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| . MSU-logo-2001 | REPORT *From the office of the…*Student Health Education Centre (SHEC) Services Coordinator |
| TO: | Members of the Executive Board |
| FROM: | Sydney Cumming (they/her) |
| SUBJECT: | SHEC Report (VI) |
| DATE: | Thursday February 11th, 2021 |

# **Year plan Update**

Moving forward, the Service has decided to focus on offering [chat-based](http://www.tawk.to/msuSHEC) support on a drop-in basis while video calls and phone calls will only be available upon request via [Bit.ly/SHEC-In](http://bit.ly/SHEC-In). Our official hours of operation are listed below for reference.

We will also be running weekly hour-long programming called “What the SHEC? Drop-In’s” (W.T.S.) on Microsoft Live Events. These livestreams allow students to anonymously join our broadcast directly from their web browsers and to quickly ask their peers health-related questions or just listen in to the conversation of the day. W.T.S. will run four times a week, from 6:30-7:30 pm (EST), with one session led-by and for 2STLGQBIA+ students and another session held by and for Disabled/ Mad/ Chronically or Mentally Ill students. The official W.T.S. weekly schedule is listed below for reference. The team plans to eventually commission more promotional assets from the Underground to advertise these “W.T.S.” Live streams.

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| **Date** | **Live Chat**  Drop-In Hours | **“What the SHEC?”**  Drop-In Schedule |
| Monday | 10:30am – 3:30pm  &  6:30pm – 8:30pm | **2STLGBQIA+ Folks**  6:30pm – 7:30pm |
| Tuesday | 10:30am – 3:30pm  &  6:30pm – 8:30pm | **Open to All**  6:30pm – 7:30pm |
| Wednesday | 10:30am – 3:30pm  &  6:30pm – 8:30pm | **Disabled/ Mad/ Chronically or Mentally Ill Folks**  6:30pm – 7:30pm |
| Thursday | 10:30am – 3:30pm  &  6:30pm – 8:30pm | **Open to All**  6:30pm – 7:30pm |
| Friday | 10:30am – 3:30pm | N/A |

MSU SHEC and WGEN recently launched our new virtual fund distribution program, “Collective Care”! As such, a large portion of the Service’s “Health Supplies” budget line has been devoted to providing students with gift cards (virtual or physical) to help cover the costs of buying essential personal health items.

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|  | There are approximately 20 gift card options to choose from, including: Costco, Walmart, Rexall, Come as You Are (Co-op), GC2B, Buy Buy Baby, Reitman’s, H&M, etc. Ultimately, this project (mostly) eliminates the need to visit campus during the pandemic and will help us to reach Mac students across the entire country (not just students living in the Hamilton area). The only problem is that the wait times are not optimal for students requesting pregnancy tests.  The official request form can be anonymously accessed at [Bit.ly/Collective\_Care](http://bit.ly/Collective_Care) or, if they prefer, folks can (confidentially) message the organizers at the email address [SHEC-WGEN@MSU.McMaster.ca](mailto:SHEC-WGEN@MSU.McMaster.ca). Both the form and the provided email address are monitored by the Part-Time Manager’s from each service, who are responsible for responding to all requests and inquiries. Additionally, a ‘Status Request’ form will be shared with students that request gift cards so that they may anonymously ask for an update on the status of their original request if it is taking longer than expected. |

Since Lockers of Love has been suspended due to COVID-19 safety concerns, MSU SHEC will **not** be providing the Food Collective Centre with free supplies until the program is able to be safely relaunched. Instead, we are **requesting permission**from *VP Administration* and *VP Finance* to allow the PTM to arrange a pick-up donation of personal health supplies to local community organizations that are currently facilitating curb side drop-offs around Hamilton.

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|  | MSU SHEC is hoping to donate such items to [SWAP Hamilton](https://swaphamilton.com/get-involved/) and/or DJNO’s [Care-Mongering](https://linktr.ee/HamOntCare) initiative. Both organizations are Hamilton-based, led directly by community members, and share our commitment for providing *free* individualized support resources. Both organizations also prioritize harm reduction strategies and anti-oppressive practices, which has made them incredibly popular referrals with McMaster students!  Specifically, we wish to donate any personal lubricants and/or safe(r) sex items from our inventory that are nearing their expiration dates. We would also like to donate approximately 50 pregnancy test kits, as a way of ensuring that students have *immediate & anonymous access* to tests when they need them rather than waiting for a gift card to come in. |

# **Service Usage**

Over the first 4 days, the Collective Care program received *33 requests* for approximately **$1,000** worth of support. We received an additional 25 requests since February 1st. Additionally, a small number of requests (3) are being redirected entirely to the MSU FCC. The project will continue until funding is no longer available.

