



CHESTERMERE



GIFTS OF
Kindness

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

A Message from the City

2021 had proven to be another challenging year full of uncertainty. As our community continued to show resilience in the face of the ongoing pandemic, we have also wanted to help bolster our support for those most vulnerable among us. Our focus this past year was raising awareness of the Gifts of Kindness Program and to expand our reach into the community. We are hoping in the next year to begin laying the groundwork for revitalization and rebuilding. We thank all those who have contributed, not just financially, but with their efforts in sharing our reach into the broader community as a whole. Here is to another year of resilience and optimism towards a new year.

-CHRISTIAN LUTZ
COMMUNITY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FACILITATOR
CITY OF CHESTERMERE



Our Mission

The Gifts of Kindness Fund provides short-term financial support to help meet the basic needs of Chestermere and South East Rocky View residents.

For many individuals and families, an unexpected emergency, change of circumstances, or an unforeseen expense may result in unmet basic needs. In these times of high stress, Gifts of Kindness can reduce the financial pressure people are facing to allow them to focus on the root cause of their financial situation, whether that be unemployment, family breakdown, medical concerns, or other difficult circumstances.

The Family and Community Resource Centre staff who administer Gifts of Kindness funds will also connect recipients with other helpful resources to support the resident's long-term goals.

In addition to supporting residents' direct needs, Gifts of Kindness helps raise awareness of poverty and the impact of poverty. Information about the supports Gifts of Kindness provides helps to educate the community on what life is like for many of our neighbours and friends. This helps to reduce the stigma associated with poverty as we collectively work toward helping community members in need.

THIS WONDERFUL PROGRAM STEPPED UP TO HELP US WITH GASOLINE ,TO GET TO APPOINTMENTS, INTERVIEWS, LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO LIVE AND A GIFT CARD FOR MUCH NEEDED FOOD.”

- GIFTS OF KINDNESS RECIPIENT

How We Help Our Community

Upon referral, the City's Family & Community Resource Centre team can meet with an individual or family experiencing financial hardship to discuss their current situation and offer strategies and resources that may provide financial relief.

This may include referrals to the Chestermere Food Bank (hampers and Good Food Box), federal support programs (employment insurance), and provincial support programs.

If eligible, the staff can also offer short term financial support to the family in the following ways:

BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT

Short term support in the form of a utility bill payment, grocery gift card or transportation assistance.

PERSONAL ESSENTIALS

Upon request, supply of personal care & hygiene items.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING SUPPORTS

Subsidized and supported access to local community programming for children and youth activities, Christmas hampers and more.

The team is made up of staff who have extensive experience in supporting individuals and families in need. They will offer a confidential listening ear, suggestions for resources, and referrals to other supports.

If you, or someone you know, is in need of this support, visit chestermere.ca/kindness or call 403-207-7079 to get connected with our Family & Community Resource Centre team.



2021

CHALLENGES

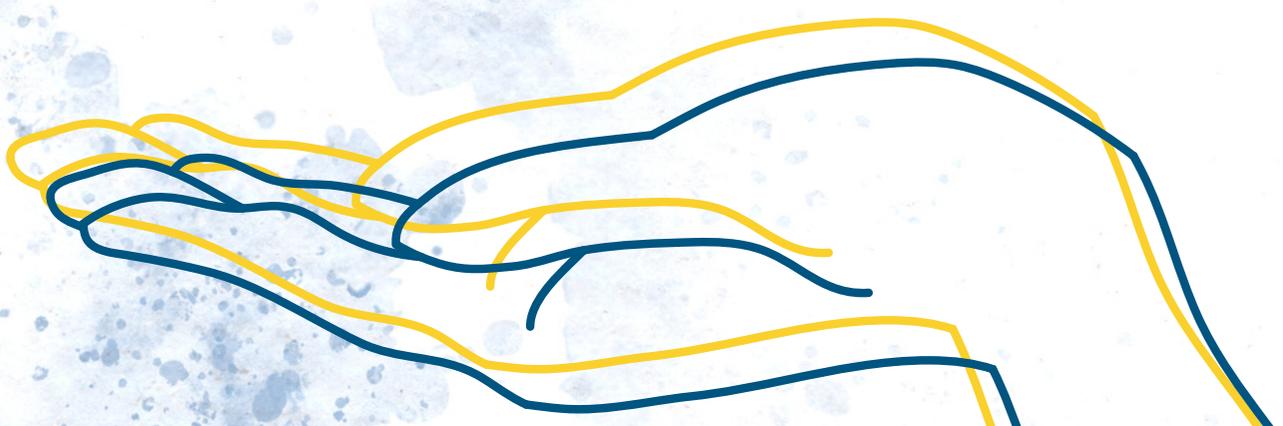
2021 continued to see pivoting events from in-person gatherings to online platforms. The primary fundraising event, The Kids Holiday Store was able to open in person this year, however, other fundraising events remained indefinitely postponed. Continued economic pressures locally were also a key factor as government subsidies were scheduled to end, and several businesses and employers had downsized or ceased operations altogether. Engagement of business partners was lower than previous years due to the ongoing financial and economic hardships

