

# Celebrating our Charities Ceremony Brings Hope to Our Local Community



HGCC Foundation committee members join with local charity partners and volunteers at last week's outstanding Celebrating our Charities ceremony.

A record year for giving through the HGCC Foundation was celebrated last week as our partner charities and their member sponsors gathered in the Great Hall for an inspiring evening of hope.

With thankful hearts and a desire to help those in need within our community, 12 local charities and community groups, including the HGCC Foundation Bursary Fund, received cheques totalling \$363,000 – the largest single cheque presentation in Foundation history.

Thirteen years ago, a person knocked on Father Tony O'Dell's door at St. Patrick's Church in downtown Hamilton and asked him if he had any food. Father Tony made them a sandwich. Since that time, De Mazenod Door Outreach has provided over 1 million meals to those in need and currently serves 700 meals daily.

"It's a really amazing charity. They do a lot of good. In the church world, this year we are celebrating our Jubilee; every 25 years is a jubilee year, and this year the theme is hope," said Francis Doyle, Director of Stewardship and Development at De Mazenod Door. "It strikes me that there is a thread that weaves through all of the charities here this evening. I think the thread that each of these organizations is providing is ultimately hope. Hope to those they serve. My message to you today is thank you, a very



HGCC member sponsor Joe Guagliano Sr. presents Francis Doyle, Director of Stewardship and Development at De Mazenod Door Outreach, with a cheque for \$25,000.

sincere thank you. I know a few of you in the room, and this is just one area that you support, but you also support a whole ton of activities and charities in this city and this region. What you are providing is hope. Please never lose sight of how thankful we are as charitable partners for the hope you provide to us and the hope that you provide to all these people. It is a truly profound gift. I know it's fatiguing when the need continues, but please don't stop giving because the gift of hope to those we all serve is truly and profoundly

a remarkable gift. We are truly thankful to all of you, to Joe, to the whole community at Hamilton G&CC, because we rely on this truly incredible gift."

For 2025, the Borthwick Memorial Golf Tournament generated total revenue of just over \$390,000, with an additional \$93,000 from Par for a Cause.

This is the second year of a three-year funding commitment to the majority of the charities that includes 2024, 2025

and 2026 in an effort to provide financial stability to organizations when rising food costs, a lack of affordable housing, unemployment and significant inflation are making it challenging for many individuals and families to have a roof over their head or make ends meet at the end of the day.

“On behalf of Ancaster Community Services, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the HGCC Foundation, the membership, the Board and everyone who supported the Borthwick golf tournament this year,” says Executive Director Kaylee Norwood.

“Our motto is giving where you live, and tonight you are living that philosophy in action. Your generosity directly supports those in need right here in Ancaster. They could be your neighbours, your friends, your community members. They all rely on us every day. We are honoured to be one of the many charities supported by the Foundation, and we are especially grateful for the continued commitment to ACS.

This consistent support enables us to plan ahead, strengthen our program, and meet the growing needs in our community. Over the past four years, I have had the opportunity to be here and speak to you all, and each year I shared the same theme: that the need in our community continues to grow. This year, of course, is no different. Our food bank here in Ancaster has seen an over 50 percent increase in demand, as well as in our senior programming. As we prepare for our annual holiday hamper program, please know that your donation will have a direct and meaningful impact on local Ancaster families and children to enjoy a brighter holiday season right here at home.”

As charity representatives accepted the cheques on behalf of their organizations, they all said a big thank-you to the HGCC membership for being so generous with their time and money in organizing and participating in the two excellent fundraisers—The Borthwick and PFAC. Many shed some light on their daily struggles—and victories—and how difficult it is to raise funds to support much-needed and strained programs.

“CAP is a support organization for those who are dealing with cancer,” said Sheila Drury, who is the HGCC member sponsor for the Cancer Assistance Program. “It’s a delight to be back here for the second year,” added Executive Director Debbie Logel Butler. “This year, I’m really pleased to share with you what your gift



**HGCC member sponsor Jennifer Jewitt-Matsumoto presents Ancaster Community Services Executive Director Kaylee Norwood with a cheque.**



**Debbie Logel Butler from the Cancer Assistance Program with member sponsor Sheila Drury.**

has meant for us. Last year, with your first gift, you helped to provide 15,021 rides, 2,242 doorstep deliveries, 2,285 parking spaces, 2,072 pieces of loaned equipment, 12 educational seminars, 10,907 personal care items and 2,045 packages of Ensure. In addition to all those numbers, what you have really provided is hope. You may have provided someone with a ride, and they have had a laugh with their driver.

