

# The Standard

17 Queen Street, St. Catharines 905.684.7251

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## Fundraising campaign provides lunches, clothing for needy school kids

Updated 12 hours ago

He walks into the staff room at his school every morning.

Walks over to the fridge where he finds all the fixings for a good lunch.

Then, he quietly sets to work before the morning bell, making up his mid-day meal, which he packs away in his school bag.

Come lunch, he pulls it out of his bag like his classmates do with their lunches brought from home and he eats without anyone, other than him, knowing the difference.

The young student wouldn't have a meal or the chance to feel like his classmates if it weren't for the money provided to his school by the Education Foundation of Niagara's Poverty and Emergency Relief Fund.

The foundation is kicking off its second annual Make Change for Children campaign next month to ensure the boy and other students living in poverty in Niagara don't miss out on the important things in life.

District School Board of Niagara trustees and brass were given a preview of the campaign at a board meeting Tuesday night.

"In a community as prosperous as Niagara, it's unfathomable (students) could come to school on an empty stomach, inadequately clothed" and unprepared to face the school day, said Melissa Predote, education foundation director and chair of the campaign.

Predote said 10,000 children — or one in seven — in Niagara live in poverty.

Money raised from the campaign, set for April 20-24, will go to the relief fund, which school principals can apply to on behalf of students to cover costs for clothing, extracurricular sports, medical expenses, transportation, university application fees and other emergency needs.

Predote and crew hope to raise \$30,000 for the relief fund. Last year, they netted \$25,000 and helped 948 children.

The foundation will approach local businesses to take part.

"It can be as huge as planning some sort of campaign in a business or in a school or as simple as putting out one of our (donation) boxes," Predote said.

The foundation is also planning a drive called Prom Project Niagara to outfit students in need for proms and graduation. Donations of new and used formal wear will be accepted at various locations throughout the region later this spring so students can attend their formals and graduations feeling confident, stylish and proud.

For more information, visit [www.efnonline.ca](http://www.efnonline.ca) or call 905-641-2929 ext. 4104.

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