



SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Year in Review

2024-2025







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Welcome



As the Chief Executive Officer of Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) and a proud Veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, I understand firsthand the profound impact military service has on our members, Veterans, and their families.

The courage of our troops is matched by the unwavering strength of their families. These families endure the emotional toll of deployments, prolonged separations, and the unique challenges that come with frequent relocations. Their sacrifices are significant, and their resilience is inspiring.

Since its founding in 2007, Support Our Troops has stood as Canada's commitment to caring for our military families. Through educational support, youth programs, emergency assistance, and community initiatives, we try our best to ensure that no family is left behind. This program invites Canadians, individuals and organizations alike, to not only contribute but to become part of a movement grounded in compassion and shared responsibility.

In this report, you'll discover real-life examples of how generosity transforms lives. I am incredibly proud of what the Support Our Troops community has accomplished over the past year. I encourage you to take a few moments to explore the stories and impact within these pages.

Your commitment and support are vital to our mission. You are an essential part of what we do.

Stand with us!



Ian Poulter,

Managing Director, Non-Public Property

Staff of the Non-Public Funds, Canadian Forces

Support Our Troops At a Glance

Who we are

Support Our Troops is the official charitable cause of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).

Through our donors' generous contributions and community support, we empower our military community to face with dignity the unique challenges resulting from military life.

Who we support

- Serving CAF Members
- Veterans
- Military families

How we support

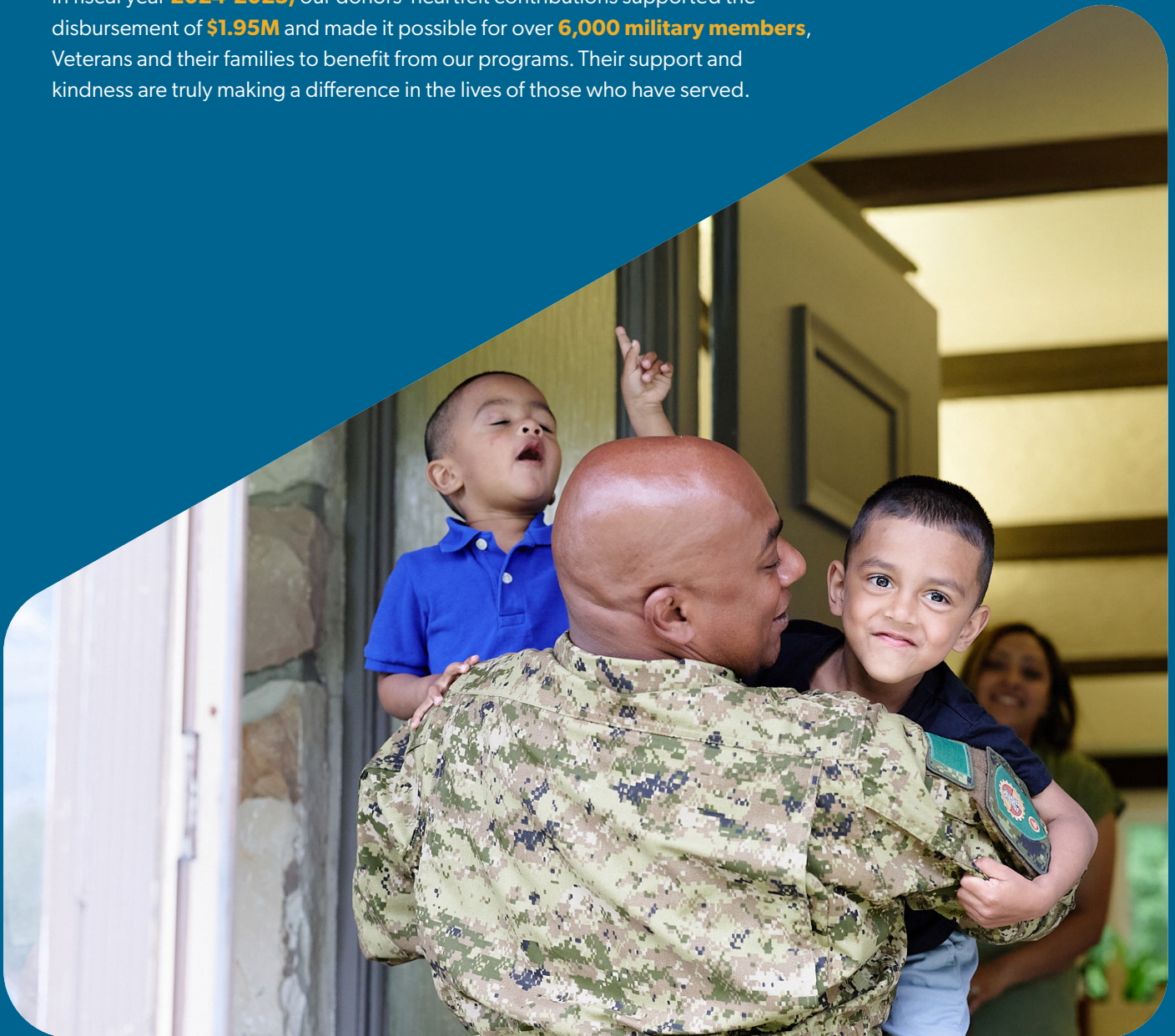
Our donors' generosity allows us to fund the following programs:

