

# Helping someone in need is the true meaning of Christmas

## Help Our Students Program gives financial aid to help students graduate high school

We are in the midst of an important holiday season, one filled with joy and charity. Unfortunately, the season has become so commercialized that we often forget its true meaning: to share our love with family and friends, and to share our blessings with those less fortunate. Supporting the Help Our Students Program (HOST Program) will rekindle the spirit of sharing with others in need.

The HOST Program provides financial support - \$100 each month from September through June - to hard-working students living in very difficult financial circumstances. The schools select the students because the staff knows who is working hard to graduate and who is in dire need of help.

Graduating high school is not the final step, but it opens the door to so many opportunities that aren't there without a high school diploma. We know that we are helping many Ottawa students reach that goal.

Started as a modest program in 2010, helping three students in two Ottawa high schools, it has grown to 59 high schools over the years thanks to so many donors who share our belief that a helping hand at the right moment can make a big difference in someone's life.

*"The HOST program has really made a difference in my life, both at school and at home. With the money I was given, I was able to ensure that I have the basic necessities and then some. Things like food, clothes, books, medication, etc., have always been difficult to purchase in my household so I really found that this program alleviated the worry and stress I go through over it. It also really helped my father as he works too hard and worries too much as well. "*

This year, the HOST Program is helping 90 students. 100% of all donations go directly to help hard-working students in need. There are no salaries and all administration costs are paid by the volunteer Board of Directors. As a registered Canadian charity (CRA 814474730 RR0001), donors receive an official receipt for tax purposes.

Each recipient is required to write a letter, describing how the award has impacted their lives. These letters are published anonymously in a President's Report that goes to all donors. They are a moving and uplifting testimony that your donations are making a real difference in their lives.

*"I am writing to talk about how the Help Our Students Program has made a positive impact in my life, at home and at school. I've been blessed to be able to use this money for small things like groceries for the house and big things like a new winter coat for my sister. My parents always wanted their kids to get the best education but it can be hard going to school in higher-class neighbourhoods when our family didn't have as much as others. We could both go to*

*school without having to worry about what we were wearing or lunch and we could focus more on school. The award made it possible for me to take a load off of my parents by helping pay for groceries and other small house needs. The award even made it possible for me to buy a uniform to start a part-time job.”*

*“I am writing to you to inform you on my experience with your HOST program. When I first got introduced to this program, I was very shocked and confused on why you guys first chose me. I was depressed and having financial and emotional issues at home. The award I received each month not only helped to pay for tutoring, money so I wouldn't starve each day, and money for clothes, and to be able to buy materials for certain projects. My marks began to improve and I didn't feel so imprisoned anymore. A lot of the stresses that I went through subsided and I could breathe again. Thank you for making me feel like I was normal girl for the first time.”*

As a result of the letters, we discovered another important impact: hope. The students start to believe that their dreams are achievable, that graduating high school is just the beginning of their future.

Visit our web site, [www.HelpOurStudentsProgram.com](http://www.HelpOurStudentsProgram.com), and read the letters that we have received since 2010. It's easy to make a donation either by cheque or online by making a one-time or monthly donation using your credit card or PayPal.

Please donate today and celebrate the joy of sharing your good fortune with those less