ADJUSTMENTS

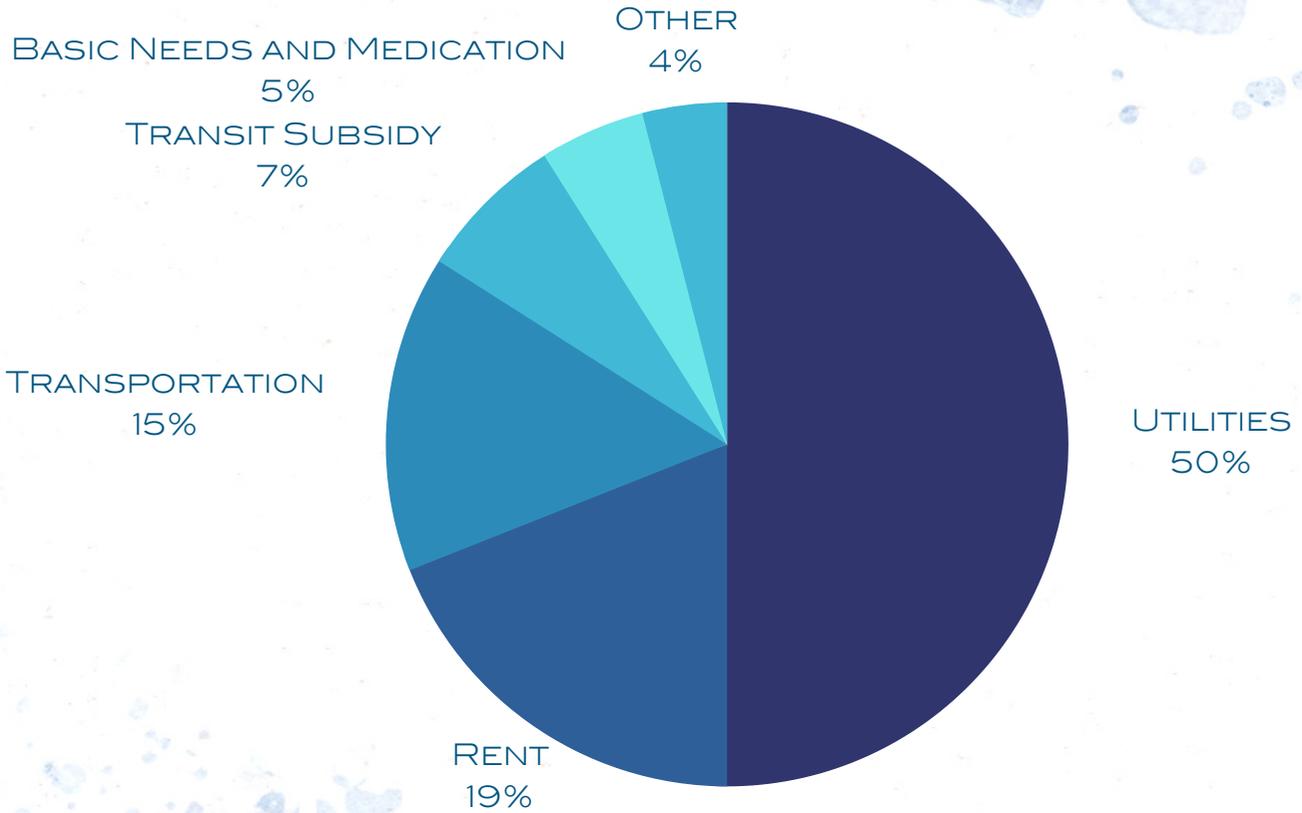
Due to the success of last year's campaign, coupled with the increase in financial hardships seen in the community, this year was orientated towards raising awareness rather than fundraising alone. The goal was to increase social media presence and resident awareness of the fund and how to access support. This year, the Gifts of Kindness Fundraising Team decided to shine a light on past donors and the origins, and development of the Gifts of Kindness fund.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Gifts of Kindness engaged in a virtual fundraising event as part of Giving Tuesday. While we saw a notable and expected decrease in monetary donations, we were able to reach many new donors who generously supported the fund with a total of \$1,746.00 in donations. Additionally, thanks to our recently launched transit subsidy, we have been able to help residents to meet their transportation needs with public transit.