- Emergency Financial Assistance
- Special Needs Grants (now called Child and Youth Disability Grant)
- Ill and injured support
- National Scholarship Program and Education supports
- National Summer Camp Program
- Community Development Grants
- Region-Specific Grants

What we achieved with your help

The unwavering generosity of our donors ensures that military members, Veterans, and their families receive the timely assistance they need through Support Our Troops.

In fiscal year **2024-2025**, our donors' heartfelt contributions supported the disbursement of **\$1.95M** and made it possible for over **6,000 military members**, Veterans and their families to benefit from our programs. Their support and kindness are truly making a difference in the lives of those who have served.



2024-2025 in Review

For many Canadians, money worries are the greatest source of stress, more than work, personal health, and relationships. In fact, research shows that nearly half of Canadians say they've lost sleep because of financial worries^[1], and that nearly 1 out of 3 Canadians say they are short of money at the end of the month^[2]. Rising grocery prices, inflation, and housing prices are all realities that can easily resonate with many Canadians.

Canada's military families face similar financial stressors as civilian families, but these stressors can also be amplified by the three essential elements of military family life, geographic relocations (mobility), operational deployments (op tempo) and the relentless upheaval of military service (pers tempo). Geographical relocations resulting from military postings do have financial impacts on the family, primarily due to unplanned changes in cost of living as well as the employment of a non-serving spouse or partner. Frequent relocation can lead to major challenges for children especially when a change of school occurs during the school year, and the re-establishment of learning supports, or specialized educational services may be required. Taken together, many of Canada's military families are often challenged in achieving both short-term and long-term financial well-being, potentially compromising their overall health and wellness.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors and partners, we were able to support over 6,000 military members and their families with grants and programs that enhanced their financial well-being and helped them adapt to illnesses or injuries.

Over the past year, the support we provided has made a profound difference in their lives, offering hope and stability during challenging times. Some of that support has included:



423 military children

enjoyed summer camp for the 11th annual Summer Camps Program;



3,586 military members

their spouses and children were assisted through the Holiday Hamper Program;



104 military dependents

received a scholarship to pursue post-secondary education through the Scholarship Program; and



305 members

provided financial support through an Emergency Grant.

^[1] FP Canada™ 2025 Financial Stress Index, (March 18, 2025)

^[2] Financial Consumer Agency of Canada "Canadians' Financial Well-being: Summary of FCAC survey findings - Canada.ca", Dashboard on Canadians' financial well-being, money worries section (December 2024)

Our impact

Emergency Grants

Support Our Troops Emergency Grants: A Lifeline in Times of Crisis

In the face of unexpected financial distress, the Support Our Troops Emergency Grants have emerged as a beacon of hope for our military community. These grants, offering up to \$2,000 for Regular and Reserve Force members and up to \$500 for Veterans, provide crucial support during the most challenging times.

