

2026/ SUCCESS STORY

BGC Ottawa

About BGC Ottawa

BGC Ottawa, one of the city's largest child and youth-serving charitable organizations, provides free, life-changing programs and services to children and youth. In 2024 alone, it served 3,624 unique members, with outreach initiatives influencing more than 12,000 young people across Ottawa.

Uses CanadaHelps for

- Events ticketing & peer-to-peer (P2P) campaigns
- Custom Donation Forms

See how the charity has seen a 54% increase in P2P revenue, 41% increase in Events revenue and a 31% increase in donations through Charity Profile with CanadaHelps.





“Our work is grounded right here in Ottawa, with a strong commitment to the priority neighbourhoods our Clubhouses call home. These are the communities where support matters most, and we’re here to show up with purpose and make a real impact.”

— Amanda Nigh, Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications, BGC Ottawa

ABOUT BGC OTTAWA

For more than 100 years, BGC Ottawa has been a cornerstone of support for children and youth across the nation’s capital. As one of Ottawa’s largest child and youth-serving charitable organizations, it provides free, life-changing programs and services to children and youth aged 6 to 18. What sets it apart is its commitment to accessibility: all programming is completely free for members and their families.

BGC Ottawa serves 31 neighbourhoods through its Neighbourhood Ambassador Program, with four flagship clubhouses offering unique facilities tailored to their communities. In 2024 alone, it served 3,624 unique members, with community outreach initiatives positively influencing more than 12,000 young people across Ottawa.

The organization’s transformative power is perhaps best illustrated by the many youth who return as mentors and staff members. BGC Ottawa’s own Chief Executive Officer, Adam Joiner, grew up attending the club and progressed through various roles before leading the organization.

“BGC Ottawa became my second home. And now, 25 years later, I’m the CEO,” shared Adam. *“I’m living proof that your support of BGC Ottawa transforms lives. The Club was my safe space. It saved my life.”*

RELATIONSHIP WITH CANADAHELPS

BGC Ottawa has partnered with CanadaHelps since 2004 to power its digital fundraising efforts. The platform has grown into an integral part of their advancement strategy.

BGC Ottawa uses CanadaHelps for:

- Custom donation forms
- Peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns
- Ticketed events
- Monthly donor management
- Donor tracking, and more.

“CanadaHelps is such an integral part of our work that it’s hard to picture our fundraising efforts without their platform and support,” shared Amanda.

Fundraising: A Diversified Approach

BGC Ottawa's multifaceted fundraising strategy reflects a strong reliance on community support.

Major Events

BGC Ottawa hosts two marquee events annually: the Morning Social in the spring and the Glamping Gala in the summer. Together, these events raise between \$1.2 – \$1.5 million each year.

Both events use CanadaHelps extensively. For the Morning Social, donors giving \$5,000 or less are encouraged to use CanadaHelps donation forms, which also serve as a guest list management tool. For the Gala, BGC Ottawa uses CanadaHelps for both ticketing and donation processing, streamlining event logistics into one centralized system.

The events combine corporate sponsorship opportunities with individual philanthropy, creating multiple entry points for community support.

Third-Party Events

Community-led fundraising represents a significant revenue stream, approaching \$400,000 annually. These grassroots initiatives include hockey tournaments, golf tournaments, birthday parties, and school-based fundraisers. BGC Ottawa creates dedicated CanadaHelps donation pages for each community partner, making it easier to track revenue sources and personalize follow-up communications.

Annual Giving and Direct Mail

BGC Ottawa maintains regular direct mail appeals throughout the year, including winter, spring, back-to-school and year-end giving campaigns. These communications keep donors connected to the organization's impact and provide consistent touchpoints for stewardship. The organization also publishes *Club Connect*, a quarterly newsletter that showcases impact stories and helps steward donor relationships.

Monthly Giving

BGC Ottawa also leverages and encourages monthly giving for operational stability. In 2024, it launched its first door-to-door canvassing campaign, recruiting approximately 400 monthly donors, while during the Morning Social, some donors chose monthly giving instead of one-time gifts. The organization also sees a steady stream of monthly donors via CanadaHelps who give via custom donation forms and BCGO's charity profile.

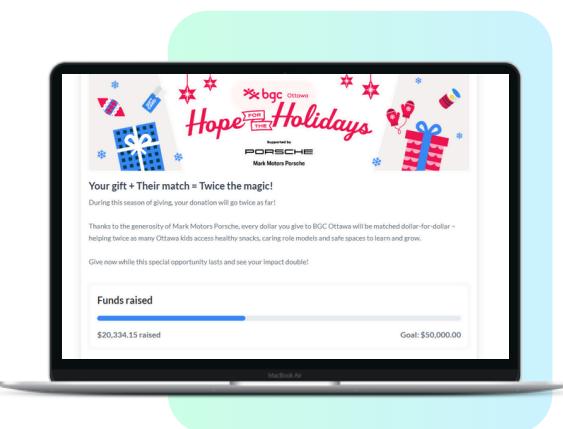
Digital Fundraising with CanadaHelps

Over the past 21 years, CanadaHelps has become the backbone of BGC Ottawa's digital fundraising infrastructure, powering campaigns across multiple channels and donor segments throughout the year.