You might have provided a hug if someone came to the centre and they needed to know where to get help. You might have provided a cup of coffee and a cookie to one of our 192 volunteers as they waited for their client. You have provided fuel for one of our drivers. All of these things that we don't measure, but please know that from the bottom of our hearts, we are so grateful for your gift, and

you are making a difference to those who have cancer, so thank you."

Since its establishment in 2012, the HGCC Foundation has raised and distributed over \$5 million to local charities. HGCC Club President Brian Bidulka welcomed the guests and commended the groups for their commitment to making Hamilton a stronger community, beginning at the grassroots level. Chief Operating Officer Alan Carter echoed those comments. HGCC Foundation Chair Ken Lancaster provided some background about how it all works.

"On behalf of the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, I want to begin by extending our heartfelt thanks to Alan Scott and Ken and Deb Lancaster for your continued support," added Executive Director Donna Zan. "I would also like to express our appreciation to the event organizers and board members whose dedication and hard work made the Dick Borthwick Memorial Golf Tournament an incredible event. Your support is making a real and lasting difference in the lives of children and youth in our community through the KIN program's path to society. When children and youth are not able to live safely in their parental home, many are placed with family members who are trusted individuals in their community, people they know and already love. Keeping children within their family network ensures they receive care and support that respects their cultural and personal identity, laying the Foundation for long-term success and well-being. We know that children placed in KIN Care do much better in terms of outcomes than those placed in foster care. This year, thanks to your support, 35 KIN families were supported, and 91 children are currently being cared for by KIN in our community. On average, we have 50 KIN homes open each month. Your generosity helps to meet both immediate and ongoing needs. It has allowed us to provide KIN families with financial assistance for things such as food, clothing and other basic needs, transportation and other essentials."

Foundation Past President, Alan Scott, took a few moments to reflect on the trends and themes of gifting this year. As a Canadian, he never thought supporting food agencies would be a primary need in this country. Still, sadly, it is the reality we face for families and children in our community. Additionally, support for youth to help them reach their full potential is a crucial need.

## 2025 is the second of a three-year commitment at the following levels for each of the charities listed below

Hamilton Food Share - \$40,000  
Cancer Assistance Program - \$25,000  
De Mazenod Door Outreach - \$25,000  
Hamilton Music Collective AIFEC - \$30,000  
Empowerment Squared - \$20,000  
Habitat for Humanity - \$20,000  
CCASH Kinship Program - \$30,000  
TEAD Therapeutic Riding Centre - \$15,000

## Additional On-going Annual Donations

Ancaster Community Services - \$20,000  
HGCCF Bursary Foundation - \$35,000  
Muscular Dystrophy Canada - \$10,000 (Revenue Sharing)



**Donna Zan, Executive Director at Hamilton Catholic Children's Aid Society, with HGCC member sponsor Deb Lancaster.**

"This organization is truly trying to make Hamilton a hunger-free city, and it's remarkable what they do," said Sheean Patel, the HGCC member sponsor for Hamilton Food Share. "For every dollar we donate to the organization, they can buy \$5 worth of food, and I believe that last year they raised 4.7 million pounds of food. "Your donation of \$40,000 provides for \$200,000 worth of food," added Haleigh-Rain Eady, Senior Manager of Fundraising & Development at Hamilton Food Share. "As the economy in Hamilton is changing, the need has gone up by over 50 per cent, and we are working as hard as we can to meet that demand. This donation is really, really important to our community. We work

with 16 different food banks in Hamilton to feed a total of 32,000 people per month. We are grateful to have partners like you, and we appreciate your support year after year, especially for a three-year term. So, thank you so much."

Thanks to the success of Par for a Cause, the Bulldogs Foundation received a record outpouring of support and a cheque for \$93,000 to support its breakfast food program at 20-plus schools in Hamilton. It will quench the thirst for assistance for now, but will be gobbled up by youngsters who go to school without a proper breakfast or any food at all, before the end of the school year.

"It's a privilege to be here today to recognize and support an organization that brings hope, healing and connection to so many in our community. TEAD Therapeutic Riding Centre provides equine-assisted therapy – a truly unique and powerful approach that uses the special bond between people and horses to support physical, emotional and mental well-being for individuals of all ages in our community," says HGCC member sponsor Brandon Campbell. "Whether helping children build confidence, supporting individuals recovering from trauma, or fostering new skills and self-awareness, the impact of this work is extraordinary. The compassion and dedication of the team, volunteers and of course, the horses themselves, make a lasting difference in the lives they touch."

