



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

*working together.
moving forward.*

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

This has been a tumultuous year for everyone at Start Me Up Niagara, including the Board.

Not only has COVID 19 disrupted just about everything, but the Board was also tasked with the monumental challenge of finding Susan Venditti's successor as Executive Director. Working with HHS Consultants, a search team consisting of Paul Miller, Maurice Prindiville, Susan Tromanhauser, and Susan Mifsud interviewed several candidates and were pleased to recommend that Laura Dumas be hired as the new ED.

We were sad not to be able to give Susan the send-off that she so richly deserved after building SMUN from the ground up and leading it for twenty-one years. Staff organized a surprise virtual retirement presentation with messages from local dignitaries and well wishes from all. Susan's family was able to attend, which was very special to her. Leadership begins at the top, and we are focused on building a strong board with skilled and experienced individuals who can add value to the organization.

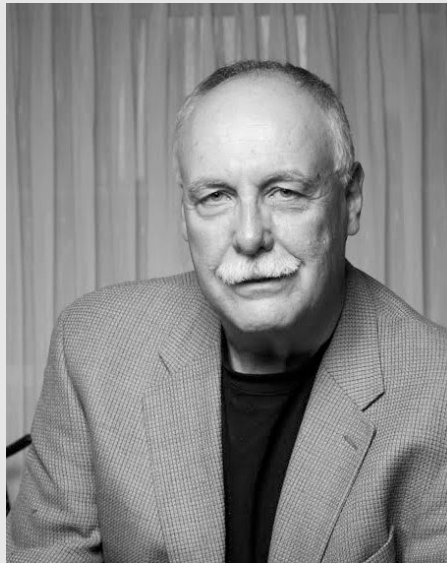
The role of the Board can be summarized in two words: Protecting and Directing. The Board has responsibility for the overall well-being of Start Me Up Niagara which means managing risks and determining the organization's direction.

The Board is also responsible for overseeing the work of the ED, which is directly accountable to the Board.

In 2020 we established two Board committees, Finance and Risk, which is responsible for reviewing the financial reports, but also for looking at issues such as insurance and health and safety; and Board Development, which is responsible for Board

recruitment, education and the overall direction of the Board's work.

Many competent and committed people have joined the Board since 2020, and I believe we have a genuinely outstanding governance team.



It is essential for Boards to continue to learn and grow. Every Board meeting includes an educational where we are informed about a topic relevant to our work. Board education has included presentations on enterprise, COVID protocols, Coldest Night of the Year, housing, research into the impact of poverty on health and well-being, capital campaigns and the Queenston Neighbourhood. In addition, we held a Board retreat (online, of course), led by one of our Board members, Laurie Warkentin.

The Board is responsible for developing the high-level strategic priorities that guide the ED, management and staff. Some of the key issues the Board will be looking at in the next year are:

- Defining more clearly our key priorities.
- Ensuring that "Persons With Lived Experience" are involved in decision-making.
- Developing Board governance policies.
- Assessing our future property and facilities needs.
- Resource development.

The Board is committed to doing its best for participants, stakeholders and the community with the resources we have – money, people and facilities. This is a task in today's climate. I want to thank Charmaine Frado, our Resource Development Manager and Emily DeGaut, Fundraising Events Coordinator and everyone who walked and donated for a highly successful Coldest Night of the Year campaign in which we raised over \$170,000.

There are twelve members of the SMUN Board. Only three have been on the Board for more than two years. Three Board members have resigned in the last year – Harry Clutterbuck, Nancy Raimondo and Susan Tromanhauser and we thank them for their contributions. Five members have joined since the last AGM – Laurie Warkentin, Teresa Hill, Susan English, Sandee Nebel and Rob Richardson. They join Bruce Lilley, Maurice Prindiville, Jennifer Rees, Reg Soper, Susan Mifsud in rounding out the Board.

We will be presenting a full slate of twelve Directors to the 2021 AGM.

Board members are appointed for a two year term which can be renewed twice. Because of the number of new members, the Board decided not to enforce those terms in order to maintain continuity and experience. Beginning in 2022, we will institute an orderly term rotation for Board members.

I want to thank our Board Treasurer Susan English and Board Secretary Sandee Nebel. I want to pay tribute to all the Start Me Up staff and volunteers who have had to work under extremely trying conditions for the last year.

I want to once again pay tribute to Susan and Tony Venditti for their tireless work on behalf of those in our community who struggle with enormous challenges and are often neglected and forgotten.

