



# THE FOOD SHARING PROJECT

Providing Nutritious Food to Students across  
Kingston, Frontenac, and Lennox & Addington



# 2023-24

ANNUAL REPORT

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I'm going to call the 2023-2024 school year, "the year of hope". The year before was financially challenging as we struggled significantly to meet the increased demand created by more students needing more food in an environment of high food costs. We asked for help then and in 23/24, it continued to come from all corners of the community as donations increased dramatically from individuals, school councils, organizations and others. We came closer to meeting the high needs school coordinators saw every day. But closer wasn't good enough and we recognized that a small non-profit like The Food Sharing Project couldn't address the crisis of food insecurity in KFL&A, which increased from 1 in 9 households in 2022 to 1 in 6 households in 2023, on its own. It was time to involve the federal government and secure funding for a National School Food Program.



**BRENDA MOORE**

BOARD CHAIR

We joined the national campaign to lobby for a National School Food Program to receive funding in the March 2023 federal budget and brought the voice of Kingston school communities to Parliament Hill. Students wrote letters to Prime Minister Trudeau answering the question "What does school food mean to you?" and we made sure their messages landed on his desk and the desks of other government leaders. We encouraged school communities to sign petitions which sent a strong message of support for a National School Food Program and were thrilled when MP for Kingston and the Islands, Mark Gerretsen stood up in the House of Commons to read each petition. Then on April 1, 2024, we were overjoyed when the federal budget included \$1billion over five years to fund a National School Food Program.

It was a testament to the power of advocacy and we were very hopeful that the federal funding would encourage the provincial government to increase the core funding we receive through the Student Nutrition Program, which hasn't increased in ten years. More importantly, we were hopeful that more students would have access to the nutritious food they need to thrive and meet their full potential. Success starts with good food and our children deserve nothing less.

As always, our staff team of Executive Director Andy Mills, Brian Cassidy, Warehouse Manager, Carissa Bird, Administrative Assistant, Robert O'Brien, Delivery Driver did an exemplary job of making sure food with an average value of \$20,000 went from our warehouse to students every week of the school year. We wrapped the year up with a fond farewell to Dave Mortensen as he retired after 20 years of dedicated service.

## Message from the Chair...continued

A few months into the 2024-2025 school year and we have just celebrated the signing of the agreement between the provincial and federal government. We are hoping to hear the details of how the first installment of the National School Food Program funding will flow to us very soon. More robust school nutrition programs are on the horizon and our Board and staff, with the help of our amazing donors and supporters, are unwavering in their dedication to providing the good food students need so they can take advantage of everything that school offers them.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This past year was a transitional one in my five years with The Food Sharing Project. Our staff team transitioned as Dave Mortensen retired after 20 years of dedicated service, Brian Cassidy replaced him, and we added Carissa Bird to the office. The renewing of our lease energized us to improve the efficiency of our physical space. With the announcement of the National School Food Program, we are preparing to support school meal programs more completely. Thanks to grants from several foundations, we have been developing our fund raising strategies and French language tools.

All of these things move The Food Sharing Project forward, but we never lose sight of our goal of being a provider of nutritious food for any student who needs it, so they can take advantage of all that school has to offer. And we always remember to be grateful to our donors, partners, supporters and our volunteers who continue to do the heavy lifting. I am looking forward to see what 2024-25 has in store!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cindy Miller'.

# SCHOOL FOOD FACTS

## ● STATS

- 400,000 breakfasts and lunches were served
- 800,000 hearty snacks were provided
- 88 schools in 4 boards received food each week
- 1150 volunteer hours were logged in the warehouse and for food deliveries
- 300 students volunteered in their schools for the SNP

# INTRODUCING FIELD TRIPS

## ● GRADES 6–8

- In 2023 we introduced interactive school field trips to rave reviews. A visit to The Food Sharing Project allows students to see first-hand the effort that goes into having food at school.



# A YEAR IN REVIEW

## Operations

- Warehouse Manager Dave Mortensen retired in June 2024 after 20 years working with The Food Sharing Project and Brian Cassidy stepped into the role. Brian has extended that role to oversee our weekly volunteers.
- Carissa Bird started in September 2023 as our office administrator. Alec Mills stepped in, part time to deliver food from September 2023 - January 2024. Robert O'Brien started in January 2024 to deliver food two days per week.
- We renewed our lease which prompted the warehouse to get new shelving which created additional storage.