Imagine the anxiety of facing eviction, the fear of losing essential utilities, or the stress of being unable to afford necessary medical services. For many, these situations can seem insurmountable. But thanks to the Emergency Grants, our troops and their families have a lifeline. Whether it is covering transportation costs to essential health services, unplanned and urgent family expenses, or ensuring that basic necessities like groceries are within reach, these grants can make a profound difference. Over the past year, 305 members and their families were assisted by an Emergency Grant.

As noted by one Military recipient this year: "In 2023...with the rising costs of gas, food and pretty much everything I was fighting a mental health battle, life as I knew it seemed to be coming apart on all sides. I heard from SISIP that we could apply for an emergency grant through Support Our Troops which would assist members when they are in a financial crunch. To my surprise, the very next day I had received word that the grant was approved, and a little ray of sunshine was coming my way. I would like to personally thank all the people at CFMWS, Support Our Troops, the volunteers and people who donate the funds as it's you that truly make a difference in the lives of our Canadian soldiers. Thank you for helping me in my time of need."

As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate the resilience and strength of our military community. The Emergency Grants are not just financial aid; they are a symbol of solidarity and compassion. They remind us that no one is alone in their struggles, and that together, we can overcome any obstacle. The impact of these grants goes beyond financial relief. They offer peace of mind, stability and reassurance that in times of crisis, our community stands together.



Distress Grants

Support Our Troops Distress Grants: A Beacon of Hope in Times of Hardship.

Life can be unpredictable, and sometimes, it throws challenges our way that seem insurmountable. Financial distress, whether due to sickness, accident, death, or other misfortune, can leave individuals and families struggling to meet their basic needs. In these moments of profound hardship, the Support Our Troops Distress Grants offer a lifeline, providing up to \$5,000 to Veterans, their families, and Regular and Reserve Force serving members and their families. These grants aim to meet the most urgent needs, helping ensure that no one in our military community experiences the fear of going without essential support. Whether it is covering personal debts that have become unmanageable due to unforeseen circumstances or providing essential support to those who have lost their primary source of income, the Distress Grants are there to help.

The impact of these grants is immeasurable. They provide not just financial relief but also a sense of security and hope. They reassure us that no matter the storm, we are held up by a community that cares. Our community stands together, ready to support one another through the toughest of times. The stories of those who have received these grants are a testament to the strength and resilience of our military family.



Holiday Hamper Program

The holiday season, while joyous, can also bring financial strain, and for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) community it is no exception.

Since 2015, Support Our Troops, together with the Royal Canadian Chaplain Services bring holiday cheer to military members and their families in need through the Holiday Hamper Program.

This program, fueled by the generosity of donations, has grown significantly over the past eight years. It now reaches 76% of Bases, Wings, and Units across the nation, ensuring that the spirit of the season touches as many lives as possible. Last year alone, over \$209,600 in gift cards were distributed to 1,064 members and families (including 1,658 children) across 10 provinces and territories, providing much-needed relief and joy during the holidays.

The impact of the Holiday Hamper Program is profound. It offers more than just financial assistance; it brings hope, warmth, and a sense of community to those who might otherwise struggle. As noted by one Military member who received a Hamper this year: "After being posted to Gagetown, I was overwhelmed by the cost of food and along with losing child support, things have become tight financially. I also have an autistic child who is very selective with what she eats. This gift card will alleviate some financial stress that comes with the holidays."

The Program is a testament to the unwavering support and compassion of our donors.

As we reflect on the past year, we celebrate the incredible growth and reach of the Holiday Hamper Program. Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we can continue to offer this vital program to those who need it most.



Our Generous Donors

Donor feature: Karen and Kevin Lynch

In honor of her father, Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) Richard Johnson, who served in the Royal Canadian Navy, together with her husband and the assistance of Support Our Troops, Karen Lynch established the Richard and Jean Johnson Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship assists military dependents in pursuing their post-secondary dreams.

When asked about their motivation to donate to this cause, Karen explained, "We believe it is important to recognize military members and their families for their commitment to the safety and security of our nation and our communities." Karen's father, LCdr Richard Johnson, born in 1922, joined the Navy at the young age of 17 as an ordinary seaman. He dedicated himself to a long and illustrious military career.

During her father's service, Karen's family experienced the challenges and joys of military life: frequent moves, base living, and long absences when her father was deployed. The military, for Karen's family, was not just a profession but also a way of life that left a lasting impact, inspiring their choice to donate to Support Our Troops.