And I want to thank Laura Dumas, our Executive Director who is dedicated to ensuring that Start Me Up Niagara continues make a significant impact on St Catharines and the Region of Niagara.
Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Dr. Paul Miller
Chair, Board of Directors

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From my first day as Executive Director at Start Me Up Niagara, I was told over and over again, "You have some big shoes to fill!" I can't begin to tell you how true that statement is. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Susan for the month of December. During this month, Susan imparted her wisdom, ideas and history of the agency and its programs. I can tell you with certainty that those 30 days were not enough. Susan graciously stayed with the agency for another four months in the role of Shelter Manager to give me the opportunity to learn about the other agency programs offered by Start Me Up Niagara. I hope she knows what a true blessing this was for me.

It has been a hefty learning curve for me, to be completely honest, more like a vertical hill! I want to sincerely thank the Board of Directors for their support, guidance and belief in me.

Thank you to the staff for your patience, your ability to impart your wisdom and experience during this time of change in management. COVID has offered new challenges in every way imaginable. The staff have provided programs creatively and inclusively, ensuring that no one was left behind.

Although COVID has limited our ability to use volunteers, the volunteers who were able to help were genuinely amazing. Their willingness to help wherever and whenever is a gift that has allowed the agency to move forward and offer programs. Their hard work, commitment and dedication and selflessness are something to be admired. Our work would not be possible, and we would not be

able to offer the level of service that is allowed with the restrictions as they were and continue to be.

I cannot say enough about the generosity of our donors. Their kind, generous financial contributions allow us to fill the gap when funding cannot meet our demands. This year's Coldest Night of the Year event is proof of the support we have within our communities. This year's event was the most successful thus far and allowed us to continue to operate the Drop-In Resource Centre.

I want to thank the numerous foundations and grant providers that have allowed us to keep our doors open. Your funding has allowed the agency to grow and serve more people in a time of uncertainty. We were able to offer unique programs that provided much-needed support for the individuals we serve. Never before have I seen such a strong spirit of giving and financial support as I have here.

Our community partners have also been of great support not only to me but to the agency as a whole. The sharing of ideas, common goals, and a willingness to move our community forward together is an excellent example of a fantastic collaborative relationship.

Let's keep moving forward, together, into another successful year!

Respectfully,
Laura Dumas





Resource Centre
17 Gale Cres., St. Catharines
(905) 984-5310

The Work Action Centre
203 Church St., St. Catharines
(289) 438-3939

At Start Me Up Niagara, we offer services to support people facing significant challenges such as poverty, homelessness, unemployment, disabilities, addictions and mental health issues.

Our goal is to provide opportunities for individuals to increase their level of self-sufficiency and attain an improved quality of life.

Our services range from community lunches, health care, and arts and gardening programs, to housing supports and employment development. Together, we are working to build a community where all are included.

Participant Pathway

- *Start Me Up Niagara operates on the following pillars to meet our mission of providing individuals who face significant life challenges with opportunities to stabilize, participate and grow.*

Stabilization

- *Stabilization is the first step toward an improved quality of life. Includes meeting basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, income, health care and social interaction.*

Participation

- *Participation is about building natural social supports, joining an activity, volunteering, trying something new. All improve community integration levels and maintain stability. Start Me Up Niagara relies on the support of more than 150 volunteers each year.*

Growth

- *Growth is about setting goals, developing social and work skills, earning income, and moving toward self sufficiency and a better quality of life.*

the story of us and those we care about.



THE RESOURCE CENTRE



The Start Me Up Niagara community outreach centre is located at 17 Gale Cres. in St. Catharines. It is a welcoming safe place, open to all 365 days a year.

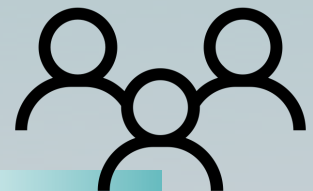
- **12,617 drop-in visits.**
- **7,331 hot lunches in the past year.**

Our staff is always available, and visitors have access to a variety of services, programs and activities.