IN 2021, FUNDS RAISED THROUGH GIFTS OF KINDNESS MADE THE FOLLOWING POSSIBLE:



THE PROGRAM HELPED 10 WOMEN IN CRISIS.



70 INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN HELPED THROUGH OUR TRANSIT SUBSIDY.



THE PROGRAM ASSISTED 58 DIFFERENT HOUSEHOLDS (105 INDIVIDUALS) IN CHESTERMERE, LANGDON AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

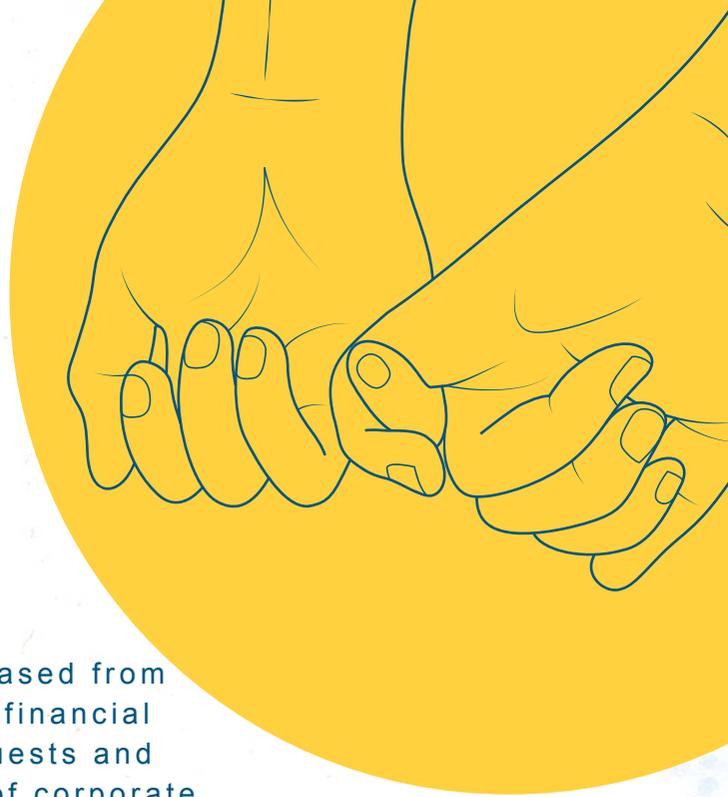


UTILITIES MADE UP THE SINGLE GREATEST FINANCIAL REQUEST FOR SUPPORT 50% OF TOTAL FUNDS DISPERSED FOR 2021.

Donors

This year the campaign focused on spreading awareness of the Gifts of Kindness program rather than fundraising alone. In terms of new donors, this translated to 34% increase in first time contributors to this years Giving Tuesday Campaign.

As expected, the total number of donors decreased from previous years further validating the expected financial hardships represented in both the funding requests and monetary donations, particularly the absence of corporate donors. However, the increase in new individual donors paints an optimistic portrait for potential growth, and the hopeful reengagement of past participants in the future.



Glenn and Jeannette Richardson

Epcor Utilities Inc.

Fran Creelman

Linda Farr

Lisa Finkbeiner

Paulette and Randy Tippe

Sara McKimmie

Stacy McKimmie

Darren Eberle

Ryan McKimmie

Dianne McKimmie

Alan and Gillian Hughes

Kerry Holliday

Victoria Moody

Danielle Fermin

Mark Sikora

BWI Enterprises Ltd.

Evan McDonald

Sonja and Greg Leduc

Greg and Diane Sereda

Trace Associates Inc.

And to all our anonymous donors....

Thank you

Thank you

2021 was a year of incredible growth for Gifts of Kindness. The community responded warmly to the call to help our neighbours which allowed 105 individuals to receive direct support from Gifts of Kindness during the year. Improved awareness of the fund has increased the funds available for community members while raising awareness of the impacts poverty and financial hardship can have on individuals, families, and communities.

Stay Informed

For all information related to Gifts of Kindness, visit chestermere.ca/kindness.



CHESTERMERE