

# OSEG FOUNDATION

## 2023

# COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT







## Land acknowledgement

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The OSEG Foundation acknowledges that Ottawa is built on un-ceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory. The Peoples of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation have lived on this territory for millennia. Their culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this Land. The OSEG Foundation honours the Peoples and Land of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation. The OSEG Foundation honours all First Nations, Inuit, Métis and all Indigenous Peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this Land known as Turtle Island.

We see the unifying power of sports as part of our commitment to standing with Indigenous peoples, listening with open hearts and minds as we commit to a spirit of reconciliation for the future. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work, live and play on this land.



# 100,000 Reasons to be Grateful

When the OSEG Foundation launched in 2017, it was our goal to create a way to empower the children and youth in our community. The Foundation set forth to provide the tools and skills that kids need to reach their full potential and accomplish their dreams.

This year, we're proud to announce that through the delivery of our programs, Girls on the Run and REDBLACKS Mentorship Program, along with our many community partnerships we have officially surpassed 100,000 hours of programming. We know, however, that we are not in this alone and that without the support of our donors, corporate partners, volunteers, and REDBLACKS and Ottawa 67's fans, achieving this milestone wouldn't have been possible. With your help, we invested over \$500,000 to help get kids off the sidelines and into the game, including providing funding to 15 organizations through our inaugural Equity through Diverse Impact (EDI) Grant.

As we look to the future, we are excited at the projected growth in our programs, which will ensure that more children & youth in our community get the opportunity to experience the true power of sports. We know that sports-focused strategies engage youth, and teach them important leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills – these are all things that will enrich not only their lives, but our entire community. As we embark on another memorable year, our efforts will be concentrated on continuing to further our efforts in gender equity programming, while exploring new opportunities to engage Indigenous youth and programs that foster positive mental health. We look forward to sharing exciting updates with you throughout the year!

## **ROGER GREENBERG**

Chair, OSEG Foundation  
Board of Directors

## **JANICE BARRESI**

Vice President, Brand and Social Impact  
Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group  
Executive Director, OSEG Foundation





## OUR GAME PLAN

### OUR VISION:

To ensure all children and youth in our community have the opportunity to play, learn, and develop through sports.

### OUR MISSION:

The OSEG Foundation will be a catalyst for social change by leveraging the power of sport to improve the lives of children and youth.

### OUR MANDATE:

Breaking down barriers and giving more children and youth the opportunity to benefit from the power of sports is at the heart of what we do at the OSEG Foundation. We view sports as an important tool that connects people and communities, and creates positive social change.





# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS



**6,349**  
children  
& youth  
impacted by  
programming



**15,482** hours of  
programming

**53** trusted  
community partners



**338**  
volunteers





# OSEG FOUNDATION PROGRAMMING





PRESENTED BY



# REDBLACKS

## MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The REDBLACKS Mentorship program aims to help at-risk youth from vulnerable communities develop the skills, abilities, and competencies needed to graduate from high school and become successful adults by engaging them in a mentorship program with professional athletes. The program is designed to build on existing youth programs at Carlington Community Health Centre that address the 42% “failure to graduate rate” of students living in five priority communities in Ottawa.

During the 2023-24 season, 18 youth were paired with 18 players from the Ottawa REDBLACKS. Mentor/mentee pairs participated in weekly 1:1 calls and outings and monthly group activities.



# The Power of Mentorship: Mike and Kate's Story

The REDBLACKS Mentorship Program highlights the need for youth to have positive mentors, guiding them to make positive life choices and reach their goals. The program serves youth living in priority communities, and pairs them with Ottawa REDBLACKS athletes who can share their personal experiences and upbringings and support the youth's development.



