

## 100 + Women Who Care award funding to BCT



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

At their second meeting of 2025 on May 28 at the Bancroft Village Playhouse, the 100+ Women Who Care heard from three organizations; Bancroft Community Transit, North Hastings Holiday Hamper Program and The Children's Foundation, and awarded an as yet unknown sum to BCT. The total amount to be donated to BCT will be known within the coming weeks, but as of May 30 it was \$3,600 out of a possible maximum of \$10,000 and by June 2, it had reached \$4,700. The final amount will be posted on the 100+ Women Who Care Facebook page as that figure becomes available.

The 100+ Women Who Care had their first meeting back in Sept. 2019, and they have three meetings per year. They've grown to 159 registered members and 28 registered charities. Community non-profits have gotten over \$73,800 during that time, including the North Hastings District Hospital Auxiliary, The North Hastings Community Fish Hatchery, Home Again and Maggie's Resource Centre. For more information go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) under 100 + Women Who Care Bancroft Region. The next three charities that will be presenting at their next meeting on Sept. 24 will be Youth Diversion, North Hastings Children's Services and North Hastings Scholarship Fund.

Over the years, the following charities have won a grand total of \$73,800 in funding from 100 plus Women Who Care; Kids in Need (\$8,000 in 2019), Maggie's Resource Centre (\$6,100 in 2020), BCT (\$4,500 in 2021), North Hastings Community Cupboard (\$4,500 in 2022), NHHS Scholarship Fund (\$3,900 in 2022), Care North Hastings (\$4,000 in 2022), NHD Hospital Auxiliary (\$6,200 in 2023), Home Again (\$6,200 in 2023), Maggie's Resource Centre (\$6,200 in 2023), North Hastings Fish Hatchery (\$6,300 in 2024), Hospice North Hastings (\$6,300 in 2024), NHD Hospital Auxiliary (\$6,000 in 2024), and the Pregnancy Care Centre (\$5,600 in 2025).

On the evening of May 28 at the Bancroft Village Playhouse, the 100 + Women Who Care had their second meeting of 2025. At 6:30 p.m., existing and new members signed in at the registration desk, and the charity candidates also were checked in and submitted. At 7 p.m., McGhee made the opening remarks, the voting process was reviewed and the selected charities made their presentations to the attendees.

Attendees donated \$100 to be dispersed to one of the presenting charities at the May 28 meeting (as they do at each of the three meetings per annum), and those who were unable to be there could still show their support through an e-transfer of \$100 to [100womenwcbr@gmail.com](mailto:100womenwcbr@gmail.com), or by making payment in person at McG's Cakes on Main at 58 Hastings St. North in Bancroft. The

final tally of funds raised this night will be known in the next couple of weeks.

Krystal Townsend, the NHHHP ([www.northhastingsholidayhamperprogram.com](http://www.northhastingsholidayhamperprogram.com)) director, said on May 27 that they intended to give a simple speech to talk about where they started, where they are now, and hopefully where they'd like to get in the future.

"We are so excited and grateful to be invited to speak to these amazing women," she says.

NHHHP has provided hundreds of holiday meals to the community since its inception in 2011. It runs solely on donations made by generous community members in Bancroft and numerous businesses. The application process is simple, offers choices and most of all provides the opportunity for families to share in the act of preparing their festive meals together. Founded by mother/daughter duo Krystal Townsend and Heather Sararas, and originally called Turkey Bucks, it has been a registered charity since 2020.

Gwen Coish, director of operations with BCT ([www.bancroftcommunitytransit.com](http://www.bancroftcommunitytransit.com)) said on May 28 that a community of caring will be in the room that night of that she was certain.

"This wonderful group of ladies have been consistently committed to making a difference for so many and we are grateful for the opportunity to present.

BCT will be presenting about our transit service, but more specifically our desperate need to replace our accessible vehicle(s). The cost to replace these vehicles is ridiculously high, so it is no small task to raise enough funds to meet this critical need. We have many clients who require accessible vehicles, and we support many agencies such as Hastings Manor, that rely on us for transportation to medical appointments, basic needs, and social outings that simply foster inclusion. We are at a critical stage, and need at least one wheelchair van, but we are hopeful that through fundraising efforts we can accomplish a little bit more. This opportunity to present alongside two other deserving charities, will at the very least allow us to share our need, to a very engaged group of amazing women. There are no "losers" here, we are all winners. Regardless of the outcome, we will celebrate together and be happy that once again this powerful group of ladies is making a huge difference for all of North Hastings!" she says.

BCT is a non-profit organization providing door to door transportation service by volunteer drivers to legal appointments, special programs, counseling appointments, medical appointments, daycare, work placements, and necessities of life. They will not transport anyone to the liquor store, the beer store or hotels.

Melanie Cressman, executive director with the Children's Foundation ([www.thechildrensfoundation.ca](http://www.thechildrensfoundation.ca)), did not respond to a request for comment prior to the event. The Children's Foundation provides and funds programs aimed at ensuring all children and youth in Hastings, Northumberland, and Prince Edward Counties have social and physical opportunities to explore, learn, play, and thrive. They've been helping children and youth in Hastings County since 1991 and Northumberland and Prince Edward Counties since 2015, and their vision statement is that no child or youth will do without positive experiences and equal opportunities to help them realize their potential.

On the evening of the event, all three women presented information about their respective organizations, what they do, how they help people and what they would do if they won funding from 100+ Women Who Care, and then answered questions from the audience. After voting from the women who were present at the event and votes from those casting remotely, it was revealed that BCT had won the funding, with the exact amount to be decided once it's tallied over the next couple of weeks. As of June 2, that amount was \$4,700 and counting.

On May 29, McGhee told Bancroft This Week that she thought it was a very informative meeting.

"Attendance has been down the last two meetings. We will be following up with surveys to our membership this summer. We've raised \$3,600 so far, but that amount will increase. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 per meeting for the charity. We will be focusing on adding a go live function on our event and an ability to vote remotely so people can watch live and actively participate in case they can't make it to the event," she says.

Coish told Bancroft This Week on May 29 that BCT has started a fundraising campaign to help raise money for new vehicles.

"While we need to replace an aging fleet of vehicles, we are in critical need of at least one wheelchair van [as soon as possible]. The funding we receive from this awesome group of women, will go directly into this fund to purchase an accessible van, to be used for service in all of North Hastings. Going into the meeting and understanding what it was all about, making connections and sharing what we do, was one of the highlights. This group has created a wonderful platform of discovery! They have accomplished so much, and BCT is truly grateful for all of them and their contributions to this community!" she says. "We all win when we work together."