Leo Johnson, a native of Liberia, founded Empowerment Squared in 2006. He arrived in Hamilton as a teenage boy without parents as a government-assisted refugee and continues to have a significant impact on the Hamilton community by empowering newcomer and marginalized youth to succeed through mentorship, access to post-secondary education, information literacy, and sports and recreation.

"The organization has grown from two to 31 full-time staff. We operate two locations across Hamilton. We have 1,200 young children from Grade 2 to Grade 12. Because of your gift last year, we eliminated 26 families from our waitlist, so I thank you," Leo said, noting that the organization is focused on providing youth with opportunities to advance to post-secondary education because it's the leading path to success.

Ted Charuk, the HGCC member sponsor for Hamilton Music Collective, noted that the organization has been providing opportunities for young people in Hamilton to learn to play musical instruments for 18 years.

"We are not a music school, it's about changing lives through music," said Program Director and CEO Astrid Hepner, noting that HGCC support goes to its school-based program - An Instrument for Every Child. Hamilton Music Collective works with the city's three school boards, the recreation department, the Boys & Girls Club, the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and other organizations. Each year, nearly 9,000 children participate in various programs. "This year, with the funds that we received from you, we were able to provide 683 instrument lessons to 350 children for the duration of the



**HGCC member sponsor Sheean Patel with Haleigh-Rain Eady, Senior Manager of Fundraising & Development at Hamilton Food Share.**



**Women's Section representative Amy Campbell with Bulldogs Foundation Executive Director Peggy Chapman.**

school year, and these lessons took place in Hamilton's highest needs schools and neighbourhoods."

Since An Instrument for Every Child launched in 2010, over 10,000 students have gone through the program.

"Our mandate is to make quality music education accessible to all children and provide programs that are affordable and barrier-free," Astrid added. "As I noted earlier, we are not a music school but a medium to provide children who often

come from challenging family situations with an outlet for creative expression that allows for a sense of pride and self-confidence as they learn music skills and perform. With your help, we are changing lives through music, so for that, we are grateful. Thank you very much."

Ken Lancaster, Foundation Chair and member sponsor for Habitat for Humanity Hamilton, noted that the organization has been building affordable housing, healthy communities, and hope for 35 years. Time and time again, we've seen that when

Habitat families move in, the positive changes they experience are profound. Children in Habitat homes tend to perform better in school, are more likely to pursue post-secondary education, participate in team sports, and exhibit a greater desire to volunteer and give back. In short, Habitat homes help local families thrive.

"The funds from our Foundation will directly support the upcoming Dawson Avenue build. It's going to be the largest, most ambitious build that Habitat Hamilton has taken on to date," he said. "When complete, the Dawson build will see ten brand new, energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable homes available for local families in need.

While it's being built, Dawson Avenue will also serve as a hub for Habitat's Youth Build Program. Serving as an immersive classroom, it will help local high school students gain hands-on, real-world experience in the skilled trades. It's an investment not just in housing, but in the next generation of builders and community leaders.

As we all know, we are in the middle of a housing crisis – one that seems to be worsening with each passing day. And building quality housing from the ground up is quite expensive. The support from our Foundation has a significant impact on Habitat Hamilton, as it will help Habitat advance its mission - not only by building houses, but also by assisting them to build opportunity, dignity, and hope for families right here in Hamilton.

In his role as Foundation Chair, Ken also thanked Brian Bidulka, President of Hamilton Golf and Country Club, and Alan Carter, the Club's Chief Operating Officer, for being present. "The support we receive from both of you, the club Board and from the club's staff is amazing. This includes many staff from all areas of the club – administrative, professional golf shop, food and beverage and course and grounds," he said. "Thank you also to the members of our club and sponsors who provide the necessary financial support to the Foundation's fundraising tournaments – the Borthwick Memorial and Par for a Cause. Al Scott and Jeff Paikin, Co-chairs of the Borthwick committee, and Melanie Oster, Chair of the Par for a Cause committee. Thank you, Al, Jeff and Melanie and all your committee members who spend countless hours organizing your respective tournaments," he noted.



HGCC member sponsor Brandon Campbell with Sue Schramayr from TEAD and Amy Campbell, who sits on the organization's board of directors.



HGCC Member sponsor Todd Fraleigh with Empowerment Squared founder Leo Johnson.



Hamilton Music Collective CEO Astrid Hepner with HGCC member sponsor and founding board member Ted Charuk.