Visitors can expect the following:

- *Daily refreshments & coffee always freshly brewed*
- *Hot lunches at no charge on weekends and holidays*
- *Nursing services on Tuesdays and Thursdays*
- *Mental Health services on Tuesdays and Wednesdays*
- *Assistance with applications and other paperwork*
- *Connections to other community services*
- *Information on housing and employment programs*
- *Addictions Worker on Monday and Thursdays*
- *Access to phones, computers, restrooms, and mail services*

The staff at Start Me Up Niagara use their education, training and lived experiences combined with professional skills and natural aptitudes to treat each participant with compassion, dignity, and respect.



individuals served	350	meals served	7,331	shoes/boots distributed	65
face-to-face service	12,617	total referrals	412	bus tickets issued	181
st. vincent vouchers	415	number of volunteers	32	volunteer hours	2,032

THE RESOURCE CENTRE



Income Matters

individuals served	778
tax returns completed	595
number of volunteers	3
volunteer hours	192

Brushed Aside

individuals served	25
face-to-face service	25
phone service	25
total referrals	25

Total Income Recovered

\$1,620,354.02

CMHA

individuals served	41	face-to-face service	32	phone service	206
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CASON

individuals served	25
face-to-face service	25
total referrals	30



Housing Services

The Housing Support Services at Start Me Up Niagara operate through two different types of programs; Prevention & Supportive Transitional Housing.

Housing Supports are provided for individuals facing significant life challenges such as: poverty, addictions, mental health and homelessness to eliminate barriers in maintaining long-term housing. We provide an individualized one on one approach that is geared to stabilization, growth and community integration through connections to resources as well as case management activities.

In both programs individuals are assigned a worker that provides support based on the individuals' identified goals and together, work towards achievement.

Prevention programs focus on early intervention strategies to engage and collaborate with individuals at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness to maintain housing or obtain new housing.

Support activities include;

- Engaging new landlords
- Tribunal support and advocacy
- Mediating landlord/ tenant issues
- Connection to supports and resources



Supportive Transitional Housing program provides ongoing support on an individualized approach to eliminate barriers to long- term stable housing.

Support activities include;

- Life skills sessions (tenancy skills, cooking/cleaning)
- Maximizing income (income tax, applying for social assistance or OAS/CPP)
- Connection to supports and resources



housing
search
assistance

103

individuals
supported/
STH

60

individuals
served
prevention

145

total
people
housed

96

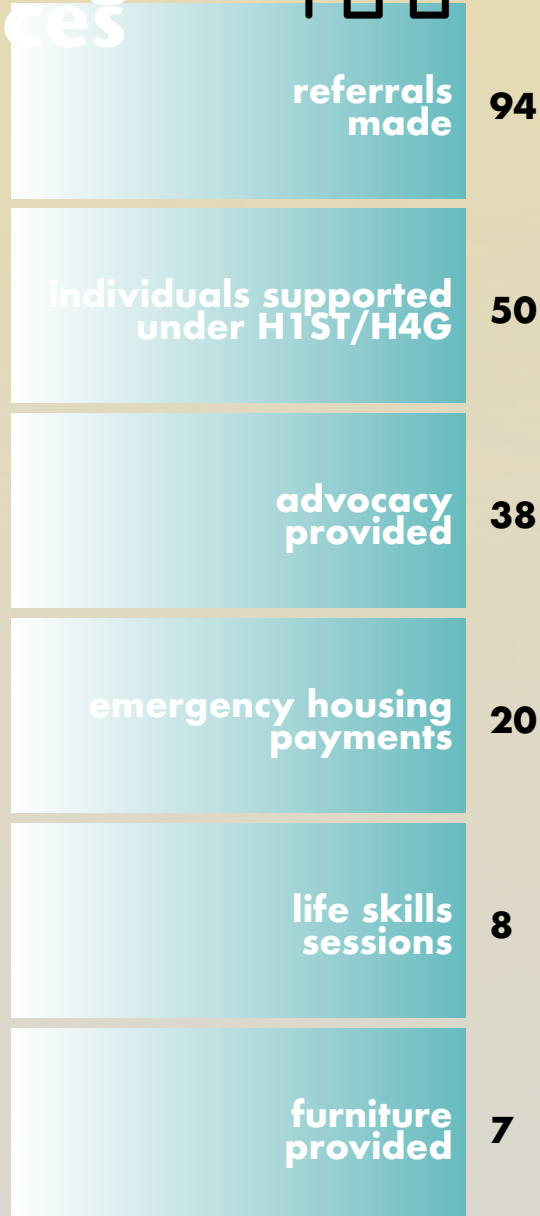
number of
food
hampers

92

number of
meals
provided

120

Housing Services





The Start Me Up Niagara employment team provides supports and services to individuals looking to find and retain employment.

