kayla McInnes – Guelph-Wellington
Desiree Turda – GTA Central West
Kelly Mendonca – GTA East
Natalie Cuda – GTA North
Karen Miller – GTA West
Courtenay Skeat – GTA West
Tsion Alemu – GTA Central
Neha Garg – Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant
Stacey Sinclair – Halton
Julie Gordon – Hamilton
Christina Yu – Kingston
Emily Brewer – London
Megan Moorhead – London
Michelle Stanescu – London
Denise Connolly – Mississauga
Linda Bruce – Mississauga
Heather Scott – Muskoka
Christina Clayton – Muskoka
Jessica Boulay – Niagara Region
Shawn Watson – Niagara Region
Sarbjot Ghuman – Northumberland County
Mary Ann Fitzsimmons – Ottawa
Marcia Morris – Ottawa
Stephanie Lobsinger – Sarnia

Annabelle Rayson – Sarnia
Samira Rashidian – Simcoe & Grey County
Jeanine Piche – Sudbury
Nimi Clare-Hemani – Waterloo
Burcu Bayraktar – Windsor
Rosalia Magliocco – York Region

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Alice Toner

QUEBEC

Joanne Bouchard – Montréal
Roxanne Gagné – Montréal
Lora Tombari – Montreal
Marissa Guerriero – Montreal
Pauline Oseña-Gauvin – Quebec City

SASKATCHEWAN

Karen Lovelace – Regina
Haley Sturgess – Regina
Grace Hominuke – Saskatoon

OUR 2024-2025 SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

LOCAL CHAPTERS:

To our 800+ Chapter-Support Volunteers from coast to coast—thank you. Your time, heart, and unwavering dedication during our Holiday and seasonal drives are the backbone of everything we do.

We are continually inspired by your passion, your energy, and your commitment to uplifting women in your communities. Your generosity doesn't just fill shoeboxes—**it builds connection, hope, and belonging across Canada.**

We are truly honoured to stand alongside each of you in this movement of kindness.



Thank you!



While we appreciate every supporter, – big and small, we want to give a special shout-out to the following partners, who have gone above and beyond to help us in our work.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to:



THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE DONORS & FOUNDATIONS

Donations of \$10,000 and over

Shoppers Drug Mart
TD Bank
J. Choo Canada Inc.
Allstate Insurance Company of Canada
Frontlines.Health Foundation at Toronto Foundation
L.I.U.N.A Ontario Provincial District Council
TELUS Friendly Future Foundation
Ontario Medical Foundation & Ontario Medical Association
Walmart Canada Corp
The Tenaquip Foundation
Ontario Realtors Care Foundation
Audrey S. Hellyer Charitable Foundation
Peel Regional Labour Council
Sifton Family Foundation
Sovereign Insurance

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE DONORS & FOUNDATIONS

Donations of \$1,000 and over

Adviso Conseil
Argo Development Corporation
C.F.U.W. Richmond
Caledon Ski Club Limited
Cambridge Merc
Canadian Women in Medicine
Cascades Canada ULC
Cavendish Farms Corporation
Charities Aid Foundation of Canada
CN
Coastal Community Credit Union
Couverdon Real Estate – Jubilee Heights
Devon Communications
Division 660
Dream Office Management Corp.
DRI Foundation
Dynacare Accounts Payable Department
Enterprise Holdings
Entertainment Partners Canada
Epic Investment Services LP
Foresters Financial
Foundation St-Hubert
GE Healthcare Canada
Groeware Technologies
Hallmark Giving Foundation RE/MAX Hallmark
Hamilton Professional Fire Fighters Assoc.
Hamilton Professional Assoc.
Hapag-Lloyd Canada Inc.
Hudsons Canadian Hospitality Ltd
J.D. Irving, Limited / Midland Transport Limited
Jewish Community Foundation
Klick Inc
MacLead Group Incorporated
McKesson
Meridian Credit Union

Newfoundland Labrador Liquor Corporation
Niagara Regional Labour Council
Niro Family Foundation
NOVA Chemicals
Nox Wine Bar
PayPal Giving Fund Canada
PayPal Social Impact Fund
Pembina Pipeline Corporation
Platform Properties
RBC Foundation
RGF Integrated Wealth Management
Rotary Club of Campbell River
Rotary Club of Norfolk Sunrise
Rotary Club Of Port Hardy
Rotary Club of Richmond Sunrise
Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary – Streetsville Branch
Royal Canadian Legion No. 255 Branch – Special Lottery
Sarnia Community Foundation
Saskatoon Twin Charities Inc
Streetsville Lions Club c/o Vic Johnston Community Centre
Teamsters Ontario Women's Caucus
The Guelph Community Foundation/AlectraCARES Community Support Program
The May Court Club of St.Catharines
The Upside Down Tree Inc.
TransCanada Pipelines Limited
Traquair Family Foundation
Unifor Social Justice Fund
Weight Loss by Gina
Yamaha Motor Canada Ltd
Yelp Foundation



THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE DONORS & FOUNDATIONS

Donations of \$500 and over

Ace Machining Limited
Alectra Inc
Barrantagh Investment Management
Best Buy
Brick Orillia Midland
Canon Canada
CHRLDR
Comput-a-Search Inc
Dossier
Dr. A. Kenny Medical Prof Corp
Eberspaecher Climate Control Systems Canada Inc.
Essential Physiotherapy – S. Moore
Physiotherapy Professional Corporation
Georgina Auto Glass Ltd.
Grand Valley Institution For Women In Kitchener
InFocus Accountants LLP
Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church
KPMG UK
Ladies of the Knitting club of the Chartwell
Morguard Investment Limited
RBC Dominion Securities
Rotary Club of Simcoe
The Clark Companies Inc.
The Lion Club of Port Carling
United Way Niagara
Vincent Massey Collegiate



THANK YOU TO OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS!

Donations of \$500 and over

Alana Krenz
Andrew Malach
Angela Petherick
Barbara Langille
Bari Moore
Brian Jones
Carmela Tartaglia
Caroline Mulroney Lapham
Catherine Burgess
Charmis De Boer
Chris Love

Dan Brown
Darlene Bisailon
Derrick Smeeton
Emma Murray
Fredrik Liljegren
Hamaad Haq
Heather Colquhoun
Jaskinder Dulay
Jessica Caldwell
Jillian McLaughlin
Katy Mulroney

Kinza Maxood
Kristin Nakrayko
Laurie Lasovich
Lesli MacLean
Linda Mayner
Louise McIsaac
Lynn MacMillan
Melissa Paquette
Melora Parker
Michele Cupit
Michelle Stanley

Pat Sims-Eastwood
Paul Dhillon
Phiphone Troussicot
Preeti Luthra
Quincy Cheung
Ramdeo Rampaul
Rick Wadsworth
Robyn Bowen
Rudy Sankovic
Samantha Harvie
Scott Amis

Sheri Watson
Sommar Brown
Susan Ratz
Susanne Thomsen
Teresa Sarkesian
Theresa Hall
Tracy Tennant

THANK YOU TO OUR IN KIND DONORS!

Access Storage
Alyxandra & Daniel Brown
Arivial Management Ltd. dba Amaterasu
Beauty
BKIND Enterprises
Brador Sportswear Co. Ltd
Brandon Sabga
Buttercup Soapworks
Chakra-Chic
Cheekbone Beauty
Cheeks Ahoy
Cutie Bum Creations

Do-Gree Fashions Ltd
Dorfin Inc.
East Coast Glow
Emballage Tout
Heather Urquhart
Kimmel Sales Ltd
L'Occitane En Provence
Laura Feick
Lisa Maxwell Jewelry Inc.
Marion Mochrie
Martyn Iles
Melina Moran

Melissa Zuker
MERIT Beauty (Power Beauty Co)
Mint Room Studios
Mimi & August
Nelson Naturals
Notice Hair Company Inc.
Papp International Inc
Perrin Inc.
Puresource Corp
Quality Home Products
Sciencederm/Thoya Laboratoire
Self-Stor

Steve Schreter
Thornhill Family Orthodontics
Two Men and A Truck
Wrappr

2024–2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nicole Watts
Chair

•

Tracee Smith
Secretary

•

James Albrecht
Treasurer

•

Shannon Murree

•

John–Paul Ricchio

•

Allie Page

•

Tessa Hadzipetros

•

Heather Colquhoun

•

Danielle Anisef

•

Raly Chakarova

•

Victoria Mancinelli

•

Kathleen Walsh



2024–2025 HEAD OFFICE STAFF

Rosie Smythe
Executive Director

•

Karen Paget
Manager, Volunteer Services

•

Naomi Benoist
Executive Assistant/Bookkeeper

•

Edidiong Abba
Administrative Assistant

•

Kelly Nguyen
IT Administrator

•

Mili Vega
Workshop Coordinator

•

Alana Tavares
Guelph Humber Placement
Student

•

Victoria Galati
Guelph Humber Placement
Student



CONTACT US

The Shoebox Project For Women

108-1485 Dupont Street

Toronto, ON M6P 3S2

info@shoeboxproject.com

shoeboxproject.ca

Charity Registration

#833095045RR0001

DONATE



The Shoebox Project's head office occupies the ancestral, traditional and contemporary lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. In particular, our office resides on land ceded in the Treaty No. 13 of 1805, otherwise known as the Toronto Purchase. We recognize and support the Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. In offering this land acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty, history and experiences.