The Lynches emphasized the importance of supporting the military community, stating, "Sadly, the public generally doesn't think about the military until it needs it. The military is only in the spotlight during times of national disasters or international conflicts like the war in Afghanistan. However, the military plays a crucial and consistent role in safeguarding the nation, ready to respond when called upon."

For Karen, education was a cornerstone of her family's values. Both her parents stressed the importance of academic achievement. Her mother devoted countless hours to helping with homework and spelling words, while their father was a staunch advocate for lifelong learning.

In line with these values, Karen and Kevin Lynch's donation to Support Our Troops has been placed in an endowment that will help military dependents pursue their academic dreams for years to come. Thank you for your support to our military members in uniform, and their families.



Donor feature:

MacDonald Franklin

Kyle MacDonald and John Franklin, both children of Veterans, have made a remarkable pledge to support the Canadian Armed Forces community. Their generous donation will significantly impact on several programs within Support Our Troops and Soldier On

Kyle and John have allocated their donation to the Support Our Troops Camps Program, Scholarships Program and to the Soldier On Equipment Grant Program. Their philanthropic efforts are focused on showing appreciation for our members in uniform, recognizing that serving our country is not just a job, but a sacrifice and a lifestyle that can have both positive and negative impacts.

Kyle MacDonald expressed her deep connection to the military community, saying, "I have always had tremendous support for our military Veterans and am proud to be the child of a Veteran."

As children of Veterans, Kyle and John have an understanding of the unique challenges faced by military members and their families. Their commitment to the Canadian Armed Forces community is evident in their continued support and generous contributions.

Kyle and John's donation will help provide essential equipment, enriching camp experiences, and educational scholarships to military dependents, ensuring that the legacy of service and sacrifice is honored and supported.

Thank you, Kyle and John, for your unwavering dedication to our military members and their families.



Get Involved

The unwavering support from our community is crucial to the success of Support Our Troops. This collective generosity has enabled us to assist over 6,000 military members and their families with grants and programs last year.

Over the past year, the support we have received through our partners has helped us make a profound difference in the lives of our military members, Veterans and their families. Here is a look at some Community Highlights over the last year.

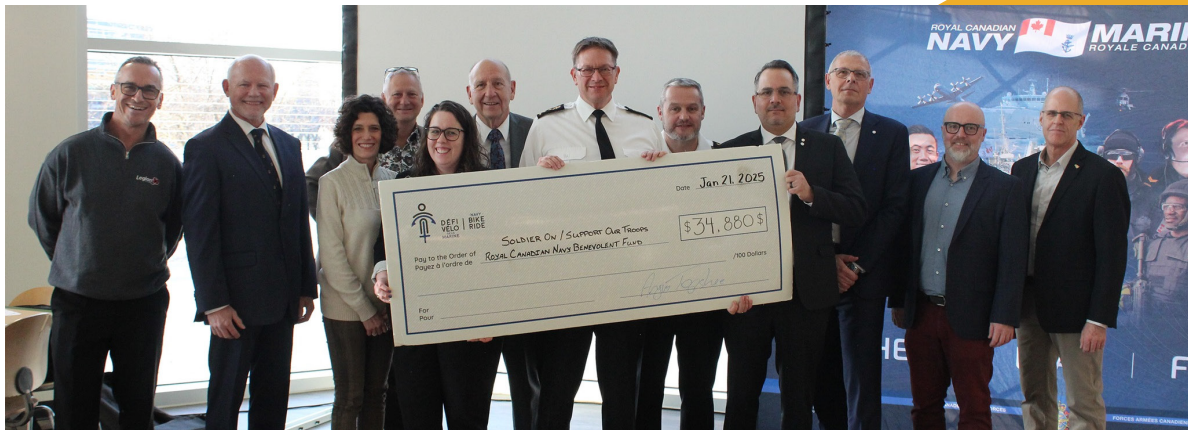
Signature event:

2024 Navy Bike Ride— an in person and virtual success!

Founded in 2016, the Navy Bike Ride (NBR) promotes community and family well-being by inspiring healthy lifestyles through cycling. The ride encourages riders from coast-to-coast-to coast to come together and raise funds for Support Our Troops, Soldier On and the Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund.