## Community Outreach

- In partnership with Kids Against Hunger Canada, we coordinated two events at which over 25,000 rice meals were packaged for distribution to schools and community food partners. Thanks to our Rotary partners for this opportunity.
- We hosted a Donor Appreciation at the warehouse on June 17. It was great to connect in person and share stories about the impact of The Food Sharing Project.

## Fundraising

- We hosted our Boots & Buckles Hoedown Fundraiser on May 25th, 2023 which raised over \$31,000.
- The Zal & Rose Yanovsky Breakfast Fund fundraiser celebrated its 20th anniversary at Chez Piggy and Pan Chancho December 12-13, 2023 which raised over \$46,000.
- School boards added the option for families to donate through their school's online payment systems, which yielded over \$27,000 in donations this year.
- Andy and Carissa decorated Smile Cookies at Tim Hortons on behalf of the United Way KFL&A in November 2023.

## Advocacy

- MPP Marit Stiles came to visit the warehouse in September 2023 to have a tour and discuss the challenges facing school food programs.
- Mark Gerretsen, MP Kingston and the Islands, read signed petitions from many school communities in the House of Commons to help propel the development of the National School Food Program.
- Students expressed their feelings on "why school food is important to them." These cards made it all the way to Ottawa where our board chair, Brenda Moore, along with other advocates went to rally for a National School Food Program.

# Boots & Buckles Hoedown

In May 2024, FSP hosted the Boots & Buckles Hoedown fundraiser at the Italo-Canadian Club. With it came the return of our revered Talents and Treasures silent auction. Special thanks to all of our donors who supplied over 130 items for the auction. The evening was complete with delicious themed food stations, country & western decor, and live music from Steve Cheesman and The Heeters. The event raised over \$31,000. Thank you to all those who came out to support our event.



# NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM

On April 1, 2024, The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced a new National School Food Program. *“With an investment of \$1 billion over five years, the Program, included in Budget 2024, will launch with a target of providing meals to 400,000 more kids every year, beyond those served by existing school food programs. This is a generational investment in the future of our kids, and we’re going to work with provinces and territories and Indigenous partners to ensure every child has the food they need.”* Justin Trudeau, PM  
[Click here for full press release](#)

This announcement is an incredible step forward and we’re thrilled to know that supporting students’ access to nutritious food is a national priority. At the same time, we recognize that there is still work to be done to ensure that students have consistent and equitable access to healthy meals at school. We are hopeful that this initiative will provide much-needed resources to address the growing need for food support in schools. We look forward to collaborating with our community partners, including school boards, to maximize its impact and ensure that no student is left hungry at school.



# DONATIONS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

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**Anna & Edward C. Churchill  
Foundation**

**LiUNA Local 183**

**Britton Smith Foundation  
Spin to Win Napanee**

**Estate of Larry G. Gibson  
St. John's Anglican Church  
Portsmouth**

**Newburgh-Camden Lions Club  
Storrington Lions Club  
NewVidity Group  
Sophie Pepin  
Adam & Esther Young  
ETFO Limestone Local  
118501 Ontario Ltd.**

**Kerri Hoffman  
Maida Williams  
Sandra D. Kelly  
House of Angelis  
Isabel Spratt  
Neighbourhood Sharing Centre**

**St. Andrew's by the Lake United  
Church  
Steelworkers Humanity Fund  
Kingston Frontenacs Hockey  
Club  
Zion United Church  
B'Nai Brith Lodge 1191 Kingston  
Fidelity Investments  
IG Wealth Management -  
Kingston**

**David & Alberta Saunders  
Kim Dressel  
Barry Campbell  
Lucie Moussu  
Probus Club Kingston  
Frontenac  
Sandra Fletcher  
Napanee Lioness Club  
Shirley Hicks  
HayBoon Mak**

**Janet Leung  
Janet Oullahan  
Knights of Columbus, St  
Joseph's 11670  
Lawrence Vandermeer  
OPSOA  
Peter Goth  
The Dr. Samuel S. Robinson  
Charitable Foundation**

**...and many more. Thank you!**



## ● FUNDING & SERVICE PARTNERS

We appreciate the ongoing support of our core funding partners, and community partners who support our mission.