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|  | Notably, 51% of students using the program indicated that they need help paying for menstrual products; 36% require assistance purchasing safe(r) sex items and contraceptives; while 66% of respondents requested money to cover the cost of other personal care items such as hygiene products, O.T.C. medications, wound care, etc. There were also a considerable number of individuals requesting funds for gender-affirming gear and children’s necessities.  Most folks are receiving a card valued at $15-30, however, a few students are receiving up to $60 to cover higher cost items such as gender gear, medication costs, or supplies for children. MSU SHEC & WGEN have been splitting these expenses and will be seeking out additional funding in the coming weeks from sources such as the McMaster University PACBIC and/or the McMaster Alumni Association. We would also welcome any Special Funding from the MSU or other MSU Services! |

This semester, several modifications are being made to the way that SHEC offers its’ services online to increase time efficiency and create a less intimidating atmosphere for potential visitors. Ultimately, turnout for virtual peer support has remained low, however, this was expected (see *Challenge A & B*). In total, only about 6 to 7 students have used our new Tawk.to page this year to contact our peer support volunteers. Moreover, there was also an error with the shortened URL that was included on the Exam schedule promotional assets which was meant to direct students to an anonymous booking form but brought them to an error page instead.

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|  | To increase visibility of these resources, we will be sure to provide the MSU website editors with the official links to our Tawk.to page, the anonymous phone/video call booking form, and the Collective Care request form to have them displayed on the official MSU SHEC webpage as soon as possible. This information has already been added to the official SHEC Linktree and to the built-in FAQs feature on Facebook Messenger to facilitate easy information forwarding.  Finally, the Promotions Coordinators will soon submit an Intake to the MSU Underground for new Warmline promotional assets. We will likely order the Multi-Event Campaign package ($275) for this, however, that means that the assets will be finished in 2 weeks. This is a relatively long wait compared to how quickly it could be done if we were permitted to create it ourselves on Canva. |

# **Past Events, Projects, & Activities**

MSU SHEC ran our first virtual “**Winter Care Giveaway**” over the break alongside MSU Maccess and with a generous sponsorship from the Student Wellness Centre (SWC)! The Giveaway ran on Facebook and Instagram from Tuesday, December 1st through to December 8th at 2:00pm EST. This Giveaway was an astounding success with nearly 300 entries (200+ from Instagram & about 100 from Facebook).

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|  | There were 12 prizes to be won ranging from $25 - $120 value each. Prizes were carefully selected to increase food security and/or offer students a means of trying holistic (yet often expensive) self-care strategies during the stressful time that is exams season. The combined cost of these prizes came to $478, but most of these expenses were covered by funding provided by the SWC.  The Giveaway was only promoted on Facebook and Instagram as entries were based off which users shared the post or liked and tagged 2 friends! The asynchronous raffle replaced our usual exam-time programming “SHEC Cares” where volunteers would previously have prepared 400 care packages and then distributed them over the course of 3 days. Maccess also held similar build-your-own care package events in previous years, hence why we partnered on this! |

This past Thursday (February 4th), MSU SHEC’s Events & Outreach committee hosted a chill virtual Game Night called “**Chess & SHECkers**” on Microsoft Teams. The organization and facilitation of the event was largely driven by the volunteer committee members, including some of our younger SHEC volunteers who were worried about the potentially distressing effects of asynchronous online learning during provincial and regional lockdowns. This programming therefore falls under the Service’s strategic priority of improving factors that contribute to students’ Mental Wellbeing.