CORE ONLINE DONATIONS

BGC Ottawa uses a primary CanadaHelps custom donation form, embedded on their website, which serves as the entry point for anyone looking to make an online gift.

"Our core donation form is the hub for all online giving. Whether someone is responding to a direct mail appeal or clicking through an e-blast follow-up, that's the form that makes donating quick and seamless," shared Amanda.



PEER-TO-PEER AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

For third-party and community fundraising events, BGC Ottawa leverages the CanadaHelps P2P tool and **also creates dedicated donation pages that help track donations by source and demonstrate impact to individual fundraisers.** This approach allows community champions to have their own branded fundraising pages, making it easier to rally their networks and see direct results.

MORNING SOCIAL EVENT TRACKING

For the Morning Social, BGC Ottawa leverages the CanadaHelps events tool, and encourages donors giving \$5,000 or less to use the platform to give.

The platform's tracking capabilities help manage donations efficiently, and **many donors already have CanadaHelps profiles, making giving faster with auto-filled information.** **Donors also receive tax receipts immediately.** The donation forms serve a dual purpose as a guest list management tool, tracking attendance and participation in one system.





GALA TICKETING AND GUEST MANAGEMENT

For the Glamping Gala, BGC Ottawa uses the CanadaHelps events tool to process donations, sell event tickets, and track sponsor guests. This integrated approach streamlines event logistics and ensures all transactions are captured through a single platform. **It simplifies the backend work required for large-scale events.**

YEAR-END HOLIDAY MATCH CAMPAIGNS

BGC Ottawa creates specific donation forms for seasonal campaigns like their year-end holiday match, using the campaign tracker feature to show real-time progress toward fundraising goals.

“We use campaign-specific donation forms paired with a goal tracker so the community can see our momentum. As we get closer to our fundraising target, it’s a great way to highlight our progress and the impact we’re creating together.”

— Amanda Nigh



This transparency creates momentum during critical fundraising periods and motivates donors to help the organization reach matching gift thresholds.

BGC Ottawa takes a strategic approach to Giving Tuesday and year-end campaigns, extending messaging throughout November and December rather than focusing solely on a single day. **“We’ve learned that success comes from getting ahead of the curve. Sharing our message and any match opportunity early helps us reach the public at the right time,”** shared Amanda. This extended approach helps BGC Ottawa compete for donor attention during the sector’s most competitive fundraising period.



MONTHLY DONOR MANAGEMENT

For digital donors, CanadaHelps’ monthly giving features work well. **“What we appreciate most is that donors can update their own information. After someone registers as a monthly donor, it becomes far less labour-intensive for our team.”** Amanda shared.

AUTOMATED RECEIPTING AND THANK-YOU MESSAGES

One of the most valuable CanadaHelps features is automated tax receipt delivery and customizable thank-you messages.

“Automated tax receipting has been critical for us. Donors value the instant acknowledgement, and the ability to customize our thank-yous while automating the rest is incredibly helpful. It removes a major administrative burden from our fundraising operations and keeps things running smoothly.”

— Amanda Nigh



CHARITY PROFILE

BGC Ottawa maintains an active charity profile on the CanadaHelps platform, which serves as a discovery tool for donors searching for children's charities in Ottawa.

“The team recognizes the profile’s importance in attracting new donors, particularly guest donors researching where to give. The charity profile has shown to be a big influencer in doing that,” Amanda noted, and consistently looks to update their profile with refreshed language and branding to better reflect the charity.

The image shows a MacBook Air displaying the CanadaHelps charity profile for BGC Ottawa. The profile includes the charity's logo, name, and registration information. A large banner at the bottom features two children and the tagline "Opportunity changes everything". To the right, a "Donate to this charity" form is shown with various donation amount options and a message input field.

Results with CanadaHelps

BGC Ottawa's deepening use of CanadaHelps across multiple fundraising channels has contributed to measurable growth in donor acquisition, monthly giving, and overall fundraising capacity.

- ~54%** Increase in peer-to-peer revenue
- ~41%** Increase in events revenue
- ~31%** Increase in donations through Charity Profile
- ~12%** Increase in donations received via CDF
- ~5%** Increase in total funds raised via CanadaHelps

**% increase over the past two fiscal years*

OVERALL FUNDRAISING GROWTH

In the current fiscal year, BGC Ottawa is on track to generate close to \$5 million through all fundraising programs combined. Leveraging CanadaHelps custom donation forms, P2P, and events tools across major events, annual campaigns, and monthly giving programs has been instrumental in achieving this fundraising momentum.



