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Year founded: 2010
Total revenue for last fiscal year: \$276,594
Facebook: @hostottawa



Richard Lussier
Co-founder, President
and Chair of the Board



Donald J. Stephenson
Co-founder and
Vice-President

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What we do

The Help Our Students Program provides \$1,500 awards to hard-working students living in difficult financial circumstances in order to help them graduate high school. The recipients, selected by school officials, receive \$150 per month from September through June directly into their RBC bank account, with 100 per cent of all donations going directly to support students. All work is done by volunteers and all administrative expenses are paid by the Board of Directors.

Each student is asked to write a letter at the end of the school year, describing how the award has impacted their lives and, generally, how they spent the funds. We know from the letters that the recipients use the money to buy food for themselves and their family, for school supplies and field trips, for Presto passes and to help with other family expenses.

TOP FUNDING SOURCES

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS: 81%
OTHER CHARITIES: 15%
CORPORATE DONATIONS: 3%
OTHER: >1%

Funding priorities

In the 2022-23 year, we are providing \$150 per month from September to June to at least three students in each of Ottawa's 62 youth high schools. We aspire to be able to support at least five students in every high school and to provide them with \$250 per month.

How you can help

DONATE

Despite Ottawa being a wealthy city, there are far too many students who struggle to stay in school due to their difficult financial circumstances. Supporters love that the students receive the award funds directly into their own bank account and need to learn how to plan and manage their money.

Potential donors can choose to support a particular

EVENTS + FUNDRAISING

Donation recognition

We have some truly amazing donors. The Shenkman Foundation, for instance, has supported us for the past 10 years.

Two years ago, we received a phone call saying that we had been selected to receive a Christmas gift made possible by a generous donor. A short while later, we were handed a cheque for \$30,000. The same thing happened again the following year and we received a cheque for \$45,000. We can't wait for this Christmas. These donations allow us to better plan the number of awards that we can give the following school year.



HOST student Christine Angnetsiak, graduating from Urban Aboriginal High School. Christine is from Nunavut and is the first person in her family to graduate high school. She is currently studying for her hairdressing certificate and plans to open her own shop in Nunavut.

school or a particular area of the city. The recipients' letters clearly make our donors aware of the significant impact of their donation on the students' lives.

VOLUNTEER

We need anyone who can help us grow our donor base. At this time, the administrative work is done by the members of the Board, supported by Principals and Guidance Counsellors. As the organization grows, there will be a need for clerical, bookkeeping and communications assistance.



The Help Our Students Program (HOST) was founded in 2010 by two local friends, Richard Lussier and Don Stephenson, to help Ottawa students living in difficult financial circumstances stay in high school until they graduate.

These students are working hard to stay in school but it isn't easy for them. In far too many cases, they don't know when their next meal will be, they wear hand-me-downs all through high school and, if they go out with their friends, they certainly can't buy anything.

Many need to either quit school to get a job to support their family or take on too many part-time hours that cuts the amount of time they have for school work.

The HOST Program gives the students \$150 per month (September to June) sent directly to their own RBC bank account. They learn firsthand how to plan, manage and save money. This year, it will give about 200 awards, to at least three students in every Ottawa high school. The students are selected by the schools; they know best who is working hard and struggling financially.

Each June, the students write a letter describing how the award impacted their lives and, generally, how they spent the money. The letters are both heartbreaking and uplifting.

More importantly, the letters talk about hope. Hope that they may be the first in the family to graduate high school, hope to go to college or university, and hope to realize a long-held dream.

The HOST Program is a rarity: **100% of your donation goes directly to a student.** All the work is done by volunteers and the Board of Directors pays all the bills.

Please visit our website at www.helpourstudentsprogram.com. You can read over 800 letters and there's a donation page that makes it easy for you to directly help hard-working students succeed.

*Help us make our community
a better place to live.*

I often prayed for the ability to rest instead of worrying about how my brother would be fed, how we'd be able to do schoolwork if we didn't have wifi, how my family would get anywhere without a Presto Pass.

Your money helped me put clean clothes on my body, helped me put the food on the table. And helped me get from place to place.

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.

I have never in my whole life had the feeling of financial security that I now have, that in case my mom gets kicked out, I can help pay for a hotel.

Thank you for making me feel like I was a normal girl for the first time.

I was able to buy myself winter boots, so I did not have to wear running shoes all winter because my family did not have enough room in their pay cheques.

If it were not for the help of the HOST program, I do not know where I would be.

The money you give me I used it for basically food and sometimes I give myself a treat like a shirt.

Growing up, I was always the kid with no money to go on the field trips, or the grad trips, or being able to afford food or other things.