This year, Roger Litwiller participated in the Navy Bike Ride with his wife Rhonda. When Roger was asked why he chooses to participate in the Navy Bike Ride, he said “[My wife] Rhonda and I were both paramedics during our civilian careers and have experienced firsthand the importance of the support provided by organizations such as the Royal Canadian Naval Benevolent Fund, Support Our Troops and Soldier On to first responders,” says Roger. “Myself, having served in the Reserves and deploying in HMCS OTTAWA on CARIBOPS, the legacy of Canada’s Navy has always been important. Now, retired from paramedicine, I actively research and write our Navy’s history, telling the legacy of service and sacrifice through books, articles, lectures and social media. A large part of this history is founded on the day-to-day sacrifice of Canadian men and women. Supporting these people and their families, especially in times of need, is paramount”.

Thanks to amazing fundraisers, sponsors and over 1,300 participants, the 2024 event raised over \$34,000.



Signature event:

Canada Army Run raises over \$5 million since 2008

The Canada Army Run remains an incredible successful fundraising event for the Canadian Armed Forces' official charitable causes, Support Our Troops and Soldier On. This year, almost 16,000 participants walked, ran, or rolled in Ottawa both in person and virtually to honor our Canadian Army.

2025 marked the year of the youth with our top fundraiser raising over \$10,000, Oskar Telach being only 15 years old. "It feels pretty rewarding, especially going in blind, I felt like I was going to end up maybe at the bottom," Oskar said after receiving a coin from the Commander of the Canadian Army, Lieutenant-General Michael Wright, to recognize his incredible efforts. "I think I'm going to give fundraising another shot, especially for the Army and the Army Run because I love the Army, and my family's all Army, so I want to support the Army as much as I can before I actually get in."

Canada Army Run is a key contributor to Support Our Troops. The funds raised by Canada Army Run directly benefit programs designed to assist members of our military community.



CAF Appreciation Nights:

Saluting our military members and their families through the joy of sports.

Through our partnerships with professional sports teams across Canada, including the NHL, CFL, MLB, and NBA, we continue to raise funds for Support Our Troops, while also building memories for life for all who join in!

We celebrated the 20th annual Canadian Armed Forces Appreciation Night with the Ottawa Senators and the Senators Community Foundation. The partnership, said Jacqueline Belsito, President Senators Community Foundation, “means everything to us.” She continued, “Supporting children and families is at the core of our mission and there is no one more deserving than our military families. Ensuring that the some of the challenges military families face in accessing health care, counselling and support are alleviated, we’ve been proud to raise awareness and funding for the important work of Support Our Troops.”

