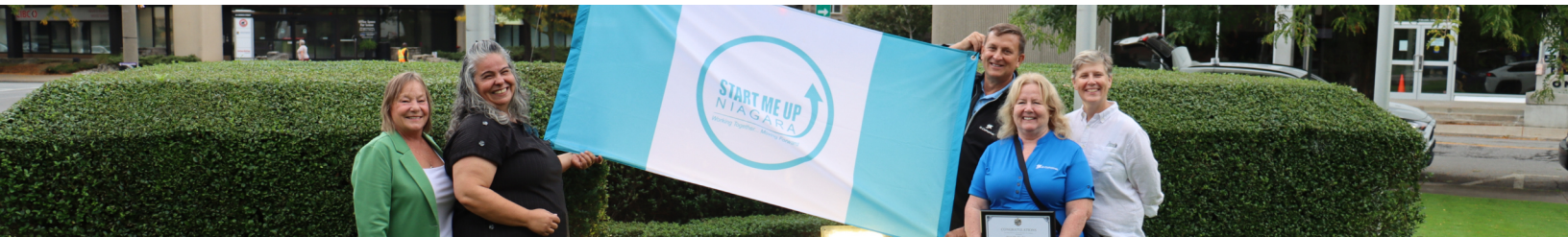


START ME UP NIAGARA'S NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

As we move into the fall season, Start Me Up Niagara is filled with gratitude for the many ways our community continues to show up for one another. Whether through volunteering, donating, attending events, or simply spreading the word, your support helps us make a lasting difference across the Niagara Region.



Save The Date:

Here's what's coming up:

Oct. 18th: Mystery & Mimosa Brunch

Oct. 30th: Collection for the Toolbox Project begins

Nov. 18th: Giving Tuesday Fundraiser for the Toolbox Project; hosted by Mr. Mikes Steakhouse Casual

Nov. 19th: Shannon Passero VIP Shopping Night

Dec. 6th: Swords for Socks

Keep an eye out for more information on our [Event page](#).

Resource Centre

On August 20, we hosted our annual Fun in the SMUN event at Lakeside Park in Port Dalhousie—a chance to celebrate our incredible staff and volunteers. Over 35 people joined us for an evening of games, food, and great company.

We're also thrilled to share that nearly 40 new volunteers have joined our team in

recent months, including many retirees who bring valuable skills and life experience. One volunteer's story stands out—she joined us after losing a loved one to addiction, choosing to give back to the same community that supported her family during their hardest times. Stories like hers remind us that volunteering at SMUN is not just about giving time—it's about giving heart.

Starting in October, we're introducing a new online scheduling and tracking system to make volunteering even easier:

www.signupgenius.com.



As the fall season begins, the Resource Centre remains a vital hub of support and connection for some of Niagara's most vulnerable residents. Every day, our dedicated staff help participants with essentials like identification, housing applications, and referrals to health and social services. Beyond practical assistance, the Centre is a welcoming place where people can feel seen, heard, and respected. With strong community partnerships and a dedicated frontline team, we're building pathways to stability, trust, and dignity for every individual who walks through our doors.

We are so thankful for the incredible generosity of our community! Instead of letting good food go to waste, local businesses and individuals continue to share it with our kitchen program, helping us provide meals to neighbours who need them most. A special thank-you to The Bridge NF, Con Gusto, Club Roma, Niagara Greek Festival, and Peller Estates—along with so

many others across Niagara—who remind us what community spirit truly looks like.

Mobile Closet

As the weather turns colder, Niagara's Mobile Closet is preparing for winter needs. For those living outdoors, warm and waterproof clothing can make all the difference. Right now, men's clothing is our biggest need, especially:

- Track pants and hoodies
- Weatherproof winter coats and boots
- Waterproof gloves
- New underwear and long johns
- Deodorant, shampoo, and body wash
- Backpacks

Your donations help ensure that everyone facing the winter months ahead has access to warmth, comfort, and care.



