

Presidents Report November 27, 2024

Good evening and thank you all for attending this year's AGM. Serving as CCWN's President over the past year has been a truly rewarding experience, and I eagerly anticipate my sixth year on this Board. This year's report is once again a collaborative effort between myself and our dedicated Executive Director, Carole Fuhrer. As we compiled this review, it became clear that CCWN has not only been highly productive but is also making significant strides toward the ambitious strategic priorities we established for ourselves.

In the realm of finance, CCWN has strategically enhanced its internally restricted reserves to align with our policy requirements, while also committing an investment of 5000 to the CCWN Endowment Fund to bolster our long-term stability. Additionally, we have raised our tax payment limits to 20,000 to better accommodate transactions smoothly. We continue to navigate the transition from George Stephenson Accounting to RPAccounting, in light of George's impending retirement.

We remain actively engaged in community stakeholder meetings, working collaboratively to shape and enhance the transformation of BDSS into a vibrant community Hub.

The Manager of FEED Niagara has been appointed on a permanent basis, complete with a sustainable operating budget, and has successfully established its own bank account. FEED Niagara is on an exciting journey of growth, marked by the recent signing of the inter-agency Memorandum of Understanding. This pivotal agreement enhances the development of FN. Carole, Jean, and Paula have dedicated their efforts to providing essential financial support and expertise to this dynamic initiative, while also expressing their enthusiasm for a forthcoming centralized perishable food hub that is in the works.

The lease for the Vineland location was renewed for the 2024/2025 fiscal year and that office also serves as a convening center for groups including FEED Niagara.

In celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Annual Food Drive, we were excited to honor the legacy of Doug Burton, a cherished member of the Beamsville Lions. This special commemorative activity is our way of recognizing his unwavering dedication and the significant impact he has made on the Food Drive throughout the years.

This year, we proudly introduced the Community Spirit Award, a heartfelt tribute to the legacy of Richard Gark. It was determined that the inaugural recipients, Debbie and Mike Ecker, embody the spirit of our mission. This award will continue to celebrate and express our gratitude to the remarkable community members who share our vision and support our efforts to uplift others.

The CCWN Agency Profile Report was filed with Government of Ontario, and the Ministry of Public and Business was reviewed and our agency information was updated.

We have familiarized ourselves with the requirements of ONCA, and completed a review of bylaws, purposes and provisions for CCWN, and engaged a lawyer to review all before submitting to CRA for approval. Thank you Jean and Carole for all the hours spent pouring over the requirements and making changes for our organization.

This year, we dedicated significant effort to refining our policies and guiding documents. Among the key initiatives are the Living Wage Policy and Implementation Plan, as well as a new Fundraising Policy that emerged from our participation in Catch the Ace. Additionally, we introduced the Agency Code of Conduct along with policies for Police Intervention in Incidents and Denial of Services, all in response to a rise in aggressive behaviors. As we move forward, our commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone remains steadfast.

We are thrilled to announce that CCWN staff is now at full complement for the first time since the onset of the pandemic. Every new member of our team has been with us for at least a year, bringing stability and experience to our organization. Our dedicated staff has successfully completed essential training in First Aid and CPR, Crisis Prevention and Intervention, Anti-Racism and Oppression, and Safe Food Handling. Additionally, we are proud to have completed the living wage application process, qualifying us as a Living Wage employer. As we look ahead, our commitment to excellence and community support remains stronger than ever. We are eager to embrace new opportunities, tackle challenges, and make a meaningful impact together.

We are pleased to share that the CCWN ED Succession Plan has been meticulously crafted and officially approved. Our dedicated team is now focused on refining our business continuity plan to ensure seamless operations.

We are currently conducting a comprehensive audit of all our policies, aiming to meet Food Bank Canada's Standards of Excellence by March 2025.

Thanks to the generous support from Food Banks Canada, we have enhanced our facilities with new shelving, cooling blankets, and the installation of a state-of-the-art emergency generator. Additionally, we have upgraded our security measures by adding more cameras and equipping our staff with essential emergency protocol tools.

The CCWN logo and slogan are officially recognized as a registered trademark, ensuring their protection until the renewal date in 2033.

At CCWN, we are constantly exploring innovative ways to support our clients, recognizing the vital role pets play in their lives. We are proud to strengthen local partnerships with a diverse array of animal-focused organizations, achieving remarkable success with esteemed partners like The Humane Society of Greater Niagara and Paulmac Pets, right here in Beamsville.

As many individuals face financial barriers when loved ones pass, in addition to their grief, identifying community partners and programs to assist clients with end-of-life and burial costs is crucial. By referring clients to these resources, CCWN can help alleviate some of the burdens associated with loss, ensuring they receive the support they need during such a challenging time. This holistic approach recognizes both the emotional and practical challenges of bereavement, ultimately fostering a more compassionate community response to loss.

CCWN actively engages in the Feed Collaboration network, including FEED Niagara and Feed Ontario, to contribute to the One More Bite program, which focuses on sharing surplus food products and minimizing food waste in the community.

Our participation in the Wellness Fair at the Fleming Centre, hosted by the Niagara Region, aimed to engage with community members seeking services, providing them with essential information and resources to address their needs effectively.

The Bottle Recycling Program has recently relocated from Millen Road to Jones Road in Stoney Creek, enhancing the opportunity to continue this valuable initiative.

The 1st Annual Debbie Ecker Memorial Event organized by Vineland Growers was a remarkable tribute to Debbie's dedication to community service, raising an impressive \$100,000 for CCWN, thanks to the relentless efforts of her family and a dedicated committee who continued her vision after her untimely passing. The event not only celebrated her life but also aimed to broaden its reach for future fundraisers, ensuring her legacy of selflessness and generosity lives on. Join us for a special evening on December 7th, of remembrance and support as we honor Debbie's impactful contributions to the community. Tickets are almost sold out.

After this year's successful event, the Board conducted a thorough review and analysis of Every Bowl Full, leading to the development of a detailed work plan for the upcoming 2025 event. Planning will commence shortly to ensure a successful and impactful occasion, building on the insights gained from this year's experience.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Executive Director, Carole Fuhrer, and her incredible staff at Community Care of West Niagara for their unwavering dedication and selfless efforts. Carole, your ingenuity, expertise, and supportive leadership not only enhance our mission but also make our roles as board directors seamless and more impactful. Thank you for your hard work and commitment to serving our community! I look forward to another year as we work to make a meaningful difference in Lincoln.

Elizabeth Klassen
CCWN Board President
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