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Engineering students expand Basket Project for homeless

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Inspired by fellow Western students who started The Basket Project — a non-profit organization that provides COVID-19 hygiene and protection kits to the homeless — Liam Briggs, Sophie Hofmann and Keegan Mongru started a division in Oshawa this past summer. Submitted photo

With more time on their hands due to COVID-19, a trio of Western Engineering students decided to find a way to help vulnerable members in their community.

Inspired by [fellow Western students who started The Basket Project](#) — a non-profit organization that provides COVID-19 hygiene and protection kits to the homeless — Liam Briggs, Keegan Mongru and Sophie Hofmann started a division in Oshawa this past summer.

“During quarantine, I took time to reflect on how lucky and privileged I am, and I quickly questioned how those less fortunate than I am were coping,” said Briggs. “We saw a need in our local community in Oshawa, so together we decided to take part in The Basket Project.”

The team created a GoFundMe page to kick things off and established a marketing plan, including social media posts, local media outreach, and promotional TikTok videos.

Briggs, Mongru and Hofmann also leveraged personal connections and ordered in bulk, thereby reducing the per-basket cost by 44 per cent of initial estimates and optimizing the number of baskets they could provide.



Each basket included a toothbrush, toothpaste, masks, socks, deodorant, soap, face cloths and Band-Aids.

To date, the Oshawa division of The Basket Project has donated 125 baskets, delivering them to various homeless shelters in the area, such as First Light Foundation of Hope, Back Door Mission and Cornerstone.

“Upon delivering the baskets, we were able to see how grateful people were to receive items we so often take for granted,” said Hofmann.

During this year’s winter break, the team plans to deliver another round of baskets. Tailored to the cold weather, the baskets include items such as hand warmers, a toque, socks and a Tim Hortons gift card.

“The entire experience has given me such an appreciation for all the hardworking volunteers who support the homeless in my community,” said Mongru. “I can’t say enough about how much they care and the personal sacrifices each of them makes. I am very proud to be involved with The Basket Project and will definitely be involved in its continued growth.”



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