

## Paramedic students deliver care, help, and hope to our most vulnerable neighbours

**“For people who have nothing, your donation means everything.”**

On a drizzly November weekend, students from the St. Clair College paramedic program jumped into action for the Mission.

Gathering outside Zehrs and Sobeys stores, they launched the *Fill the Ambulance* campaign to collect non-perishable food, hygiene products, pet food, and warm winter clothing for people in our community who need them most.

The students contributed donations of their own and handed out flyers to shoppers, asking them to pitch in to help fill the ambulance.

Sarah Reid, a student in the paramedic program, led the campaign. She says, “I brought in a bag of winter clothes and all of the

students donated whatever they could. People were receptive to our flyers and their response was great.”

In total, the *Fill the Ambulance* campaign collected over 5,000 items—enough cereal, canned goods, pasta, rice, hats, gloves, and jackets to fill an ambulance plus eight of the students’ cars.

**Sarah says that the students’ community spirit is inspired by the ambulance ‘ride outs’ they participate in as part of their training. “Going to calls, we see a lot of people in need. They’re freezing outside. We want to help them. A lot of us grew up in Windsor, never realizing there was this kind of poverty here.”**

The paramedic students are touched by what they have learned serving our city.

**In total, the *Fill the Ambulance* campaign collected over 5,000 items**

Sarah says, “Whenever we help someone, we remember that they are someone’s child, someone’s friend, someone’s parent. We’re respectful and we don’t judge.”



*Sarah (centre) poses alongside Mission staff, Rukshini and Maurizio.*

Sarah encourages everyone to donate what they can, especially in the cold winter months. “Whatever you give to the Mission will go far. For people who have nothing, your donation means everything,” she adds. ➤



# “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

— JOHN 1:5

In times of struggle, we all look for signs of hope.

For your neighbours who depend on the Mission, you provide a beacon of light, even through the darkest days of winter.

Recently, I heard from a young man who’s a graduate of our Phoenix Recovery and Enterprise Job Training programs. He told me that the Mission got him through a dark, difficult time in his life. He’s found peace and hope through what we offered him—all thanks to your generosity. Now, he’s giving back to our community through a job placement.

Your support makes stories like this possible.

**Please keep our clients in your thoughts this winter. And, if you can, consider giving a donation to ensure hot,**



**nutritious meals, warm clothing, and compassionate care.**

In closing, I’d like to share some exciting news with you. The Mission is proud and grateful to be a part of the new Shelter Health Program that provides medical care to those experiencing homelessness and are at our Shelter. It’s a collaborative initiative between Windsor Regional Hospital, Canadian Mental Health Association of Windsor-Essex, the City of Windsor, and a group of

wonderful, caring local Physicians, Nurses, and Students from the Schulich School of Medicine. Shelter Health is funded by Ontario Health and removes barriers of access to people living in shelters.

Through Shelter Health, one of our shelter guests, who’s in his 60s, got the surgery he needed—and his health is now back on track. After 20 years, he even reconnected with his mom, who’s in her 80s.

**With your help, it’s never too late to shine a light in the darkness.**

Thank you,

Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin  
Executive Director

continued from page 1

**Thank you to Sarah, all the paramedic students from St. Clair College, and to every community member who made the 2024 *Fill the Ambulance* campaign such a huge success!**

If you’d like to donate gently used winter clothing or perishable and non-perishable food, we will gratefully accept them at the

Downtown Mission at 875 Ouellette Avenue or at the Windsor Youth Centre at 1247 Wyandotte Street East.

**Thank you for your generosity.**



# Supporters like you are at the core of our small but mighty village!

**“My kids and I were homeless. We left a violent home and lost everything. The staff at Generation WYC (Windsor Youth Centre) were amazing. They helped us with clothing and connected me with the right agencies to find housing. They listen and never judge me. They’re like a family.”**

That’s Christina, the mom of four children, talking about her experience with Generation WYC, a peer-to-peer program for young families at The Windsor Youth Centre.

Ashley Marchand, the Mission’s director of youth services and administration, says, “Together with staff, families, and volunteers,



Generation WYC is a community for parents who don’t have a lot of support. Whether parents are struggling with their mental health, concerned about their child’s development, or don’t have the money to feed their kids at the end of the month, we can help—and that’s because of our very generous donors.”

**“Together with staff, families, and volunteers, Generation WYC is a community for parents who don’t have a lot of support.”**

**Generation WYC does not receive any government funding.**

Ashley says, “We are so grateful to everyone who gives to the

Mission. You buy food for our hot lunches and groceries like milk and eggs that young families need. Plus, families can turn to us for diapers and baby formula.”

Christina has been coming to Generation WYC for over six years. She says, “No one asks to be in a bad situation where you need help raising your kids. If you feel alone, the staff and other participants boost you up and guide you in the right direction. My kids are happier because I’m happier. Gen WYC is a real game-changer.”

**Every month, 30 families, with a total of 65 children, come to Generation WYC for support, to socialize, and to build a better life.**

**“Thank you for helping to prevent generational poverty,” Ashley says. “It takes a village to raise a child—and supporters like you are at the core of our small but mighty village!”**



# Revving up their engines—and their hearts—for a good cause!

You can hear the enthusiasm in Shaun Fathers' voice as he talks about the *On a Mission for the Mission* charitable foundation that raises funds for the Downtown Mission Windsor food bank.

"Most of our events are family-oriented. We welcome everyone, not just people in the motorcycle community," says Shaun, president of the foundation.



The *On a Mission for the Mission* annual motorcycle ride takes place on the last Sunday in August. This past August, the 16th year of the event, 140 motorcycle riders joined in on the fun and raised over \$18,700 to stock the shelves of our food bank and provide much-needed groceries to neighbours in need.

The riders' route takes them from the outskirts of Windsor to the Colchester Bar and Grill in Harrow where they enjoy a delicious dinner compliments of owner Julie Appleby and other local suppliers.

"Everyone loves the ride and the camaraderie. It's a great way to support the Mission and we get to see our fellow riders every year," Shaun says. "If you don't ride, you can still support the food bank by coming to the Biker Breakfast in January or our bike show in July." Other events include a corn hole



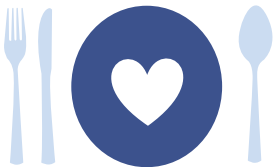
tournament and two summer barbecues.

The Downtown Mission is close to Shaun's heart. He says, "Lots of working people can't afford to feed their families *and* pay the rent anymore. They need extra help and we're more than willing to help."

If you'd like to organize an event of your own to support the Mission's work, please contact Harsh Raj at [events@downtownmission.com](mailto:events@downtownmission.com). Thank you to Shaun and to everyone at *On a Mission for the Mission* for your generosity. To learn more, visit [onamissionforthemission.com](http://onamissionforthemission.com).

## Your Generosity in Action Take a look at your positive impact in 2024!

**Served 153,000+**  
hot meals



  
**Provided food to 17,000+**  
individuals through our food bank

**Supported 37 youth and 109 adults**  
through their recovery journeys



### SAVE THESE DATES!

**Annual General Meeting**  
777 Tecumseh Rd. W.  
(The Moose Lodge #1499)  
**April 30 starting at 5:30pm**  
Everyone is welcome.

### The Coldest Night of the Year

Join our walk to help people experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness.  
**Saturday, February 22**  
Visit [downtownmission.com](http://downtownmission.com) for more information.



### THE DOWNTOWN MISSION

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