

1. **C-2025-186**  
Correspondence dated October 12, 2025 from Start Me Up Niagara respecting a Council challenge to participate in the Coldest Night of the Year campaign.
2. **C-2025-187**  
Correspondence dated September 25, 2025 from the Wainfleet Township Public Library respecting September 2025 statistics.

**Subject:** CNOY 2025 Launch Event November 21

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**From:** Emily Fieguth <efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca>  
**Sent:** October 12, 2025 3:31 PM  
**Subject:** CNOY 2025 Launch Event November 21

Good morning,

On behalf of the Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) 2026 Event Directors, we are pleased to share the **CNOY2026 Launch Event package** for the upcoming **event on Thursday, November 21, 2025**.

This package includes:

- A full overview of the launch event schedule
- Details on how your municipality can get involved
- A challenge letter to Regional Councils, encouraging elected officials to support the campaign and rally their communities
- Informational Poster

We hope your office will share the attached challenge letter and posters with the appropriate council members and staff to help spread the word.

This is shaping up to be a truly exciting and impactful year for Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) across Niagara. As Event Directors, we are working collaboratively to amplify the campaign's message and invite all 502,000 residents of the Niagara Region to get involved as walkers, donors, sponsors, and supporters. Together, we are building a movement to support the local charities that serve individuals experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness throughout our communities. We are sincerely grateful to each of you for making time in your schedules to attend this important gathering and photo opportunity. Your presence plays a key role in setting the tone for a united, region-wide effort.

If you have a vintage CNOY toque, we encourage you to wear it to the event for a fun and recognizable show of support.

Please **RSVP to Emily Fieguth** at [efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca](mailto:efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca) to confirm your attendance. If you have any questions about your local walk, we encourage you to connect directly with your local Event Director for more details. We look forward to working together to make this the most successful CNOY campaign yet in the Niagara Region.

Warm regards,  
**CNOY 2025 Event Directors**



905-334-4567 Jacob  
[jacobschmittbiafe@gmail.com](mailto:jacobschmittbiafe@gmail.com)



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for general information and

[www.cnoy.org](http://www.cnoy.org)

Emily Fieguth (*she/her*)

Donor Engagement Coordinator / Event Director Coldest Night of the Year

Start Me Up Niagara

211 Church Street, St. Catharines ON L2R 3E8

289-501-0263

[efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca](mailto:efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca)

In Office Hours: Tuesday – Thursday from 9am-2pm. Emails will be answered as soon as possible. If after hours, emails will be answered the next business day.

*\*SMUN values and respects flexible work arrangements. Although I have sent this at a time that is convenient for me, please be informed it is not my expectation that you read, respond or follow up on this email outside of your work hours.*

Secure online donations can be made at <https://www.startmeupniagara.ca/site/donate>

**Consider becoming a monthly donor and make your gift have an impact all year long!**

***Start Me Up Niagara currently resides on unceded land. Therefore, we would like to recognize and acknowledge the land we currently operate in the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples' traditional territories.***

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# CNOY 2026 Launch Event Plan & Media Outline

**Date:** Friday, November 21, 2025

**Time:** 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Location:** Niagara Parks Upper Grand Hall of Table Rock Centre, to the left of the escalators (opposite the restaurant side)

**Parking:** complimentary parking passes for the large lot across from Table Rock will be issued, 1 per Mayor's Office (12 tickets), 1 per Agency/ CNOY reps (5 tickets). Parking passes- take a ticket upon entering the lot and press the assistance button when exiting. The parking team will then allow up to 17 vehicles from our group to leave at no charge. *If your group comes in more than 1 vehicle, you will have to pay for parking for additional vehicles.*

## Event Purpose

The Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) 2026 Launch brings together community leaders and champions to raise awareness of the growing need for supports for individuals and families facing, food insecurity, precarious housing, compromised mental health, across the Niagara Region.

This unified regional launch highlights the commitment of all 5 Niagara CNOY walk sites and celebrates the strength of collaboration and community care.

