



# **COMMUNITY CREW 2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT**





# A Message from the Board Chair

As Interim Board Chair, it is an honour to reflect on the unwavering dedication, passion, and hard work that have shaped our organization's journey. As you read through the 2024 Community Impact Report for Community Crew, I hope you will feel inspired by the remarkable strides we've made together and the collective impact we continue to create.

This past year brought its share of challenges, yet it also witnessed significant triumphs—thanks to the collaborative efforts of our staff, volunteers, and, most importantly, our generous donors. Your continued support has been instrumental in empowering children, strengthening ties with local businesses, and fostering a deep sense of community engagement.

Following the resignation of our Executive Director, Community Crew has undergone an exciting phase of growth and restructuring. We are pleased to welcome our Director of Donor Relations, Katy Herron, and Director of School Programming, Andrew Rutledge, both of whom are dedicated to transforming children's lives and furthering our mission in the Niagara Region. Their leadership will play a vital role as we continue to inspire and equip the leaders of tomorrow, providing them with the resources they need to make a lasting difference.

Often, it's the smallest gestures that create the biggest impact. Whether it's an encouraging note in a lunch, a warm smile, or a high-five during an after-school program, these simple acts of kindness help children gain the confidence and hope they need to succeed in life.

One of our most significant achievements this year was securing a permanent operational home at Central Niagara. This state-of-the-art facility has not only expanded our operational capacity but has also created a collaborative space for our team to work more effectively together. We are profoundly grateful to the Grantham Optimist Club for their unwavering support, which has allowed us to better serve the community during this period of transition.

In response to growing community needs, Community Crew also expanded its school lunch program in 2024, supporting after-school initiatives and reaching even more children. Volunteers remain the heartbeat of our organization, from board leadership to preparing and delivering lunches, hand-writing inspirational notes, and assisting with after-school programs. Their tireless dedication is the driving force behind our success.

Looking ahead to 2025, Community Crew is excited for the new opportunities on the horizon. We are committed to broadening our reach and enriching our programs, with the goal of inspiring and empowering children across Niagara—our home and the community we serve.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors, partners, and the entire Community Crew family. Your belief in our mission fuels our resolve to create lasting change. Thank you for your unwavering support.

In closing, I want to express my sincere appreciation to our board members, staff, and volunteers. Together, we are not just building programs—we are building a legacy. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey.

Sincerely,  
**Trudy Schroeder**  
Interim Board Chair | Community Crew







# Community Crew 2024 Community Impact Report

FUELING POTENTIAL. ONE LUNCH AT A TIME.

## 2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### LUNCH PROGRAM

- **1,500 children** enrolled on average, identified as food insecure by their schools
- **160,164 lunches** served across 33 Niagara Region schools
- Lunches provided **3 days per week**, using **6 rotating** menus that include all food groups plus snacks
- **15+ daily dietary accommodations**, including Halal, vegetarian, and gluten-free options
- Lunches packed in biodegradable boxes, using food from both local growers and commercial suppliers
- Serving **DSBN and Catholic schools** in: St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Thorold, and Fort Erie



## HIGHLIGHTS

- This summer we moved our operations to the Central Niagara facility, located at 680 York Rd, NOTL. This 70,000+ square foot facility offers increased physical space for expansion, meeting room spaces, a large commercial kitchen, ample parking, and increased exposure
- Lunch pack happening for 30 out of the 33 schools at Central Niagara, starting Sept. 2024.
- 3 Fort Erie schools are still packed and delivered through our partnership with Strong Fort Erie Neighbourhoods charity.

## SCHOOLS WE SERVED IN 2024

- **ST. CATHARINES**  
Connaught | Edith Cavell | E.I. McCulley | Ferndale | Lincoln Centennial | Prince of Wales | Jeanne Sauve | Burleigh Hill | Harriet Tubman  
St. Alfred | St. Anthony | St. Denis | St. Nicholas
- **NIAGARA FALLS**  
Heximer Ave | James Morden | Simcoe Street | Valley Way | Greendale  
St. Patrick | Father Hennepin
- **FORT ERIE**  
Peace Bridge | John Brant | Our Lady of Victory
- **WELLAND**  
Diamond Trail | Plymouth | Princess Elizabeth | Ross | Quaker Road  
St. Andrew | St. Augustine | St. Mary
- **THOROLD**  
Prince of Wales | Ontario Public



# Our Programs and Highlights

## YOUTH EXPERIENCES

### ECO DRIVE FUNDRAISER

In collaboration with AIM Recycling, students collected batteries, cans, and recyclables. Funds raised went to Community Crew, and classrooms were rewarded with pizza parties.





## SHAW THEATER TRIPS

Thanks to a generous donor, students experienced live theater for the first time:

- James Morden (Niagara Falls) – “The Secret Garden” + workshop and lunch



- Prince of Wales (St. Catharines) – “A Christmas Carol” + cast meet-and-greet  
“This was my best day ever!” – Grade 8 Student





## KIDS HELPING KIDS

- Royal Oak Elementary students packed lunches and wrote notes





- Ridley College students supported lunch prep and snack drives



- Brock University students, including from the Goodman School of Business, packed lunches and raised funds



# Signature Elements

## HANDWRITTEN INSPIRATIONAL NOTES

Every Tuesday lunchbox includes a handwritten note of encouragement.

- Over 50,000 notes packed annually
- Notes written by volunteers across Canada

Teachers report students cherish these notes and often keep them. This personal touch sets Community Crew apart.





# “Fun-Raising” & Community Events

In 2024, we held over 50 events that brought people together while raising funds:

## FITNESS FUNDRAISER



## ONTARIO TEACHERS PENSION PLAN EVENT AT QUEENS LANDING





## WINE/COCKTAIL/TAPAS

- Jane (center), a Community Crew Volunteer was our hostess and organizer of this great event.





## OTHER FUNDRAISING EVENT PICS

- Bliss Aveda Salon, 24 Hrs of Haircuts for 24 years of Service—fundraiser for Community Crew



## TRUNK OR TREAT





# Snack Drives

A record-breaking 23,893 snacks collected in 2024!

Snack drives continue to unite classrooms, churches, and offices around our cause.



## LUNCH PACK VISITORS

Organizations joined us for team-building and to give back:

- Central Community Church
- Bosch Rexroth
- Walker Industries
- RBC & RBC Dominion Securities
- Meridian Bank
- Niagara IceDogs
- Mayor Siscoe's Office (St. Catharines)







# Volunteer Impact

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF COMMUNITY CREW – IN 2024, THEY DONATED A RECORD 6,087 HOURS OF THEIR TIME.

## BREAKDOWN OF VOLUNTEER HOURS

MONDAY PREP TEAM:	810 HOURS
TABLE SETUP:	54 HOURS
MORNING SETUP (COFFEE, ETC.):	3 HOURS
FOOD SETUP:	180 HOURS
LUNCH PACKING TEAM:	3,132 HOURS
DRIVERS:	1,458 HOURS
BINGO VOLUNTEERS:	450 HOURS

We welcomed **many new volunteers**, and are so thankful for the ongoing dedication of returning ones.





# Celebrating Our Donors

We are deeply grateful for the generous individuals and organizations that empower us to serve our community.