We offer support for employers, as well as traditional and self-employment pathways at the Work Action Centre.

The Work Action Centre is part of a range of services organized along a continuum which leads to self-sufficiency and an increased level of employability. We work with participants to remove barriers to competitive employment and develop an individualized employment plan to assist in attaining and retaining their employment goals.

- **You do not need to be on ODSP to work with our team. Services are available to all living with a disability requiring employment services.**

We offer a wide range of services and support tailored specifically to meet individual needs and employment goals, both traditional and self-employment pathways. **Our employment team is available to help participants attain and retain employment.**

individuals
served

136

new
employers

3

number of
jobs secured

17

number of self-
employment individuals **63**

12 number of successful
self-employment ventures





Resource Development at Start Me Up Niagara is all about giving and giving forward..

- *In Resource Development, we raise all resources that support SMUN's work through donor gifts, financial donations, government funds, foundations and fundraising events such as the Coldest Night of The Year!*

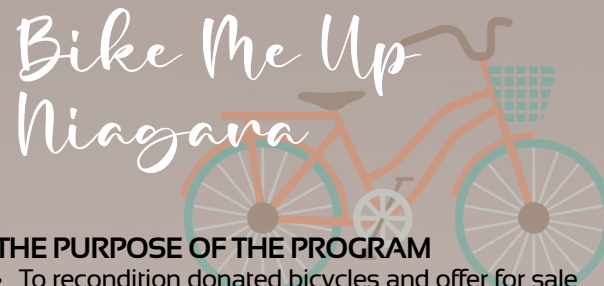
We could not do this without you! We also coordinate the SMUN Volunteer program and coordinate media and communications such as our website, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. When you give to Start Me Up Niagara, you give someone a meal, a welcoming place to find respite from the harsh elements of the outdoors, access to friendly support staff, and many resources such as housing, employment programs, recreational programs, primary health care, and on-site connections to mental health and addictions support programs.

By giving of your time, your volunteerism helps us get the coffees served, the meals prepped, the donations picked up and delivered, the phones answered and allows us to continue to provide the highest level of service possible!

- **Volunteers allow us to build a healthy community! There are challenges with the work that we do. Knowing we have you as a partner makes us stronger.**

Please donate at <https://www.startmeupniagara.ca/site/donate>. Consider becoming a monthly donor or apply to become a volunteer! We appreciate your kindness, and you have a lasting impact on our whole community.





THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

- To recondition donated bicycles and offer for sale at affordable prices, provide work space, tools and training for our customers along with a kind and supportive environment.

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE PROGRAM

- Our shop was initiated to serve our local client base but is also open to everyone in Niagara. Due to our committed volunteers we are able to offer good bicycles for sale for \$40 making them affordable to people that need transportation.

WHO FUNDS THE PROGRAM

- Funding is provided through generous individual local donors.

Bike Me Up also helps to keep bikes out of the local landfill sites thus providing an environmental benefit..

Located at 203 Church St.
(accessible at the side of the building)



bike repairs	234	total volunteers	7	Total Revenue \$5,896
bikes sold	117	volunteer hours	234	



THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

- To provide a safe space, physically and virtually for Start Me Up Niagara artists interested in developing their artistic practices, no matter what medium they choose to use.

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE PROGRAM

- The Art Me Up program is a very beneficial program for beginners and masters alike, where individuals can express their ideas freely with other artists to become better at their craft and foster deeper connections within the community. Art is not just about what you create; it's problem solving, attention to detail, and finding a balance.

WHO FUNDS THE PROGRAM

- We are funded in part by private donations and also through a municipal SCCIP grant.

Art Me Up Niagara is not just for artists, but it also focuses on the health & wellbeing of all of our participants.



Check out our website for some of the amazing work of our Art Me Up Niagara participants.

8 number
of artists

85 Street News
Circulation



THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

- For over 10 years, Start Me Up Niagara has enjoyed the use of a two-acre community farm space in Vineland where SMUN staff, volunteers, and participants can come together to grow food for our meal programs and to offer to our community at a low cost, helping us to promote wellness and food security in our neighbourhood.

In this space, we grow a wide variety of different vegetables, herbs, and beans. We welcome and transport our SMUN participants out to the farm from downtown St. Catharines, so they can come and help out and enjoy the garden, and to get away from the drama of downtown life.