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|  | The event had a total of 8 attendees, 2 of whom were guests! The combined expenses of this event came to $185 ($125 for promotional assets, $15 on social media advertising, and $45 on raffle prizes). Each attendee will be getting a $15 gift card and the remaining gift card will be raffled off to the volunteers that attended and/or facilitated the event! |

# **Currently Working On**

On Wednesday, February 10th, MSU PCC and SHEC are teaming up to bring in Pharmacist Drew (he/him) from the PrEP Clinic for a one-hour webinar from 3-4pm [EST]! During “[**Fully PrEP’d**](https://bit.ly/Fully-PrEPd)”, we will be discussing everything folks need to know about PrEP and PEP, including how to get full prescription coverage. Other topics include medications as a form of safe(r) sex and harm reduction and more about how Drew’s clinic has been breaking down barriers across Ontario for folks trying to access this care. Join us at **Bit.ly/Fully-PrEPd** (linked above)!

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|  | Important Considerations: This event is open to students of ALL programs, levels, and identities. MS Live also allows attendees to join anonymously via web browser and to submit questions directly to the moderators. Moderators can then decide whether they would like to “publish” said questions for other attendees to see, answer it privately, or “dismiss” the question if it is inappropriate.  Closed captioning is fully embedded within the MS Live Events streaming platform and attendees can request (in advance) that auto-translations for a specific language be enabled for a more enjoyable experience. If folks have any accessibility concerns or requests for accommodation, we encourage them to reach out to the SHEC Coordinator and/or the PCC Coordinator.  In lieu of an honorarium for the work that Drew is putting in, he has requested that our services donate money to the AIDS Network which is a community-led prevention and outreach service in the Hamilton area. As such, MSU SHEC has made a one-time donation of $150 to the AIDS Network in honour of the PrEP Clinic and Andrew Schonbe! |

The Resources & Advocacy team is about to submit an Intake to the MSU Underground for their first full-sized campaign, “**Closer Than Ever: Staying Connecting during COVID-19**”. This campaign focuses on fostering healthy relationships with those that are important to you while staying true to your boundaries and taking precautions to protect yourself from the spread of COVID-19. The two executives for the committee are currently working alongside the Promotions Coordinators to edit and slim down the drafted campaign before submitting the official Intake.

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|  | The team is very excited to see how the Closer Than Ever campaign turns out and are *hoping* to coordinate a very special Share-a-Thon campaign alongside its release. The idea of the Share-a-Thon is very similar to that of MSU SWHAT’s famous biannual [Walk-a-Thon](https://twitter.com/MSU_SWHAT/status/925790625181655041) events, with each share of SHEC’s designated fundraising post warranting a $1 donation to a featured charity! To ensure that this is financially feasible for the Service, there will be a clearly defined cap on the amount of money to be donated (i.e. Any # of shares > 300 = $300)… The Service is currently leaning towards giving this money to SACHA or LGBT YouthLine as they are organizations that focus on supporting folks that might not otherwise feel safe isolating at home. |

Work on the Collective Care program with MSU WGEN will continue until funds run out and/or the end of the current Part-Time Manager contracts are reached (approximately April 1st, 2021). Both Yimeng and I are still becoming accustomed to running this new initiative and thus are not ready to delegate duties to volunteers – particularly since confidentiality is a major concern. Currently, the program requires about 1.5 hours of work per day to ensure proper division and allocation of funds, to prepare ordering information, to navigate multiple purchasing platforms and potential payment issues, to track all completed expenditures, and to communicate with the students requesting assistance.

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|  | Last week, I emailed both the *AVP Services* and *VP Administration* to inquire whether there is any Special Projects funding available to the MSU Services this year. Both PTMs believe that accessing this fund (if it still exists) would be an appropriate means of extending the number of students that can be assisted through the Collective Care program.  If this is not a possibility, we will be reaching out to other groups on-campus or in the community to seek out additional funding to ensure that the initiative remains operational until April (& beyond). |

# **Upcoming Events, Projects & Activities**

The PTM and the Promotions Coordinators have decided to capitalize on the marketing opportunity that the upcoming commercial holiday has offered us by hosting a virtual raffle for three ($50) fifty-dollar gift cards to some of MSU SHEC’s most highly recommended online stores for sensual exploration! Featured shops include Bonjibon., Come As You Are, Venus Envy, Spectrum Boutique (USA), & Honey Play Box (USA)! Students can enter “**A SHECxy Valentine’s Giveaway**” anonymously via Microsoft Forms ([Bit.ly/SHECxyValentines](http://bit.ly/SHECxyValentines)). The form will close automatically on February 14th at 11:59 pm (EST) and the winners will be sent their gift cards over the following two weeks.