Work Action Centre

With the school year back in full swing, things are buzzing at the Work Action Centre! Our workshops are back, offering opportunities for job seekers to build skills, gain confidence, and connect with others on their employment journey. Our case managers continue to work one-on-one with clients, helping them set goals, overcome barriers, and celebrate successes.

We've also upgraded our computer lab with four brand-new laptops—perfect for resume building, online training, and job searches. This exciting improvement was made possible thanks to the Delta Bingo and Gaming

Commission, whose continued support helps us provide the tools people need to move forward with confidence.

Plus, we're bringing in guest speakers from education, HR, and local businesses to give participants insider tips on landing their next job. If you know someone looking for work, send them our way—we'd love to be part of their success story.



Toolbox Project

The season of giving is almost here, and the Toolbox Project is once again preparing to deliver care and comfort across Niagara. This year's goal is to assemble 1,500 holiday care kits, ready for distribution on December 11.

Starting October 30, collection bins will be set up across the region for community donations of essential care items. We're collecting travel-sized toiletries, warm socks, gloves, toques, and small comfort items like puzzle books, pens, and candy.

Thanks to this year's generous sponsors—CAA Niagara, Boldt Realty, Odd Fellow Lodge, and 100+ Women Who Care Niagara—we're well on our way to meeting our goal. However, we're still looking for additional community partners to host collection bins, especially in Port Colborne, Fort Erie, and Fonthill.

If you or your organization can help, please contact James at

toolbox@startmeupniagara.ca. Monetary

donations and sponsorships are also appreciated and help cover the cost of essential items not received through the drive. Every contribution brings dignity and comfort to those who need it most this holiday season.

From Our Garden

As the growing season winds down, our garden continues to impress. Tomatoes and beans are still thriving, and we've begun harvesting Butternut, Honeynut, and Crooked Neck squash—along with apples, plums, and carrots from our friends at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. So far, we've harvested and distributed over 32,000 pounds (14,500 kg) of fresh produce throughout the Niagara Region.

In the coming weeks, we'll harvest the last of our watermelons, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, beans, and apples—aiming to meet or even exceed last year's record of 42,000 pounds (19,000 kg). The demand for fresh, healthy food continues to grow, and we're proud to play a part in meeting that need.

Bike Me Up

Bike Me Up Niagara recently joined the fun at the Queenston Harvest Fest, where we auctioned off a free bike and met many new faces in the community. Our new repair service has been a great success—this summer alone, we completed 28 tune-ups!



The program continues to expand, helping more people access affordable, sustainable transportation.

Fundraising

Jubilee Online Auction Opens October 15 – Everyone Welcome to Bid

The Jubilee Online Auction opens October 15, and everyone is invited to bid! From unique collectibles and experiences to professional services and gift bundles, there's something for everyone—perfect for early holiday shopping. Visit <https://mobilbid.co/url/BTEhZ03G> to register, browse, and bid.

Highlights include:

- Coffee & Conversation with author Terry Fallis or musician Danno O'Shea
- Signed Bobby Orr jersey
- Gazelle bicycle
- Breakfast with Niagara Mayors
- Walk With Purpose with Karen Orlandi
- Radio co-host opportunity on 105.1 The River
- Gift cards, experiences, and themed bundles like "Thrift the Niagara Region" and "Kitchen Collection"

Proceeds support Start Me Up Niagara's programs, empowering individuals to regain stability and purpose. To donate an item or become a sponsor, contact Emily Fieguth at efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca.

Third Party Events



Mr. Mike's Steakhouse Casual Giving Tuesday Fundraiser

Tuesday, November 18 | 5:00–8:00 PM

Enjoy dine-in or takeout and join a penny auction benefiting the Toolbox Project.



Shannon Passero VIP Shopping Night

Wednesday, November 19 | 7:00–9:00 PM

Shop with purpose—proceeds support SMUN's programs and services.

RSVP by November 15th

Call: (289) 501-0263

Email: events@startmeupniagara.ca

We're so grateful to the local businesses and community groups supporting SMUN this season. These events provide vital support and help raise awareness of our programs.

Want to host your own? Contact Emily Fieguth at efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca — every event helps build a stronger, more caring Niagara.



startmeupniagara.ca