We also grow specific herbs, flowers, and veggies that we then harvest and use in a kitchen program, where we transform these items into unique products to sell at the farmer's market.

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE PROGRAM

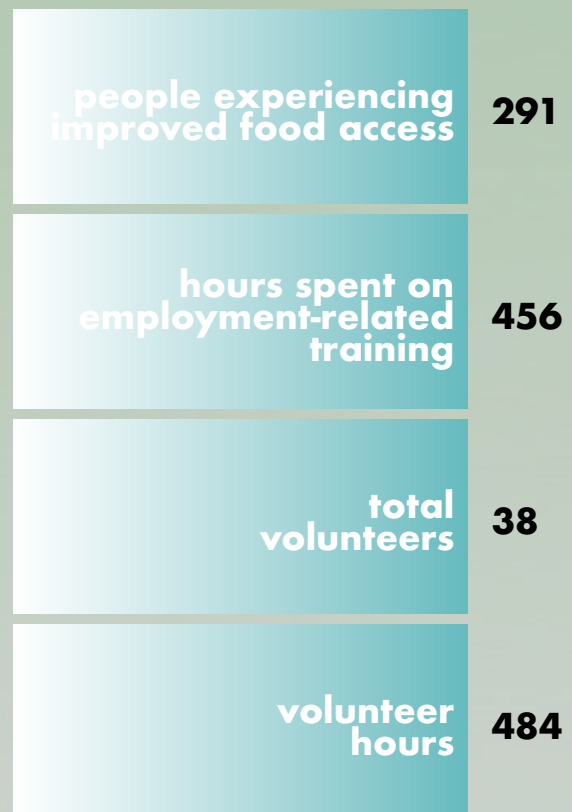
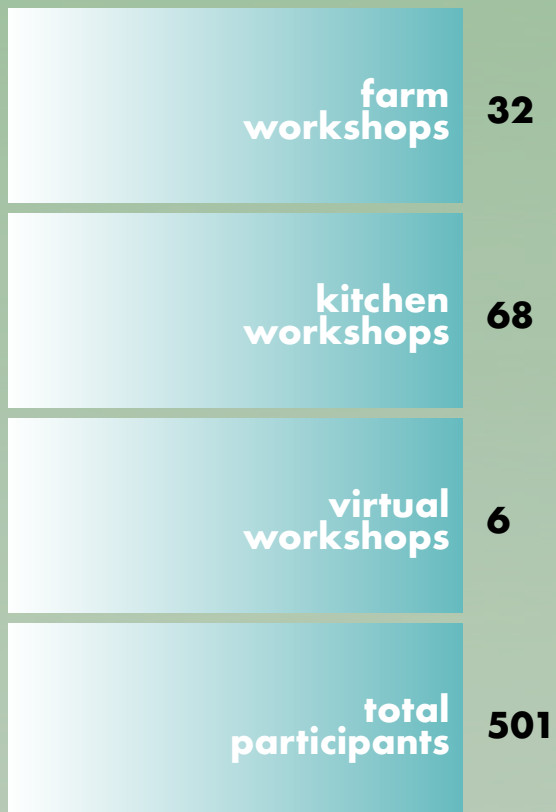
- Participants in our farm and social enterprise program benefit from increased knowledge, employability, self-esteem and self-sufficiency from knowing how to grow food and create health-promoting products that they can make and use themselves at home.

GREEN GARDEN HOURS:

- **FARM:** May to October
- **Social Enterprise:** Tuesday workshops

We would like to acknowledge: Vineland Research & Innovation Centre, Stokes Seeds, William Dam Seeds, Tree + Twig Farm, the Niagara College Greenhouse, Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way Niagara, and Niagara Herbalist

Green Garden





Temporary Winter Shelter

Temporary Winter Shelter is a coordinated approach to providing a hot meal and sanctuary to community members who experience poverty and homelessness over the harshest winter months of the year.

- In partnership with the local faith community, Start Me Up Niagara coordinates the Temporary Winter Shelter program in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls.

Shelters are available in **St. Catharines** and **Niagara Falls** from **November 1st** until **April 15th** from **7:30PM** to **7:30AM**.

- This service is provided at two locations, Westminster United Church in St. Catharines and St. Andrew's United Church in Niagara Falls.

Overnights are funded by donations, Start Me Up Niagara and the Regional Municipality of Niagara.

Donations always welcome.

FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
COMPASSION & DIGNITY

Emergency Overnight Shelter - St. Catharines

individuals served	360	number of volunteers	4	volunteer hours	420
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Emergency Overnight Shelter - Niagara Falls

individuals served	189	referrals made	4454	number of volunteers	12	volunteer hours	390
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Volunteers are paramount to the success of the operations of Start Me Up Niagara.

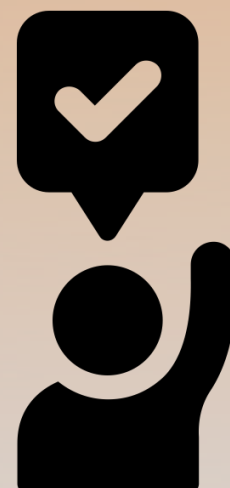
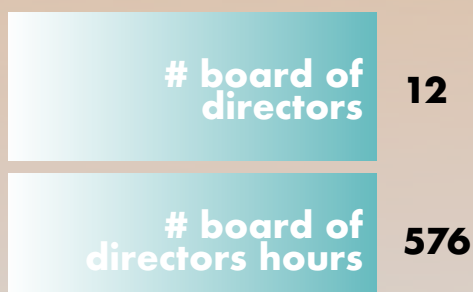
- Volunteering is a great way to grow skills, help the community and be involved in making a difference in someone's life.

Without our dedicated team of volunteers, we would not be able to offer the programs and activities participants have come to count on. With hundreds of volunteers every year, SMUN is very thankful for the tremendous amount of help given to us. Your time and commitment is truly appreciated!

- ***We accept volunteers in many programs such as Bike Me Up, the Garden, the Resource Drop In Centre, the SMUN Kitchen and other areas.***

Our mighty team of volunteers is always welcoming new interested applicants. Volunteer opportunities include, but are not limited to the following:

- *Serving coffee, beverages, and snacks or meals. Prep vegetables, and other ingredients for cooking meals or snacks. Helping pack lunches in a "take-out" style for handing out at the Drop In doors.*
- *Working at the front door to help facilitate intake information, screening, and hygiene protocols. Assist with passing out mail, clothing, or other donated goods.*
- *Assist with helping participants use the phone to make calls.*
- *Clean, and sanitize surfaces and enforce COVID restrictions.*
- *At the Garden: weeding, watering, and general up-keep of plants.*
- *At Bike Me Up, volunteers are fixing bikes and bike parts, and tidying the shop.*
- *Volunteer drivers pick-up and deliver "Food Rescue" from local partners through Second Harvest.*



the story of us and those we care about.





Thank you!

Thank you so much to all of our Donors, Sponsors and Volunteers for your gifts of kindness! We appreciate you!



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Niagara
Mental health for all



We appreciate your kindness

Start Me Up Niagara appreciates the support of the following funders and donors in 2020–2021. We also thank 680 individuals who gave directly to SMUN. 2470 donors, 61 teams, 422 walkers, and 22 sponsors of The Coldest Night of the Year raised over \$172,000 in 2021!

Working together, we are moving forward!

Federal Government

Canada Summer Jobs

Provincial Government

FedCap

Ontario Job Creation Partnership

Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Regional Government

Niagara Region: Housing

Niagara Prosperity Initiative

City of St. Catharines

SCCIP

Foundations & Community Groups

Arab Community Centre Toronto

Audrey Hellyer Foundation

Beamsville Church of Christ

Canadian Red Cross Society

Community Care

Community Foundations

Community Food Centres Canada

Elm St. United Church

Emergency Community Support Fund

Engage and Change Foundation

The Fowler Family Foundation

Golden Harvest Baptist Church

Grace United Church

Grantham Lions Club

Holy Cross Fathers of the Sacred Heart

Province

Jim's No Frills

John Howard Society of Niagara

Jordan Lions Club

Life Abundant Niagara Division of Sheepfold Ministries

Loyal Order of the Moose

The May Court Club of St. Catharines

Merritton Lions Club

Million Dollar Round Table

Morgan's Point United Church

Mountainview United Church

My Tribute Gift Foundation

Niagara Community Church

Niagara Community Foundation

Niagara Falls Professional Firefighters Association

Niagara Regional Police Association

Ontario Trillium Foundation

Open Arms Mission

PayPal Giving Fund Canada

Pocket Change

Port Dalhousie Lions Club

Rotary Club St. Catharines

Royal Canadian Legion H.T. Church (ON #24)