IMPROVED DONOR EXPERIENCE

The immediate delivery of tax receipts and automated acknowledgments has improved donor satisfaction and reduced administrative workload. Donors appreciate the instant confirmation and ability to access their receipts at any time through their CanadaHelps profiles.

CAMPAIGN EFFICIENCY

By creating dedicated donation forms for different campaigns and community partners, BGC Ottawa can track revenue sources more accurately and personalize follow-up communications. The ability to launch new donation forms in minutes has given the team agility to respond quickly to fundraising opportunities throughout the year.



Why BGC Ottawa Recommends CanadaHelps

For BGC Ottawa, CanadaHelps represents more than just a payment processor – it's a strategic partner that enables their small Advancement Team to execute sophisticated fundraising campaigns efficiently.

The platform's versatility stands out as a key strength. The platform supports everything from major events to community-led fundraisers to memorial giving campaigns. The team also appreciates the reliability and responsive support.

“CanadaHelps plays a big role in our fundraising success and ultimately the impact that our efforts and the community support have on our Members and their families. Not just today, but in the future.”

— Amanda Nigh

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Impact on the Community

- **Creating Safe Spaces and Belonging:** In 2024, 91% of Members actively participated in activities they enjoyed, while 90% reported feeling respected and comfortable within BGC Ottawa environments. For many young people from vulnerable neighbourhoods, this sense of safety and acceptance is transformative.

"As a single parent, it's not always easy to find programs I can rely on, but BGC Ottawa has been a lifeline for our family. My son has grown so much since joining the Club. He's more confident, more engaged in school, and has found mentors who truly care. It's not just a program, it's a community that lifts kids up and gives parents peace of mind." – Jamal, BGC Ottawa Parent



- **Four Pillars of Programming:** BGC Ottawa's programs fall under four key areas. Creative Arts programs like Art Now encourage self-expression through activities including Indigenous soapstone carving and collaborative mural projects. Education programs, including the mandatory Homework Club, ensure every member receives academic support. Leadership & Social Skills initiatives like Leaders 4 Life and Empower Her create safe spaces for young people to build self-esteem and develop leadership capacity. Physical Activity & Healthy Lifestyle programs like Basketeers promote teamwork and a lifelong love of physical activity.



- **Addressing Food Insecurity:** The organization's commitment to nutrition addresses food insecurity head-on. In 2024, BGC Ottawa served 11,400 healthy meals and 98,600 healthy snacks. *"For so many of these kids, the Club's after-school snack is their most substantial meal of the day,"* Adam explained. BGC Ottawa also delivered 215 holiday hampers and 643 Ramadan and Eid hampers, supporting families with culturally appropriate food and essentials.



- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** Of members who responded to a voluntary survey, nearly 90% identified as racialized. Importantly, 88% believe their culture is recognized and valued at BGC Ottawa. The organization integrates EDI themes through celebrations like Black History Month and Pride Month, while staff receive specialized training on inclusivity, 2SLGBTQIA+ support, and Indigenous awareness.

➤ **Scholarships: Opening Doors to Education:** In 2024, BGC Ottawa awarded \$37,000 in scholarships to 17 young people – the largest total to date. Mohammed Abdulghafoor, a Ringside for Youth Scholar who spent 12 years at BGC Ottawa, is now studying Civil Engineering at Carleton University. *“Coming from a low-income family, the financial burden of post-secondary education felt overwhelming,”* he shared. *“This scholarship didn’t just lift a financial weight; it gave me the freedom to truly focus on my studies.”*



➤ **Camp Smitty: A Century of Transformation:**

In 2024, Camp Smitty celebrated its 100th anniversary. Thanks to donor support, 90% of Campers received subsidies, ensuring financial barriers didn't prevent participation. A major highlight was the reinstatement of out-trip programming, and survey results showed 88% of Campers enjoyed activities.



“Imagine growing up never having left your block. Then one day, you arrive at Camp Smitty – and suddenly, the world opens up. A vast lake stretches before you. The air feels different. You’re surrounded by nature’s beauty and for the first time, you feel like anything is possible. Camp Smitty isn’t just a summer experience. It’s a life-changing opportunity.”

— Matt Singer, BGC Ottawa’s Senior Manager, Camp Smitty and Outdoor Education

For more information about BGC Ottawa and how to support their mission, visit www.bgcottawa.org.

Meet the Team

ADAM JOINER

**Chief Executive Officer,
BGC Ottawa**

Leading with vision and passion, BGC Ottawa CEO and Club Alumnus Adam Joiner has nearly 20 years of experience shaping youth programs in Ottawa. A strategic connector, he fosters partnerships and positive change while raising three children, all thriving BGC Members.



AMANDA NIGH

Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications, BGC Ottawa

A skilled storyteller and community connector with nearly 20 years in communications, marketing, event management and media relations, Amanda Nigh amplifies youth voices and drives engagement across Ottawa, supporting the wellbeing and success of young people.

