

Ottawa volunteer helps give hungry schoolchildren a healthy start

Federal government employee says a nutritious breakfast means a 'brighter' future for children

By John Carta

Sept. 7, 2006 – Ottawa, ON – To Sarah Lawley, the concept is simple: No child should go to school hungry.

Yet the fact that some children in Ottawa still begin class with growling stomachs distresses the young mother of a five-year-old.

“I believe that all children deserve the opportunity to benefit from education, but a hungry child cannot learn successfully,” she said. “It’s such a simple concept; by helping make sure these children start their day off right, we’re helping provide a brighter future for the next generation.”

Determined to make a difference, the communications executive with the Public Health Agency of Canada in Ottawa volunteered for the *Fund for a New Generation*. Proceeds from group’s annual Ottawa Gala help support initiatives aimed at children at risk. One of these projects is the School Breakfast Program, which strives to give about 8,000 Ottawa children a healthy breakfast.

In 2005, Ms. Lawley became co-chair of the Ottawa Gala, which has become one of the city’s premier social events. In the 14 years since it began, the Gala has raised more than \$450,000 for children’s causes. Ms. Lawley says the link between healthy children and a healthy community is clear.

“Providing nutrition in the schools helps ensure that every child will be able to gain the skills, knowledge and attitude needed to become a contributing citizen in our community.”

Ms. Lawley is one example of Government of Canada employees making a difference in their communities. Along with their regular volunteering, thousands of public servants participate in the annual Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC), the largest workplace charitable project in Canada. In 2005, federal public servants contributed more than \$29.5 million to GCWCC in 113 communities nation-wide. GCWCC 2006 kicks off on September 7 and will run until November 22.

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