

## **FirstOntario Credit Union delivers \$250,000 to local student nutrition programs in elementary schools**

*The pandemic doesn't stop the need for healthy snacks while school is back in session*

**Hamilton, ON, October 5, 2020** – A lot of things are unexpectedly different this year, but some things never change. In keeping with its commitment to student nutrition, FirstOntario Credit Union has donated \$250,000 to not-for-profit agencies across its communities to support healthy snacks in schools for the 2020/2021 school year.

Access to nutritious food is critical in giving young students the boost they need to support a full day of learning – no matter where they are learning. FirstOntario has been a dedicated partner with local groups like Brant Food for Thought, Halton Food for Thought, Niagara Nutrition Partners, Haldimand-Norfolk REACH (Child Nutrition Network), Southwestern Public Health and the Hamilton Bulldogs Foundation –since 2014 and has given close to \$1.7 million to date.

“We know the need is always there, perhaps this year – during the pandemic – more than ever. As a credit union we strive to make an impact in our communities, and reach as many kids as we can,” said Lloyd Smith, CEO at FirstOntario. “We’re happy to provide these funds, but our volunteers are also there, happy to prepare and serve when needed”.

As COVID-19 continues to present challenges, the partners have come up with alternative solutions this year. FirstOntario’s support will ensure the agencies have the funds they need to deliver programs in a safe, accessible way. The funds will be used to purchase supplies, pre-packaged snacks, increase program delivery and potentially introduce food hubs through community kitchen spaces. FirstOntario Blue Wave volunteer employees are usually at schools helping to get the snacks to kids, but are currently standing by while new ways of delivery are being tested.

Student nutrition programs have shown to improve attendance, increase students’ participation in the classroom and in physical education programs, promote healthy eating habits, improve food-related skills and knowledge and improve students’ social skills

### **About FirstOntario Credit Union**

FirstOntario is a full service cooperative financial institution, serving Members for 80 years throughout the Golden Horseshoe, Niagara Region and Southwestern regions of Ontario. With \$5.8 billion in assets under management, FirstOntario is one of Canada’s largest credit unions. Everyone is welcome to be part of FirstOntario for financial services including daily transactions, mortgages, lines of credit, loans and investments. FirstOntario profits are invested into the communities we serve through support for entrepreneurs, competitive rates and charitable pursuits including our award winning student nutrition program. Learn more about us today at [FirstOntario.com](http://FirstOntario.com).

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