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|  | Each student will be asked to provide their student number in the form so that, if they win, the PTM can send the gift card directly to their McMaster inbox without knowing their name. Moreover, it limits the number of possible entries per student to just one! Students will also be asked to indicate their preferred gift card when filling out the form with an alternate “Surprise me!” option for those that aren’t sure what store they would like best. |

Over the next few weeks, our team will also be planning out the second round of MSU SHEC’s **Exam Giveaways – Spring Edition**! This will once again take the form of online raffles for prizes that address the additional stress caused during exams in a more holistic manner. This term the team will also focus on featuring prizes that help ease the discomfort of isolating at home during warmer weather, in preparation of Summer Break.

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|  | The Events & Outreach committee is currently working on a list of recommended on-campus collaborators to help reduce the cost of the programming to the Service. By the next EB report, we expect to have an official list of prizes, entry dates, and a decision as to which service(s) we will be partnering with for this programming. |

# **Volunteers**

MSU SHEC recently finished the second official round of volunteer training. This consisted of two 2-hour live sessions (A & B) on the weekends of January 23rd/24th and 30th/31st. Each live session was held twice; once on a Saturday afternoon (2-4 pm EST) and once on a Sunday morning (10am-12pm EST). The executive team also released a training module (recorded presentations with Closed Captioning) on Body Empowerment. We also had the help of the folks at MSU Pride Community Centre in creating a third module centered on 2STLGBTQIA+ wellbeing.

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|  | During the January training sessions, the executive team had guest speakers come in to cover the topics of Indigenous wellbeing, self-determinism and cultural empowerment, as well as providing gender-affirming and survivor-centric care. These speakers were River H.V. (they/them) from [DAHAC](https://aboriginalhealthcentre.com/) Hamilton and Yimeng W. (they/them) from MSU WGEN. Our two Volunteer Coordinators also prepared a quick information session for volunteers on relevant MSU and McMaster support services available to students and several scenario-based discussions to review content from last semesters training.  Due to the nature of the topics covered, specific and frequent content warnings (CWs) were provided during these sessions. CWs should always be provided at the beginning of each session and additional warnings are to be given 1-2 minutes in advance of the content being discussed. These CWs allow volunteers to discretely mute their microphone and speakers or to otherwise emotionally prepare themselves for the conversations ahead, if desired. They were also permitted to leave the call entirely. |

We are still in the process of scheduling regularly occurring meetings for the executive team. Due to conflicts in our schedules, the entire team is only available for a 15-minute window on Friday afternoons. As such, the PTM will circulate a new When2Meet to identify two potential timeslots for executive meetings and allow each executive to decide which they are able to attend each week based on their school schedules. After this has been arranged, we will schedule some form of an executive social for early March!

In place of our normal tradition of distributing chocolates and mini valentines to our SHEC volunteers, the Volunteer Coordinators and I have instead decided to run a meme contest amongst the volunteer team in competition for [even more] gift cards.

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|  | Interested volunteers will be asked to submit their favourite memes about self-love, dating, family connections, friendships, etc. through a designated Google Form. Then, we will reshare all the [appropriate] submissions with all the volunteers to vote on their favourites! The 3 volunteers with the most popular meme submissions will then win a virtual gift card of $15 to $20, as a thank you for brightening our day!  There is no limit to the number of submissions that volunteers can make, however, volunteers will only be eligible to win one gift card at most. If one volunteer wins both first and second place, third place will automatically rise in the rankings (and so forth). |

# **Current Challenges**

***A. Human Connection.***In the past, many peer support sessions started as impromptu visits to the MSU SHEC space with visitors first coming into to grab some personal health supplies or get information about health-related concerns. This made coming to the space less intimidating for many students and provided a low-risk way for them to assess whether they felt safe enough in the space to speak with one of the peer support volunteers about their private lives.