**United Way**  
Kingston, Frontenac,  
Lennox and Addington



Ontario  
Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium  
de l'Ontario

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



**Community Foundation**  
for Kingston & Area



**get cracking**  
Egg Farmers of Ontario



**KFL&A**  
Public Health



**Lionhearts** INC.

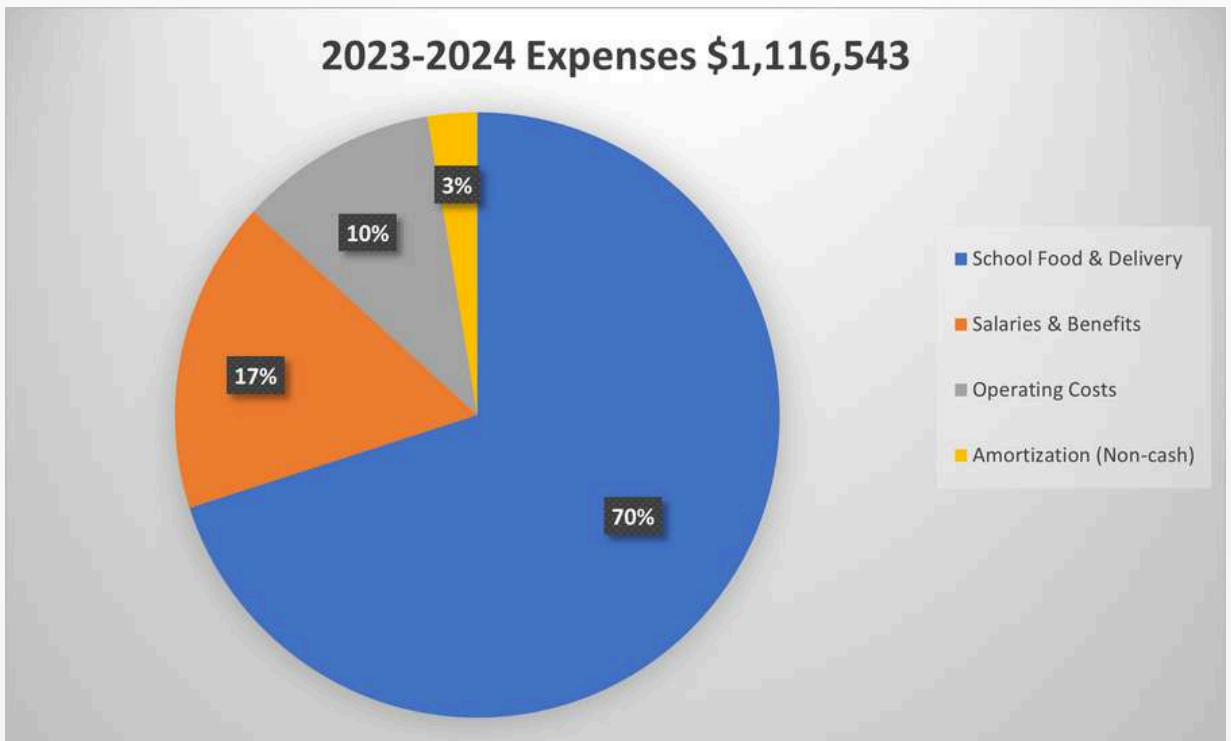
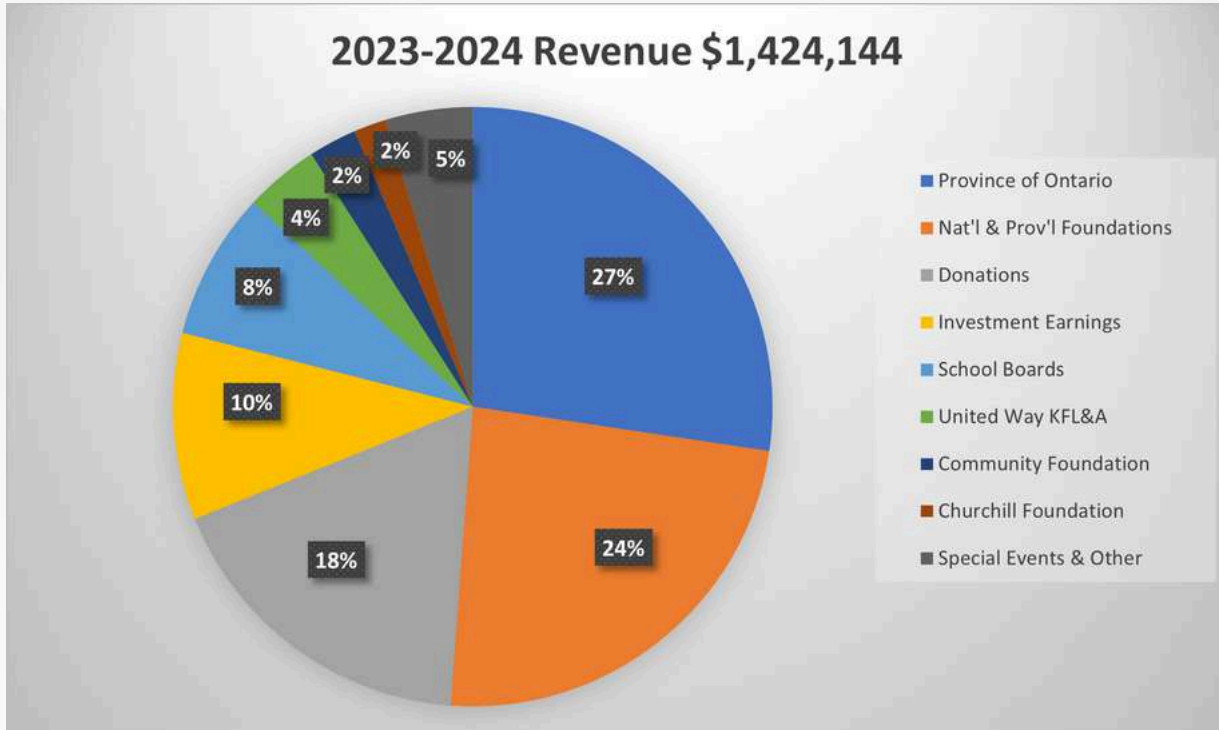
## ● THIRD PARTY FUNDRAISING

