

Help Our Students (HOST) Program President's Report - July 2018

"I am writing to you to inform you on my experience with your HOST program. When I first got introduced to this program, I was very shocked and confused on why you guys first chose me. I was depressed and having financial and emotional issues at home. The award I received each month not only helped to pay for tutoring, money so I wouldn't starve each day, and money for clothes, and to be able to buy materials for certain projects. My marks began to improve and I didn't feel so imprisoned anymore. I didn't have my parents yelling at me about how I'm such a financial burden to them. A lot of the stresses that I went through subsided and I could breathe again. Thank you for making me feel like I was normal girl for the first time."

This letter, from a recipient of a Help Our Students Program award, eloquently describes the impact of the award on this young lady's life. When you read the letters that we have received, you will find similar stories, sad but uplifting, heart-wringing but hopeful. When we started the Help Our Students Program eight years ago, our goal was modest: help hard-working students living in difficult financial circumstances to help them graduate high school. We helped three students from two local high schools that year. We felt that if we could continue to do that each year, we would be very successful.

This year, we distributed \$1,000 HOST awards to 113 students from 56 Ottawa high schools (50 males and 63 females). To date, we have given out over \$315,000. This amazing achievement is solely the result of the generosity of countless individuals, associations and organizations. They support our mission to help hard-working students in dire need stay in school. They love that 100% of their donations go directly to help the students, that no donation is used to pay for administration.

"I am writing to talk about how the Help Our Students Program has made a positive impact in my life, at home and at school. I've been blessed to be able to use this money for small things like groceries for the house and big things like a new winter coat for my sister.

My parents always wanted their kids to get the best education but it can be hard going to school in higher-class neighborhoods when our family didn't have as much as others. Being able to get new clothes for my sister was a good feeling. We could both go to school without having to worry about what we were wearing or lunch and we could focus more on school. The award made it possible for me to take a load off of my parents by helping pay for groceries and other small house needs. The award even made it possible for me to buy a uniform to start a part-time job.

In all this award has been an amazing help to my family and me so far this year, and I am so grateful for this opportunity that the HOST program has given me."

This year, donations fell slightly. As a result, the Board of Directors decided to take a more cautious approach for next year, giving us a better chance at stability for the next few years: in the 2018-19 school year, we will support 84 students, one student in 27 schools and two students in the other 27 schools. To select the schools that would choose two students, we gave priority to schools that had contributed financially to the HOST Program - either through a Parent Council donation or through school

fundraising. The remaining schools were chosen by a random draw. In every case, the schools select the deserving students since they know best which students are hard-working and are in need of financial assistance. We encourage gender balance in the schools' selections.

Our continuing challenge is awareness. Even though about 80% of our current donors renew their donations, we need new donors in order to continue to maintain this program at the current level.

There are many ways to help us:

1. Print the Donor Form on our web site (www.HelpOurStudentsProgram.com) and send us a cheque.
2. Click on the "Donate Now" button on the web site; this will take you to the CanadaHelps web site, a Canadian Registered charity that collects donations for many Canadian charities. You can make a one-time or a monthly donation using your credit card. You can also donate securities through this portal, a highly beneficial way of getting the maximum value from your donation.
3. Make a specific Bequest in your Will. Simply read the "Bequest" section on our Donations page.
4. Donate a new or existing life insurance policy, naming the Help Our Students Program as beneficiary. Refer to our Donations page for more information.

The Financial Statement for 2017-18 is available by clicking [here](#).

You can read many of this year's recipient letters by clicking [here](#).

We ask each recipient to complete a short online survey. You can view the results of the survey by clicking [here](#).

Thank you for your support. Please tell your family, friends and colleagues about our Program. I would be very happy to speak to a group about the HOST Program. You can contact me by email (hostawards@rogers.com) or by telephone (613-830-3633).

Richard Lussier
President