



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 14, 2022**

## **Barrie Police connects with MatureMinds to deliver the love on Valentine's Day**

More than 3,000 Valentine's Day cards will be delivered to residents of retirement and long-term care homes across the city today after Barrie Police partnered with other community organizations to expand the reach of this intergenerational demonstration of neighbourly love. Also involved are North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services Program, MacLaren Art Centre, and Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County (CFSSC).

Constable Julie Reynolds, who credits Constable Shannon Calladine for being "the main driver of this initiative," has been working with CFSSC's MatureMinds coordinator Jenna Wickens and others over the past few weeks to encourage students and residents across Simcoe County to craft the cards.

"Elementary schools across Barrie and high schools in Barrie, Orillia and Bradford crafted the caring cards," says Wickens, who is delighted with the uptake among young people. "Kindness doesn't have to be complicated. A card or a letter is a very simple, practical way to let people know they are valued – especially those who are particularly vulnerable to social isolation."

CFSSC, a registered charity, provides fully inclusive and accessible counselling clinics and psychoeducational programs across Simcoe County and Muskoka. MatureMinds is the agency's newest program offering, designed to enhance the mental health and wellness of older adults by helping them connect to community services. Wickens hopes to expand the card program into additional communities across the county in the future.

"In the tough times we're living through, this is a good news story," she adds with a smile. "Studies show that both giving and receiving kindness increases dopamine levels – the feel-good chemical in our brains – and that can lead to improved mental health."

To participate in the next #ShowTheLove campaign, please contact [JWickens@CFSSC.ca](mailto:JWickens@CFSSC.ca).

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### **Photo attached - suggested cutline:**

Elementary and secondary school students across Simcoe County created more than 3,000 Valentine's Day cards to let isolated Barrie adults know they are valued. Here, campaign leaders Jenna Wickens of Catholic Family Services of Simcoe (left) and Barrie Police Constable Julie Reynolds (right) deliver the messages of love and appreciation to the Catherine Dougherty, Community Resource Coordinator at Barrie's Woods Park Care Centre.

### **Media inquiries**

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