Thanks to these groups for fundraising on our behalf. We are grateful to be considered as the charity of choice for these local groups.



Charitable registration number 11893 3522 RR0001

# 2023-2024 FINANCIAL REPORT



For more details please contact the office or download our audited statements from the website.

[www.foodsharingproject.org](http://www.foodsharingproject.org)

# WHAT EDUCATORS ARE SAYING



Many of our students rely on food sharing to meet their daily nutritional needs. Many students note that it is the only place that they have access to milk and look forward to coming to school for it.

We have several students who rely on the food program not only for food but for the connection that is provided by the support staff that helps run the program.

A student who has an unstable home life doesn't always come to school with a nutritious lunch. On those days, if we provide food for him, his day honestly gets better. He demonstrates less frustration, listens better to teachers and he interacts better with peers.

We have helped ensure equity among all students by offering healthy food to everyone. Students are better able to concentrate, and often feel more confident and sociable once given nutritious food. This year, a student from a food insecure family was able to have a consistent lunch and afternoon snack provided by the Food Sharing Program. She displayed better self-regulation throughout the day and stayed in her classroom for more of the day.

This program has had a huge impact on the school climate. There seems to be less anxiety during recess time as everyone knows they can grab something to eat if they need it with no concerns of stigma attached to it.

We have many marginalized students at the Centre including a few that are homeless. In particular, one student suddenly became homeless and the food provided by the Food Sharing project kept a smile on his face. A warm meal and some snacks to go helped eliminate one of his struggles.

Many of our students depend on the food sharing project, in a few cases it is the reason that gets kids to school because they have nothing at home but know they will be fed at school.

Sometimes our food share is the only food kids can rely on eating in the day.

We have a number of students who use our lunch program daily. Without food sharing being offered they would be going all day without a lunch.



# OUR STAFF



**Andy Mills**  
Executive Director



**Brian Cassidy**  
Warehouse Manager



**Carissa Bird**  
Office Administrator



**Alec Mills**  
PT Delivery Driver



**Gillian Moss**  
Accountant



**Robert O'Brien**  
PT Delivery Driver

## Board of Directors

Brenda Moore, Chair  
Tom Gingrich, Vice-Chair  
Cathy Summers, Secretary  
Michael Murphy, Treasurer  
Janice Ezard  
Laurie French  
Sy Golosky

Michael Higginson  
Krista Johnson  
Jessica Hrgetic, Health Unit Rep  
Judith Brown, LDSB Rep  
Kathy Turkington, ALCDSB Rep  
Shawn Murphy, ALCDSB Rep

## School Board Partners