St. Catharines Museum & Welland Canals Centre

St. Catharines Twinning Association

St. Columba Church

St. Cyril Ukrainian Church

St. Davids and District Lions Club

St. John's Anglican Church

St. Julias Catholic Women's League

St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Julia's Church

The Benevity Community Impact Fund

The Catholic Women's League St. Thomas

Aquinas Parish

The Toolbox Project

Trinity Christian Reformed Church

Trinity United Church

Unitarian Congregation of Niagara

United Way

Wise Guys

Youth Philanthropy Initiative Canada

Corporations/Local Businesses

2022 Canada Summer Games

A. Kowalski Consulting Services Inc.

Alectra Utilities

Bargains Group

Bass Pro Shop

Beatties Business Products

Brock University

Campbell Creative

Club Richelieu St. Catharines

CMS Intelligence

Con Gusto

Costco

C R Smith Financial Services

Dean's No Frills

Dennis' No Frills

Desks Plus

Dillon's

Edible Options

Essential Cremation and Burial Services

Fidelity Investments Canada ULC

First General

First Ontario Credit Union

Future Access

General Motors Canada

H2ONLY INC.

Henderson Pharmacy Staff

Koorneef Produce Ltd.

Ling & Ling Enterprises LTD.

Niagara Dailies

Mark's No Frills

Martindale Kennels and Grooming

Metro Richelieu Inc.

O'Hara Trucking

OLG: Delta Bingo

Ontario Power Generation

Osborne Law Group

Patrick J Darte Chapel Limited

Pelham Aesthetics

PenFinancial Credit Union

Price Industries Limited

Rankin Construction

REMAX Garden City Realty Inc. Brokerage

Restaurant Pearl-Morisette

Restaurant Solutions

Real Canadian Superstore

Ridley College

RWTO/OERO Niagara Falls Branch

Scotiabank

Segue Clinic

Sheldon Pest Management

Shoppers Drug Mart (Hartzel Rd.)

Spiritwear Promotions

Starbuck's

Stone Mill Holdings Inc.

StuCor Construction LTD.

Sun Life Financial

Venest Industries

Vineland Research Station

Wayne Gretzky Estates

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susan English

Teresa Hill

Bruce Lilley

Susan Mifsud

Paul Miller

Sandee Nebel

Maurice Prindiville

Jennifer Rees

Robert Richardson

Reg Soper

Susan Tromanhauser (Resigned)

Laurie Warkentin

THE SMUN STAFF

ADA STORIN
CAROL ANN GRAHAM
CASEY WACH
CATHY SISLER
CHARMAINE FRADO
DANIEL HARRISON
DAVE ROULSTON
DUAA HUSSEIN
EMILY DEGAUST
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SANDY MIDDLETON
SILVANNA SMITH
SUSAN VENDITTI
TAMMY GOODMAN
TENESIA BENJAMIN
TIFFANY ROSS
TONY VENDITTI
VERN VAUTOUR
WAYNE SCHMIDT

FINANCIAL REPORT

Start Me Up Niagara Statement of Operations

Year ended March 31

2021

2020

Revenue

Regional Municipality of Niagara	\$ 1,191,066	\$ 1,134,246
Ministry of Community and Social Services	624,395	622,820
United Way Niagara	249,133	251,842
Ontario Trillium Foundation	160,691	135,362
Fundraising and donations	355,222	370,264
Other grants	121,971	122,911
Rental	54,774	73,851
Investment income (loss)	10,100	(14,563)
Other	15,343	35,676
	<u>2,782,695</u>	<u>2,732,409</u>

Expenses

Administrative support	37,023	27,469
Amortization	9,035	9,017
Bank charges	2,367	1,876
Fundraising	37,503	36,888
Housing and hostel costs	270,629	416,846
Insurance	8,922	6,683
Interest on long-term debt	6,252	6,555
Materials and supplies	102,854	65,535
Office and miscellaneous	725	1,333
Participants support	215,714	194,586
Professional fees	10,537	9,253
Promotion	11,562	12,391
Rent	57,040	43,914
Repairs and maintenance	95,034	176,998
Salaries and benefits	1,681,630	1,568,054
Subcontract	49,304	74,320
Supplies	9,427	13,392
Telephone and fax	20,495	22,334
Travel	21,874	37,690
Utilities	26,685	29,731
Workshops	669	2,947
	<u>2,675,281</u>	<u>2,757,812</u>

Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses

\$ 107,414

\$ (25,403)

the story of us and those we care about.