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## Event Agenda (2:00 PM – 4:00 PM)

### 1:45 PM: Key Staff Arrive

- Event Directors from the 5 area walks along with their support teams

### 2:00 – 2:15 PM: Setup of space

- Setup the Table Rock Space
- Mayors & dignitaries along with their teams begin arriving
- CNOY signage & toques
- Each walk location has a space set up for interviews with a printed page with names, titles and contact information

### SAMPLE SIGNAGE (each event director to bring this)

|                    |                       |                                    |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Emily Fieguth      | Start Me Up Niagara   | CNOY Event Director St. Catharines |
| Kelly Anne Salerno | Start Me Up Niagara   | Executive Director                 |
| Mat Siscoe         | City of St.Catharines | Mayor                              |
| Terry Ugulini      | City of Thorold       | Mayor                              |
| Gary Zalapa        | Town of NOTL          | Mayor                              |

### **2:15 PM – 2:30 : Welcome & Get into place**

- Media check-in and mic/camera setup
- Ensure everyone is in their space with their walk team

### **2:30 – 2:40 PM**

- Emcee Chair Bob Gale
  - Brief welcome
  - Land Acknowledgement

### **3:00 – 3:30 PM: Media Interview Block @ Table Rock**

- Opportunities for one-on-one interviews with:
  - Mayors
  - Dignitaries including Chair Bob Gale- Niagara Parks
  - MP's
  - CNOY Event Directors
  - Agency Executive Directors

### **3:30 PM: Mini Walk to Niagara Falls for Photo Op**

- Line up in agency groups (see Walk Order page 5)
- Walk from Table Rock Centre to scenic location near the falls
- Group carries CNOY signs: *"It's Cold Out There"* & *agency signs*
- All Mayors wear CNOY toques (vintage or current encouraged)
- Media agencies will record footage of walk

### **3:30 – 4:00 PM: Group Photo by Niagara Falls**

- High-impact visual for media & social sharing
- Professional Photographers have been invited to capture these photos

## **Each Agency Responsibility**

- Meet and greet your Mayors
- Set up your CNOY branded banner
- Printed sign with names, titles and contact information for your stations

### **Press Kits Should Include:**

- CNOY 2026 Niagara Region Overview
- Statistics on local need (housing, food insecurity, etc.)
- CNOY beneficiary profiles (5 local organizations)
- School Challenge information

## Key Messaging for Media & Public

“If you live, work, or go to school in the Niagara Region – there’s a Coldest Night of the Year walk in your community.”

**Main Walk Date:** Saturday, February 28, 2026

**Locations:** Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Welland, St. Catharines, West Niagara

### Benefiting Agencies:

- Brain Injury Association of Fort Erie
- Open Arms Mission Welland
- Project Share (Niagara Falls)
- Start Me Up Niagara (St. Catharines)
- YWCA Niagara Region (West Niagara)

### Programs Supported:

- Food banks and outreach
- Housing supports
- Mental health and transitional services
- Community advocacy
- Mobile Clothing & Mini Closet crisis clothing
- Bicycles for low income individuals and families
- Holiday care package

## 2026 School Challenge Highlight

Both **DSBN** and **Niagara Catholic** school boards are distributing CNOY kits to every school to promote participation in a **School Challenge Walk**—giving students and staff the chance to walk on their own school grounds and raise funds for local impact.

## 2026 City Council Challenge Highlight

We're calling on *all* city councils in Niagara to step up and join the **Coldest Night of the Year Walk**! Just as the DSBN and Niagara Catholic school boards are getting behind the walk by distributing CNOY kits to every school, inviting students and staff to walk and raise funds on their own grounds, we want every city council to take the lead in their community.

City councils can:

- Form their own council-led walk team to show leadership and build local momentum.
- Encourage municipal staff, councillors, and residents to participate and fundraise.
- Provide access to public spaces (parks, town squares) for offsite or virtual walking, especially for those who can't attend the main event.
- Partner with local organizations to amplify outreach, awareness, and support.

Doing so sends a powerful message: municipalities aren't just spectators—they're part of the solution. When councils walk together with citizens, they help raise critical funds for local programs at the Brain Injury of Fort Erie, Project Share (Niagara Falls), Start Me Up Niagara (St. Catharines) Open Arms Mission Welland and YWCA Niagara Region- all serving individuals and families facing hurt, homelessness, and hunger.

Let's make the **2026 City Council Challenge** a movement: watch your council rise to the occasion, set a fundraising goal, and walk with dignity, purpose, and compassion.

## How to Get Involved

Visit [www.cnoy.org](http://www.cnoy.org) to:

- Register to walk or fundraise (as an individual or team)
- Donate to a walker or team
- Volunteer your time
- Provide financial or in-kind sponsorship

There is place that everyone in the Niagara Region fits in these local walks supporting the local community.

