



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Many reasons to celebrate the first Spirit of the Season Festival Guelph, raising community spirit and \$29,000 for the Home for Good Campaign

Guelph, Ontario – December 12, 2023 – The inaugural Spirit of the Season festival illuminated Downtown Guelph, infusing it with joy and radiance over a two-day celebration orchestrated collaboratively by The Guelph Community Foundation and the Downtown Guelph Business Association (DGBA). Beyond uplifting the community's spirits, this event successfully garnered funds to support the Home for Good Campaign, dedicated to financing permanent supportive housing initiatives in Guelph.

CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY: SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

The organizing partners came together early in the year to coordinate their individual seasonal initiatives into one larger festival and collaborated on the event timing and marketing efforts. The [Home for Good](#) Campaign, a co-operative fundraising campaign between The Guelph Community Foundation and United Way of Guelph Wellington Dufferin along with the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination, was selected to be the first festival beneficiary from the net sponsorship revenues for the event.

Through the generous support of Co-operators, Skyline, Barzotti Woodworking Ltd, Linamar and 18 other community sponsors nearly \$28,000 was raised for this important campaign. A further \$1,000 in community donations were collected by volunteers at the Mayor and Council's Tree Lighting event, to address a critical issue in our community. The organizers are grateful to the many volunteers who worked to plan, fundraise and deliver an outstanding first festival.

Event Highlights:

An indoor and outdoor market were hosted by each of the organizations.

The DGBA transformed St. George's Square into a festive haven, adorned with glowing huts that beckoned shoppers into the night to explore creative offerings from 18 local vendors. Festival goers were dazzled on the Friday evening with an electrifying circus performance by NorthFire Circus and treated to a sighting of Santa in a beautiful, oversized snow globe.

Chair of the DGBA Board, Chuck Nash, said "Spirit of the Season proved to be an exhilarating and joyous occasion, and we were thrilled to witness our community savoring the vibrant offerings that the Downtown has to provide. There was palpable enthusiasm from the crowds, especially on Parade Day, and lively engagement from attendees underscored the significance of fostering



a sense of unity and celebration within our community. As the Downtown continues to evolve into a hub of cultural and communal experiences, events like Spirit of the Season play a pivotal role in reinforcing the bonds that make our community truly special. We look forward to building on this momentum and creating even more memorable moments that showcase the unique charm and vibrancy of our beloved Downtown”.

The Guelph Community Foundation Indoor Market showcased many local not-for-profit organizations and their fundraising initiatives as well as other local vendors selling delicious treats and handcrafts. While warming up indoors, market visitors were engaged with crafts and musical performances from local Indigenous storytellers and drummers, Guelph Multicultural Festival dancers, local choral groups and more. GCF Board Chair, Carly O'Brien, volunteered during the event and noted “the joy I felt while attending and meeting so many people interested in helping our community”.

In its first year as a night parade, over 10,000 spectators enjoyed the Guelph Community Santa Parade sparkled its way through the city and ended with the joyful Mayor and Council’s Tree Lighting. In support of the festival, the city had selected the Home for Good Campaign as the charitable partner at the lighting and just over \$1,000 in community donations were collected by volunteers.

About Downtown Guelph Business Association

The Downtown Guelph Business Association (DGBA) is a BIA governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Created in 1972, the DGBA is one of the oldest BIAs in Ontario and recently expanded its borders. There are three full time permanent staff and one seasonal staff member (from May to September) that work for the 500+ members that reside within the boundary.

About The Guelph Community Foundation

The Guelph Community Foundation is a charitable public foundation whose purpose is to provide leadership in community philanthropy and enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Guelph and surrounding areas through endowments, stewardship, and granting programs. The Foundation pools the charitable gifts of donors into permanent, interest earning endowments. The income from the endowments supports a range of charitable programs and activities. The Guelph Community Foundation is located at 55 Wyndham St. N., Suite 4A, in the Old Quebec Street Shoppes in downtown Guelph. To learn more please visit guelphcf.ca.

Note: This press release is subject to updates and changes. For the latest information, please refer to the Guelph Community Foundation website and social media channels.





For additional information about this release or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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