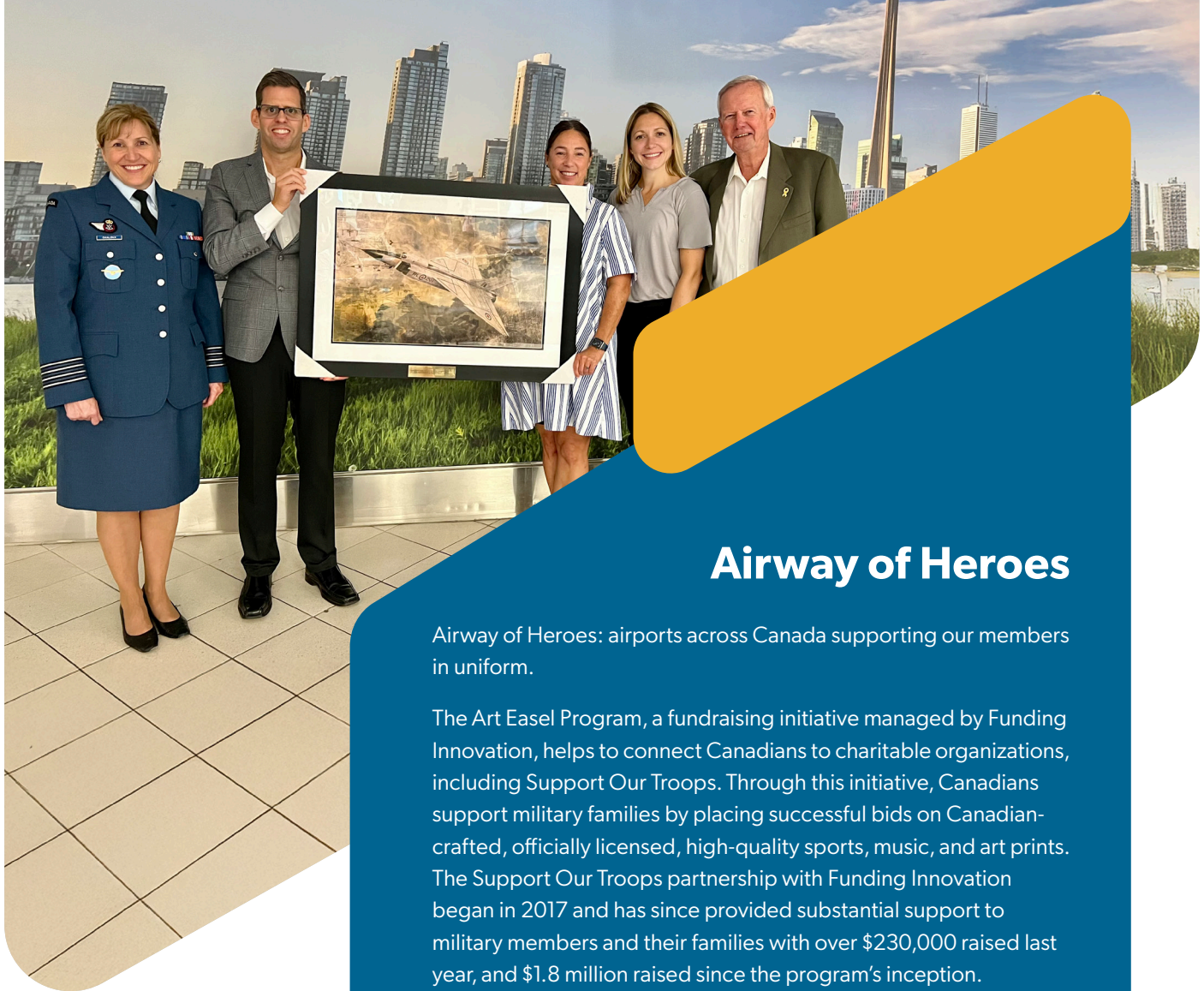


Licence Plate Program

The Support Our Troops Licence Plate Program, embraced by Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan, offers a simple and innovative way for Canadians to unite in support of our military. These personalized licence plates, adorned with our signature Yellow Ribbon, symbolize the unity and gratitude of Canadians from coast to coast towards our service members.

Did you know that the Support Our Troops Licence Plate Program supports a myriad of programs in each of their respective provinces. For instance, the Licence Plate Programs supported 34 dependents and spouses of military members and Veterans in their academic pursuits through the National Scholarship Program.





Airway of Heroes

Airway of Heroes: airports across Canada supporting our members in uniform.

The Art Easel Program, a fundraising initiative managed by Funding Innovation, helps to connect Canadians to charitable organizations, including Support Our Troops. Through this initiative, Canadians support military families by placing successful bids on Canadian-crafted, officially licensed, high-quality sports, music, and art prints. The Support Our Troops partnership with Funding Innovation began in 2017 and has since provided substantial support to military members and their families with over \$230,000 raised last year, and \$1.8 million raised since the program's inception.

The "Airways of Heroes" is a key fundraising channel for the Support Our Troops Art Easel Program that also provides incredible visibility and brand awareness for our charitable cause. The airport initiative is supported by 24 airports hosting art easels across Canada, with the Windsor International Airport being the latest Airport to support the program.

Support Our Troops Art Easels can also be found at retail outlets like Giant Tiger, Kent Building Supplies, CANEX and multiple City Halls. Working with Funding Innovation, Support Our Troops continues to seek new easel hosting opportunities for this incredible program.

According to Ron Gardner, President of Funding Innovation, the Art Easel Program has enjoyed significant success over the past eight years for two principal reasons. Specifically, aside from providing 4 sq ft of floor space, there is nothing for the easel hosting establishment to do while the consumer gets to purchase a beautiful sports, music or art print while contributing to the Support Our Troops charitable cause.

