

Help give the gift of winter warmth with museum Mitten Tree campaign

Nov. 27, 2020 — The holidays are a time of giving and warmth, two things the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre hopes to extend to those in need with the return of the annual Mitten Tree campaign.

Heading into its seventh year, the holiday tradition will return Sunday, Dec. 6, with a tree set up at the museum where the public can come and decorate the display with donations of new and gently-used winter wear such as mittens, gloves, scarves and toques. The campaign will run from Dec. 6, 2020 to Jan. 3, 2021, with donated items supporting Community Care St. Catharines and Thorold, alongside Start Me Up Niagara's Out of the Cold program.

Traditionally the museum kicks off the campaign with programs and activities celebrating the launch. That tradition will continue this year with a virtual twist as the celebration moves online to the museum's Facebook page. Visitors to the page can expect chats with Community Care, Start Me Up Niagara and Santa; DIY Mitten Tree Ornament crafts; a virtual knitting tutorial; and the chance to make a Random Act of Kindness Calendar.

"The Mitten Tree is a really great way for everyone to get into the holiday spirit while helping those in need," said Kathleen Powell, curator and supervisor of historical services, adding, "it's a tradition that brings the warmth of the season to the museum and to the community. This year more than ever there we should come together as a community to help those in need stay warm."

The public is still invited to come in and decorate the tree with their winter wear donations during open hours. Alternatively, donations can be left at the front desk, although the tree is preferred as a contact-free means to donate. The museum is open daily, appointments are recommended but not necessary. For more information visit www.stcatharinesmuseum.ca.

Last year, the Mitten Tree campaign collected 1,295 winter donations for individuals in need. The museum hopes to collect at least 1,500 for this year's campaign.

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