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|  | Unfortunately, having the service run online has made creating a comforting environment increasingly difficult and has thus created a sort of unease amongst visitors when reaching out to our (seemingly faceless) peer supporters. I guess this is my way of explaining that it is important to maintain the anonymity of visitors due to the nature of the information shared, but that it is impractical to have these students trust a so-called “peer” when that person’s identity is being concealed. This is something to discuss with the incoming PTM as they set their Year Plan. |

***B. Anonymous Support.*** The service is looking for better ways of offering anonymous support to students when an audio or video call is requested. After some discussion, the team is hopeful that we can remotely use the existing phone extension number to facilitate anonymous peer support via telephone! *I am currently waiting on further comment from Pauline, Victoria, and Graeme on the viability of this solution.*

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|  | To facilitate this, an executive or volunteer would connect to the Meridian telephone system remotely through [Avaya Equinox iX Workspace](https://www.eng.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/remote_work_tools_v1.02.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2RnUgBzzQkotdXMZVU_uvGJVcWy2d2BferyB5akU-gIROoL8oa9D42h3k). Linked is a guide from the McMaster Faculty of Engineering on how to use this system. The phone-in option will *not* be available for impromptu peer support sessions. It will only be available for sessions that are booked in advance via our new anonymous booking form (linked [here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=VULlUrBySUaVGi3kwXAAnWFxY06aNFBMktynKFmEgKtUN0IwMlNROVVPSE9LNlUxVjBYT09TWEdNMS4u)). Video calls will also be primarily booked through this request form and visitors may choose between Zoom or Microsoft Teams.  Only the Volunteer Coordinators and the Part-time Manager have access to the responses to the peer support request form. This means that these three are responsible for matching each visitor with an available volunteer for the requested call time. As such, email notifications have been turned on for each incoming form submission to ensure that all requests are answered as soon as possible. If no volunteer is available during the indicated call time, the visitor will be offered an alternate time and/or one of the executive team members will attempt to fulfil the session. |

***C. Universal Design as a Barrier.*** The MSU has been undergoing a lot of changes this year in order to remain relevant and to effectively serve the modern needs of an everchanging student body. Nevertheless, there has been a persistent desire to adapt every proposed solution as a ‘universal’ solution; one that can be applied to numerous Services in order to simplified oversight for the permanent staff. However, this has been one of the largest roadblocks facing the MSU all year long when it has come to making progress and increasing accessibility.

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|  | Incoming modifications to the hiring board structures and practices have risen concerns about inaccessibility for a variety of reasons – most of which stem from the issue of trying to find a “one-size-fits-all” solution.  For example, the desire to have asynchronous interviews makes sense for those sitting on the hiring boards who have busy schedules, but it inherently excludes certain applicants. Including those who might experience dysphoria, who don’t communicate in a neurotypical or linear manner, who need to see facial expressions (see *challenge A*) or who face any other number of barriers. These universal designs also force candidates to self-advocate for accommodations from an organization that claims to be inclusive of all experiences and identities. This is often a deterrent for many applicants as it is a signifier of performative allyship.  Many students have spent the past six months begging their professors to afford them “new” accommodations – most of us are either tired or completely discouraged from asking at this point. We should not exclude students just because they might not have the energy to disclose their situation and ask for what should be automatically afforded to them (i.e. A synchronous interview timeslot with one member of the hiring board).  Another broader example is the adoption of the Assistant Director position across multiple services all at once, which created a rushed timeline for creating the jobs thus inhibiting our ability to properly customize the roles to the actual Service needs. |

# **Successes**

We were able to use some of our Advertising & Promotions budget line to get each executive team member a pair of sweatpants embroidered with the MSU SHEC logo! These are a great way to promote the service around Hamilton and to show our appreciation for the work that the executive team does to represent SHEC’s value within the student community.

Reminder:

Applications for the position of [MSU SHEC Director](https://msumcmaster.ca/jobs/student-health-education-centre-shec-director/) are currently open on the MSU job opportunities webpage! Applications will remain open until February 19th at 11:59 PM [EST]. The position is open to any MSU members that plan to return to full-time studies at McMaster in the upcoming academic year (2021 – 22). I am more than happy to discuss what this position will look like with interested students and how it might fit into their pandemic routine! I encourage such folks to reach out confidentially via [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Smile.You.Are.Gorgeous/).

