

**For immediate release**

December 27, 2016

Waterloo Region

On November 29th, Waterloo Region celebrated its second annual region-wide GivingTuesday. GivingTuesday follows Black Friday and Cyber Monday and kicks off the giving season.

Local volunteers, including Community Ambassadors Brenda Halloran, Waterloo Region Police Chief Bryan Larkin, Shirley Levene and Susan Cook-Scheerer helped to promote GivingTuesday throughout the community.

More than 130 charities and non-profits in Waterloo Region participated by sharing their stories of giving on social media. The @givingtuesdaywr Twitter account received over 61,000 impressions in November, with over 8,700 on November 29 alone. The hashtags #StayGenerous and #GivingTuesdayWR were used heavily leading up to, and on, November 29<sup>th</sup>. Giving Fairs took place at Conestoga Mall and the Cambridge Centre where more than 30 organizations met with the public to discuss their work. The website ([www.givingtuesdaywr.ca](http://www.givingtuesdaywr.ca)) donated by COPP Marketing + Design saw nearly 900 individual users the week of GivingTuesday.

"I'm very grateful for the support of the Waterloo Region Record, Conestoga Mall, the Cambridge Centre and COPP Marketing + Design for their donations of support for GivingTuesday," says Scott Williams, Chair of the GivingTuesday Waterloo Region movement. "Without the help of these partners, GivingTuesday Waterloo Region could not have been the success it was."

"2016 saw an increase in the number of local business and organizations getting involved with GivingTuesday," says Williams. "The Kitchener Rangers, D2L, PeaceWorks Technology Solutions, SAP and Rabideau Law all ran GivingTuesday campaigns to support local charities. In addition, 30 businesses in Belmont Village once again rallied to support the food bank, raising 1110 lbs of food and \$723.75! Many people posted UNselfies on social media to let the community know how they were giving."

"We still haven't collected all the results of GivingTuesday," says Williams, "but, with 40% of the charities reporting, we know that financial and in-kind donations exceeded \$82,000. Nearly 1200 volunteer hours were pledged or worked. There were 73 blood donations and five people signed up as organ donors. More than 6,700 lbs of food were donated!"

Blayr Hogg of Belmont Financial has been involved with the Belmont Village food drive for the last two years and will be taking over as Chair of the local GivingTuesday movement next year. "I'm so excited to see all the results coming in from our charities and non-profits and I'm eager to help build on the movement next year," said Hogg. "Waterloo Region is an incredibly giving community," says Williams, "It's been a pleasure to be involved in the GivingTuesday movement for the past two years and I know the community will continue to #StayGenerous!"

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