# **Walk Order**

## **Group 1 - Niagara Parks**

Chair Bob Gale

Anyone not in group 2 - 7

## **Group 2 – Brain Injury Association of Fort Erie**

Jacob Schmidt Event Director & Operations  
Manager

Mayor Wayne Redekop (Fort Erie)

Mayor Bill Steele (Port Colborne)

## **Group 3 – Open Arms Mission Welland**

Rosh Gill Event Director & Assistant Executive  
Director

Mayor Frank Campion (Welland)

Mayor Marvin Junkin (Pelham)

Mayor Brian Grant (Wainfleet)

## **Group 4 – Project Share (Niagara Falls)**

Jenelle Gummensen – Event Director

Mackenzie Warren – Fundraising Coordinator

A.J. Heafey – Executive Director

Mayor Jim Diodati (Niagara Falls)

## **Group 5 – Start Me Up Niagara (St. Catharines)**

Emily Fieguth – Event Director & Donor  
Engagement Coordinator

Kelly-Anne Salerno – Executive Director

Mayor Mat Siscoe (St. Catharines)

Mayor Gary Zalepa (NOTL)

Mayor Terry Ugolini (Thorold)

## **Group 6 - YWCA Niagara Region (West Niagara)**

Arienne Good – Event Director

Elizabeth Zimmerman – Executive Director

Mayor Jeff Jordan (Grimsby)

Mayor Sandra Easton (Lincoln)

Mayor Cheryl Ganann (West Lincoln)



it's cold  
out there  
cnoy.org

To: All Niagara Region Councillors

Subject: **A Regional Challenge – Walk with Us in Coldest Night of the Year 2026**

Dear Councillors,

This February, we invite you to join a powerful movement sweeping across the Niagara Region — the Coldest Night of the Year 2026. On **Saturday, February 28**, five non-profit agencies across Niagara will host CNOY walks, bringing people together to raise funds and awareness for the work on the front lines of poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, and mental health.

This is a challenge to all municipal leaders across Niagara walk with us, lead by example, and show your community that no one should be left out in the cold.

### **5 WALKS - 12 COMMUNITIES- 1 NIAGARA**

In 2026, five local charities are stepping up to host CNOY walks, each deeply rooted in their towns and cities and uniquely serving the residents of the Niagara Region:

**Brain Injury Association (Fort Erie)** – Supporting those living with acquired brain injuries through healing programs that foster independence and inclusion. Contact: Jacob 905-334-4567 [jacobschmittbiafe@gmail.com](mailto:jacobschmittbiafe@gmail.com)

**Project SHARE (Niagara Falls)** – Providing emergency food, housing loss prevention, and essential supports to individuals and families in crisis. Contact: Jenelle 905-357-5121 [events@projectshare.ca](mailto:events@projectshare.ca)

**Start Me Up Niagara (St. Catharines)** – Empowering individuals facing poverty, food insecurity, employment barriers, and compromised mental health with life-changing supports and services. Contact: Emily 289-501-0263 [efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca](mailto:efieguth@startmeupniagara.ca)

**Open Arms Mission (Welland)** – Meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the Welland community with dignity, compassion, and connection. Contact: Rosh 905-123-4567 [rosh.g@openarmsmissionwelland.com](mailto:rosh.g@openarmsmissionwelland.com)

**YWCA Niagara Region (West Niagara)** – Offering shelter, transitional housing, and youth prevention programs to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness. Contact: Arienne 905-329-3187 [agood@ywcaniagarairegion.ca](mailto:agood@ywcaniagarairegion.ca)

These are not just organizations they are lifelines in our neighbourhoods. Your support gives them the visibility and encouragement to continue their missions.

### **HOW YOU CAN LEAD:**

We're calling on you our elected officials to participate in one of the five walks happening across Niagara.

**Walk** – Join the event in your city or visit a neighbouring municipality to show cross-regional solidarity.

**Donate or fundraise** – Rally your networks to support your chosen charity.

Together, we can demonstrate the strength of regional leadership and show that across Niagara, compassion knows no boundaries.

To register a team or as an individual, financial support, or learn more, starting December 1: **[www.cnoy.org](http://www.cnoy.org)**, select the walk in your community.

# coldest \*night OF THE YEAR

## february 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026

The Coldest Night of the Year is a winterrific family-friendly walk to raise money for local charities serving people experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness.

HOW CAN  
YOU  
SUPPORT?

-  Register to walk
-  Donate
-  Join a team that is already made
-  Become a team captian
-  Create fundraising challenges with friends



FIND YOUR LOCATION!

# COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

The Coldest Night of the Year is a winterrific family-friendly walk to raise money for local charities serving people experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness.

# FEB 28TH 2026



coldest  
night  
OF THE YEAR



## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- ❄️ Register to walk
- ❄️ Join a team that is already made
- ❄️ Become a team captian
- ❄️ Create fundraising challenges with friends
- ❄️ Donate

# SEPTEMBER 2025 STATISTICS

