

# UNIVERSITY STUDENTS MAKE AN IMPACT IN ONTARIO'S COMMUNITIES



Students across Ontario's universities are demonstrating their adaptability and commitment to making a difference in their campus and local communities. Whether it's by fundraising for local and national non-profits, supporting other students through campus food markets or applying their skills to support local businesses through WIL, students continue to find new ways to give back and get involved.



Below are some of the many ways students are making a positive impact and building resiliency in communities across the province – helping create a better future for all Ontarians.

## ● Giving back to the local community

● Preparing care packages for vulnerable groups and helping build homes for those in need are some of the many ways **Brock University** students continue to make a difference in the Niagara community. Through the annual Brock Cares Day of Service program, more than 100 new and returning students volunteer their time each year to support local non-profits and the needs of the community.

● As a way to support youth development, student athletes at **Laurentian University** volunteer as camp counsellors at an outdoor adventure and sports summer camp for local children and youth hosted by the university. By leading daily outdoor and sporting activities, student volunteers have helped campers develop their leadership and teambuilding skills.



● Over the past 24 years, the **Nipissing University** Student Union has helped raise funds for Cystic Fibrosis Canada. Through their annual fundraiser Shine Day, students shine cars across North Bay to raise money and awareness for Cystic Fibrosis. To date, students have raised over \$480,000 for critical research and care.

● During reading week, students can get involved in the community by taking advantage of the **University of Ottawa's** Alternative Student Breaks (ASB) program. Through the program, student volunteers build their skills while learning about and taking action on local development challenges and sustainability initiatives through connections with campus-based projects and local organizations.

● Through advocacy and community events, student leaders in the Books Art Music (BAM) Collective at **Toronto Metropolitan University** are creating more opportunity for equity-seeking groups and addressing community safety and youth well-being. For example, to address gun violence and its impact on racialized youth in Regent Park, BAM Collective organized art therapy and creative workshops in the community to provide youth with a safe space. The group was also invited to participate in a roundtable discussion on gun violence hosted by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other community groups.

● By devoting one day of orientation week to volunteering in the local community, over 120 first-year students at **Western University** have helped support the initiatives of non-profit organizations in the City of London through the university's O-Serves program. Over the past two years, students have contributed over 12,000 hours of community engagement and volunteering across their local region through the program.

● As the weather gets colder, a campus clothing drive organized by students at the **University of Windsor** is helping those in need in the Windsor Essex community access warm clothing. Donations are given to the Homelessness and Housing Help Hub, which aims to improve the social welfare and quality of life for local residents experiencing homelessness.

## ● Supporting local businesses and municipalities through work-integrated learning

● As the City of Sault Ste. Marie revitalizes its downtown core, students at **Algoma University** are helping support and implement community projects through WIL opportunities with the city. The projects allow students to develop critical soft skills and gain valuable experience while supporting a range of municipal priorities, such as enhancing safety, youth retention and climate change mitigation.

● By providing free legal advice to new Canadians in Thunder Bay through a community legal clinic, law students at **Lakehead University** are helping meet the evolving needs of the local community. Since launching in 2021, students have counseled over 100 newcomers in the region, as well as offered free, public legal education in partnership with community organizations.



- As the City of Oshawa implements its Age-Friendly Strategy to support older adults in the local community, students at **Ontario Tech University** have helped develop an interactive training tool to support the roll-out of the program through a partnership with TeachingCity. The tool helps city staff apply the principles of the strategy to municipal policies, practices, funding, services and programs.

- For youth experiencing homelessness in the City of Toronto, unlimited access to transit could be life-changing. Through the student-led transit equity research project, Transit Access Project for Youth (TAP), students at the **University of Toronto** are helping increase youth mobility across the city. In partnership with local shelters and transitional homes, TAP is providing participating youth with free, pre-loaded transit cards with the goal of connecting them with job opportunities across the city and helping inform municipal policy frameworks on transit equity.



- To help support campus land stewardship, one **Trent University** graduate student worked alongside university staff through an on-campus field training placement to address some of the campus and community's most critical environmental needs. This career-boosting experience included conducting field surveys and identifying at-risk plants, which will help inform the university's green space management plans.

- Through WIL opportunities with local non-profits, students at the **University of Waterloo** are helping make a difference in their local region through the university's Co-op for Community program. Students apply skills learned in class to support United Way-affiliated non-profits, as well as gain new skills, such as marketing and community investment.

- Students are helping launch real-world social-change projects and policy innovations through a WIL experience as part of **Wilfrid Laurier University's** Social Innovation in the City course. Through the course, students support a range of municipal projects, including revitalizing outdoor spaces and collaborating on affordable housing initiatives to help address local challenges.

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### ● Fostering community on campus

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- Through in-person and virtual social and education events for 2SLGBTQ+ students, the Engiqueers student club at **Carleton University** is helping create a safe space for engineering students and their allies to connect with one another. To further create a sense of community and belonging, the group has opened up membership to all students.

- The weekly student and community-run Campus Food Market at the **University of Guelph** is helping address food insecurity on campus. By selling fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable and flexible prices, and partnering with other campus markets, students are helping their peers access a variety of fresh produce in a stigma-free environment.

- To help increase access to nutritious meals and groceries on campus, students at **McMaster University** launched a fundraising campaign called Loonies for Lunches. In partnership with McMaster Hospitality Services, students are asking customers to contribute one dollar to their purchase to support the campus-based food program Lockers of Love.



- As new students transition to university life, upper-year students participating in **OCAD University's** Welcome Squad program are helping first-year students connect with their campus and local community. Through both on and off campus events, the Welcome Squad helps students foster new connections with peers and a familiarity with the City of Toronto.

- With support from the university and local community, one **Queen's University** student developed three online platforms to help promote mental health from an overall wellness perspective. Through the development of these student-led initiatives, they were able to provide mentorship, living advice and free tutoring to help students build a strong foundation for mental health.



- Networking opportunities, mentorship and access to academic resources are some of the many ways the Women in White Coats (WiWC) student club at **York University** is helping empower women students studying STEM. WiWC also organizes Girl STEMpowered – a mentorship program for grade 11 and 12 students who are interested in pursuing health, science, and medicine-based careers.