Moreover, applications to become MSU SHEC’s first ever paid Assistant Director will open in March! The Director and Assistant Director (AD) will work closely together to oversee all service operations and supervise the volunteer team. The AD will be taking the lead on “internal operations” such as managing the Service’s designated safe(r) space and distribution of free health supplies – akin to the current duties of the Volunteer Coordinators.

# **Budget**

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| ***BUDGET LINE*** | ***ITEM*** | ***BUDGET / COST*** | |
| **REFERENCE LIBRARY** | *Gift Card Incentives – Resource list updates & additions* | *60.00* | |
| **TOTAL SPENT IN LINE** | **$60.00** | |
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| **HEALTH SUPPLIES** | *Reproductive Wellbeing – Pregnancy Testing Strips & Collection Cups* | *170.63* | |
| *Collective Care – Gift cards from Blackhawk, Amazon, Well.ca* | *270.00* | |
| ***!*** *Collective Care – Gift cards from Loblaw & Blackhawk* | *325.00* | |
| *\*\*Harm Reduction – Deterra Medium-Sized Deactivation Pouches* | *128.48* | |
| *\*\*Harm Reduction – Rapid Response Fentanyl Contamination Strips* | *70.18* | |
| **TOTAL SPENT IN LINE** | **$964.29** | |
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| **ANNUAL CAMPAIGNS** | *Cum One, Cum All! – Guest Speaker Payment* | *550.00* | |
| *Winter Giveaways – Amazon Prime Orders* | *197.68* | |
| *Winter Giveaways – Gift Card Orders (Loblaws, Blackhawk & Costco)* | *300.00* | |
| *Fully PrEP’d – One-Time Donation to AIDS Network* | *150.00* | |
| **TOTAL SPENT IN LINE** | **$1,197.68** | |
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| **ADVERTISING & PROMOTION** | *Shipping Accessories – Polyethylene bags for sweaters* | *9.47* | |
| *New Student Hiring (September) – Paid social media ads* | *14.00* | |
| *Cum One, Cum All! – Promotional Assets & Paid social media ads* | *155.53* | |
| *Warmline (Fall) – Digital Package promotional assets* | *150.00* | |
| *Winter Giveaway – Digi-Lite Package promotional assets* | *60.00* | |
| *Seasonal SHEC In’s (Exam) – Digi-Lite Package promotional assets* | *60.00* | |
| *Entripy Order – Branded sweatpants for executive team* | *370.20* | |
| *Chess & SHECkers – Promotional Assets & Paid social media ads* | *140.00* | |
| *SHECxy Giveaway – Digi-Lite Package promotional assets* | *60.00* | |
| **TOTAL SPENT IN LINE** | **$1,019.20** | |
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| **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION** | *Token of Appreciation – Electronic Gift Cards for PSVs (x50)* | *250.00* | |
| *Prime Video - Movie Rental “Elf” for December Volunteer Social* | *5.00* | |
| **TOTAL SPENT IN LINE** | **$255.00** | |
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| **TRAINING**  **EXPENSES** | *Indigenous Wellbeing & Community – One-Time Donation to DAHAC* | *300.00* | |
| **TOTAL SPENT IN LINE** | **$300.00** | |
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| ***TOTALS*** | | | |
| **TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING** | | | $8,450.00 |
| **TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING** | | | **$3,346.17** |
| **REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING** | | | $5,103.83 |

*! A payment issue occurred when placing these orders, this should be remedied by the end of the week.*

*\*\*Purchase Order has been submitted and/or approved, but the purchase has not yet been finalized or placed.*

It is noteworthy that the actual amount spent by the Service thus far is closer to $3,800 but that some of these expenses were offset by a sponsorship from the McMaster Student Wellness Centre. The SWC generously provided a sum of $450 to assist in the purchasing of prizes for the Winter Giveaway with MSU Maccess!

So far, the Collective Care program has received requests for approximately **$1,000** worth of support. Most folks are receiving a card valued at $15-30, however, a few students are receiving up to $60 to cover higher cost items such as gender gear, medication costs, or supplies for children. MSU SHEC & WGEN have been splitting these expenses according to the types of purchases the student indicated needing to make. We will be seeking out additional funding in the coming weeks in hopes of keeping the initiative going until April.