"Our field representatives continue to tell us how much the Support Our Troops cause resonates with the easel hosting locations and how Canadians remain passionate about supporting CAF members, Veterans, and their families."

\$1.8 million raised since the inception of the program

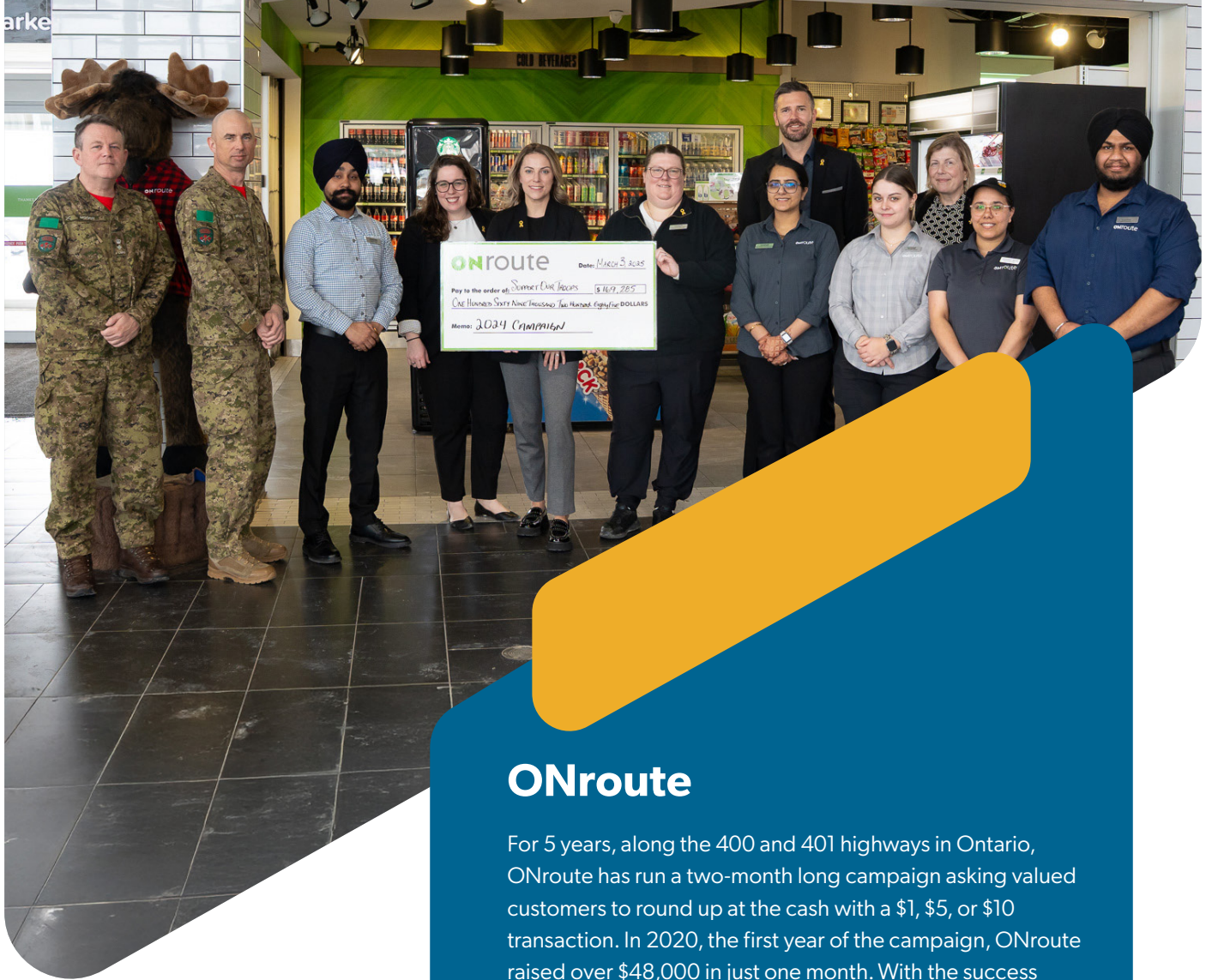
BMO Support Our Troops Mastercard

BMO has been a longstanding supporter of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members, Veterans and their families. As the official bank of the Canadian Defence Community for over 17 years, BMO has provided over \$1.3M to Support Our Troops through its BMO Support Our Troops Mastercard program.