For youth mentee, Kate, and her mentor, Ottawa REDBLACKS defensive linemen Mike Wakefield, the experience has been transformative for both of them. Growing up in a small town in Georgia, Mike's life has centered around football. While his parents helped guide him to where he is today, he wishes he had a mentor growing up to have different views of things. The experience as a mentor allowed Mike to gain another perspective of life through his mentee's eyes. "Especially with her being from Congo, I was able to learn a lot about her traditions and customs." While Mike inspires Kate with her goals, Kate has inspired Mike in many ways. Learning about Kate's culture "sparked a flame in me to want to trace back to my roots". Kate explained, "You don't only learn from your mentors, but you also teach the mentors. We have taught each other different things, like about my culture, about career choices, and other major things in life".



Kate strongly feels that by being a part of the REDBLACKS Mentorship Program, she has seen a lot of positive changes in herself, including an increase in her confidence. Kate sees herself as a very communicative person and loves to express herself through poetry. With the support of her mentor, he has encouraged her to pursue communications in post-secondary to have more opportunities to impact people through her creative writing. “She has a pretty good idea of what she wants, and she’s already working towards it. We have set many goals. One of the biggest goals was figuring out which college she wanted to attend. She has achieved that goal.” The power of mentorship can be a transformative experience and help youth see opportunities they didn’t even know existed.

Through monthly meetings with her mentor and group workshops, Kate has been developing her communication skills and confidence. Without the support of Mike, Kate may not have been able to discover the skills and passion inside of her. Kate shares, “I had a mentor on my side that believed in my and that supported me and encouraged me.”





In shadow or doubt,  
youth lost and alone,  
a symphony of struggles,  
a heart heavy as stone.

Yet through the haze,  
a mentor appears.  
Guiding with wisdom,  
dispelling the fears.

The mentors embrace  
a flicker of light,  
igniting the spirit,  
dispelling the night.

Through trials and tribulations,  
a journey unfolds.  
A tale of resilience,  
of a story untold.

The mentor whispers,  
a balm for the soul.  
Navigating storms,  
making broken spirits whole.

In the canvas of challenges,  
the youth find their art.  
A tapestry of talents,  
a healing restart.

**Written by youth mentees,  
Kate B. and Bwami R.**





# Helping girls unlock their power and potential!



The OSEG Foundation is the first charitable organization in Canada to bring the Girls on the Run program to its local community. Launched in 2021, 598 girls have participated in the program since its inception. This past year, 105 volunteer coaches at 27 sites led our girls through a season of powerful and fun lessons.





# Girls on the Run – is so much fun!

Natalie, a dedicated coach with Girls on the Run Ottawa for four seasons, has witnessed firsthand the transformative power of the program in the lives of young girls. Through her experiences coaching, she has seen how Girls on the Run (GOTR) goes far beyond running. The program fosters confidence, instills valuable life skills, and builds a supportive community for the girls aged 8 to 13.

"GOTR definitely helps to instill confidence in their own abilities," Natalie reflects. "There are so many of them who are really hesitant at first and not too sure what they're capable of. GOTR helped them learn to speak up and have their voice be heard."

Girls on the Run stands as a vital program addressing the disproportionate dropout rates of girls in sports during their formative years. The program provides a supportive environment where girls can develop essential life skills while embracing the joy of physical activity. By emphasizing empowerment through running and mentorship, Girls on the Run equips girls with the tools they need to thrive both on and off the track.

"They've all run of course! They run at recess, they run for fun when they're playing their games. But they've never seen themselves as runners," Natalie explains. "So doing the activities week after week and building on the distance helps them realize that they actually can do it." As the girls progress through the program, they gain a newfound sense of accomplishment and self-belief that extends to other aspects of their lives.





According to Natalie, this progress continues through the season, right on to the celebratory 5K event. "I think without a doubt the highlight of coaching is just watching the progress that they make from week 1 to week 10 and then the 5K." Many of the girls come from marginalized communities or are new to the country, initially reserved and hesitant to engage. Yet, as the weeks pass, they emerge from their shells. "Those who didn't think that they'd be able to run from one end of the gym to the other are now doing multiple laps. And then of course, 5K day comes and they all finish."

The 5K not only exemplifies the girls' limitless potential, but it also showcases the values of community and connection that they learned throughout the season. "Just to see how proud of themselves they are and how proud of each other they are warms my heart. It's just amazing to see." The girls uplift one another "...watching them encourage the other girls who they don't know, the girls from the other teams. It's just such an encouraging environment!"

To learn more about Girls on the Run Ottawa or to make a donation, visit:  
<https://osegfoundation.ca/our-impact/girls-on-the-run/>



# Precious's Inspiring Journey of Empowerment

Meet Precious, a remarkable 15-year-old who joined our basketball program seeking camaraderie and a love for the game. Little did we know that her participation would evolve into a transformative journey of leadership and community impact.



Precious's commitment to the program not only honed her basketball skills but also cultivated a passion for mentoring and community service. Recognizing her potential, our coach and volunteers encouraged her to share her knowledge and enthusiasm with younger kids in our children's programs. Precious eagerly embraced this role, becoming a mentor for budding athletes.

As Precious continued to dedicate her time and energy to our initiatives, her efforts did not go unnoticed. She was chosen as the "Youth Volunteer of the Year" in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the community. This award not only celebrated her commitment to the program but also showcased the positive impact young individuals can have when given the opportunity to lead and inspire.



# Every girl deserves the opportunity to play!

In October 2023, Sport Day the Girls' Way brought together 700 young girl sport leaders in grades 4 to 8 from more than 15 schools across Ottawa for a day of inspiration, sports, and connection. Girls heard from Olympians, high profile female role models, and took part in a variety of sports-focused workshops.

With a theme of CONFIDENCE, sessions focus on sport and physical activity, peer connections, fun and empowerment with mentorship from recreation or sport leaders in the community.







## Our Huddle Includes Everyone

The National Capital Amateur Football Association (NCAFA) provides youth with affordable pathways to participating in amateur sports. Thank to this partnership 4,000 players benefit from both flag and tackle football opportunities for boys and girls.

## 67's Blind Hockey

Prior to 2019, when the OSEG Foundation partnered with Blind Hockey Canada, there were no formal programs in the capital region to give blind and visually impaired youth the opportunity to try and play hockey. With the growth of the program, 20 youth participated during the 2023 season, positively building their physical, emotional, and mental health.



## Champions Program

Youth from military families are resilient; however, they also face a number of unique challenges such as repeated relocation, absences of one or both parents, parental deployments to volatile areas. The Champions Program provided 37 kids, aged 10-14, with the opportunity to build connections between youth in similar lifestyle challenges while using sports and wellness to equip them with the tools to react to challenges.





"I didn't really think I could play basketball. That's why I don't really play around the boys. The camp made me feel included and actually helped me improve my skills. Now I don't feel shy to play with the boys in the neighbourhood."

- Teta, Confederation Court

"The dedication of our youth, coupled with the support from the community and my fellow mentors, has created a positive and empowering atmosphere. I am proud to be part of an initiative that values not just the game but the holistic development of every young athlete."

- Alaukwu Anozie, Sports Program Coach



"In the spirit of service, resilience, and teamwork, the Champions Program embodies the strength of our military and veteran families. Fostering growth and camaraderie, it stands as a testament to the unwavering commitment of our community. Together, we build champions on and off the field."

- Col. A.J. Delhommeau,

CD, Commander, Canadian Forces Support Group

"My sister and I are both in this program and I like spending time with her and our friends. I like the snacks that we get, and the leaders in the program are so friendly and make us feel special."

- Aisha, Christie Lake Kids



# Stronger Together

As we reflect annually, we continue to be amazed by how fortunate we are to have our incredible network of volunteers! Our 338 dedicated volunteers contributed directly to 936 hours of programming this year.

Thank you for generously sharing your time, skills, and hearts to strengthen the children and youth in our community – we are grateful for your commitment!



The OSEG Foundation Youth Advisory Council (YAC) serves to provide a voice and platform to the youth in Ottawa who can directly impact the opportunities available for their community. Through these direct youth voices, the OSEG Foundation will obtain a deeper understanding of issues and opportunities that will serve to inform and facilitate greater support for youth in the community. Thank you to our inaugural YAC for your passionate dedication!





# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

## DONATE TODAY

You can provide opportunities for children and youth in our community to play, learn and develop through sports by making a one-time gift or a monthly donation.

Donate online at [osegfoundation.ca/donate](https://osegfoundation.ca/donate)



## BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Help provide opportunities for children and youth to play, learn and develop through sports by hosting your own fundraising event!

Contact the OSEG Foundation at [foundation@oseg.ca](mailto:foundation@oseg.ca) to learn more.

## ATTEND OR SPONSOR A SIGNATURE EVENT

Our signature events offer a unique way to get involved with the OSEG Foundation while helping children and youth experience the power of sports.

Contact the OSEG Foundation at [foundation@oseg.ca](mailto:foundation@oseg.ca)



## 50/50 RAFFLE

50/50 raffle draws are held by the OSEG Foundation for all Ottawa REDBLACKS, Ottawa 67's, PWHL, Ottawa BlackJacks, and Atlético Ottawa home games at TD Place.

Play online at [osegfoundation.ca/50-50](https://osegfoundation.ca/50-50)



# Upcoming Events

## SAVE THE DATE



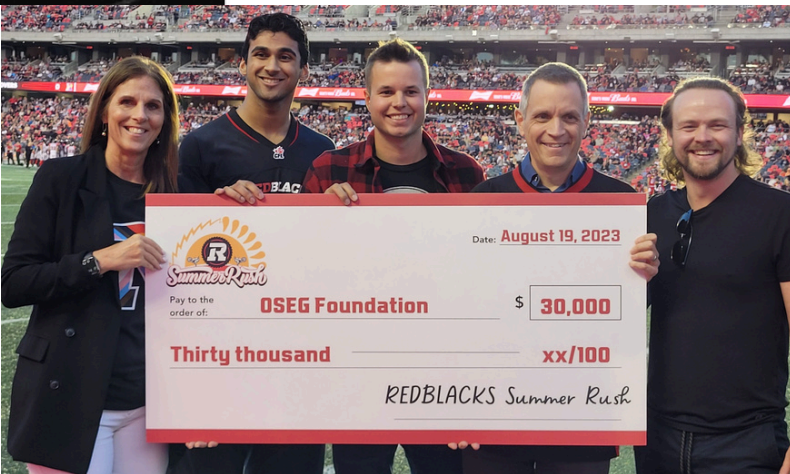
PRESENTED BY  
SITE PREPARATION LIMITED



FRIDAY JUNE 14, 2024  
5:30PM- 10:00PM  
THE STADIUM AT TD PLACE

For more information and to get involved, please contact:  
Lisa Nicholson, OSEG Foundation  
613-232-6767 ext. 8352  
lnicholson@oseg.ca

OSEG  
FOUNDATION



Tuesday, August 27

**REDBLACKS**  
WOMEN'S TRAINING CAMP

Thursday, September 19



**Breakfast with Santa**  
Saturday, December 7



# 2023 Leadership

**TO ALL OUR DONORS**, volunteers, community event organizers and partners, and the Ottawa REDBLACKS and Ottawa 67's players and coaches – thank you for believing in our mission and helping bring positive change to our communities by leveraging the power of sport to improve the lives of children and youth.

## **OSEG FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Kent Kirkpatrick  
Peter Lunney  
Paul McCarney  
Catherine McLaughlin  
Mark Noonan  
Kevin Pidgeon  
Jeannine Ritchot  
Sylvie Forget-Swim





# 2023 Program Partners

## REDBLACKS Mentorship Program Partners



## Girls on the Run Ottawa Program Partners



Sole Responsibility  
Running Club

The Catherine and Maxwell  
MEIGHEN FOUNDATION







# Get Social

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## BY MAIL

1015 Bank Street  
Ottawa, ON K1S 3W7

## BY PHONE

613-232-6767

## BY EMAIL

[foundation@oseg.ca](mailto:foundation@oseg.ca)

[osegfoundation.ca](http://osegfoundation.ca)

Charitable Registration Number

89423 9524 RR0001



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