In September 2023, BMO rebranded the BMO Support Our Troops Mastercard as a gesture of its enduring support for those who serve or have served our country by including Soldier On as a beneficiary. The BMO Support Our Troops Mastercard, in addition to supporting programs such as Emergency Grants, the Holiday Hamper Program, Boomer's Legacy, and Helping Entrepreneurs Reach Complete Success through Support Our Troops, now also supports the two major programming thrusts of the Soldier On Fund: Equipment Grant Program, and Events/Activities for Veterans.

We would like to thank BMO for continuing to support the CAF community!





ONroute

For 5 years, along the 400 and 401 highways in Ontario, ONroute has run a two-month long campaign asking valued customers to round up at the cash with a \$1, \$5, or \$10 transaction. In 2020, the first year of the campaign, ONroute raised over \$48,000 in just one month. With the success of its inaugural campaign, the company-built momentum and continued to exceed their donation goals. This year, ONroute presented Support Our Troops with a cheque for over \$169,000, bringing their 5-year donation amount to over \$500,000.

Thanks to the ONroute team and its customers, the campaign assisted over 453 military members and their families in Ontario this year. Their support directly supported 382 military families through the Holiday Hamper Program, 27 military families experiencing financial distress through the Emergency Grant Program, and 44 children of military families through the Special Needs Program.

CANEX

Year over year we are thrilled to work with our friends at CANEX, Canada's Military Store, on their two CANEX Gives Back campaigns in support of Support Our Troops and Soldier On. Customers are offered the opportunity to donate at the cash or online and CANEX matches these donations (up to \$15,000) to give back to the CAF community.

CANEX staff are an integral component in making this campaign the success that it is, year over year. Christine Busch, Petawawa Base Store Manager, spoke highly of staff saying, "We are deeply grateful for the dedication of our CANEX staff and to our community for supporting our troops. Our staff's commitment has made this campaign a successful endeavor."

In fiscal year 2024-2025, with the help of CANEX staff, customers across the country stood united in their dedication to giving back to their community:

- In June, CANEX Gives Back raised \$47,284.57 supporting Inclusion workers at PSP Camps and Soldier On Equipment Grants; and
- In December, CANEX Gives Back raised \$44,774.58 supporting the Holiday Hamper Program and Soldier On Equipment Grants.



Looking ahead

Over the past year, Support Our Troops has heard from thousands of families who are struggling with inflationary costs to support their families, including escalating home prices in many communities as well as many unplanned, out-of-pocket expenses related to the care and well-being of their loved ones. These economic pressures are often compounded by the reality that many military families are required to move every couple of years to help enable the vast operations of Canada's military from coast to coast.

Our mission is simple yet transformative: to respond to the needs of these families, empowering them by easing the burden of unforeseen expenses, enabling education, or supporting children and youth and building community support. With your generous support, we strengthen family and community foundations and ensure their readiness to face whatever comes next.

Looking ahead to 2025-2026, the Support Our Troops team remains greatly excited about many new initiatives and milestones, we look forward to collectively celebrating with the larger CAF and Veteran community. Some of these include:

- **Establishment of the Better Together Community Grant** to better empower third-party registered non-profit organizations to better serve and support the military and Veteran constituency in Canada;
- **Launch of the Child and Youth Disability Program** to support CAF members with dependent school-aged children with disabilities including neurodevelopmental, social, physical, and medical needs who require accommodations to access their education curriculum; and
- **Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Alberta Licence Plate Program.**

Looking forward, our vision is clear: **we are the community's trusted resource** that the military and Veteran community can turn to in moments of need. As the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) **charitable partner of choice**, we are dedicated to providing **relevant, timely, and critical** support that bridges the gap between challenges and solutions. Our commitment runs deeper than a helping hand; it is about **standing with** you to build a better military and Veteran community.

With your support, we can ensure that the military and Veteran community in Canada continues to be supported in a manner that appropriately honors their service and sacrifice.