MEDIA RELEASE

Community's Generosity Provides 37,162 Meals Through 2026 Onkel Hans Food Drive

October 22, 2026 – KITCHENER, ON – The spirit of giving was alive and well this Oktoberfest season! Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, the 2026 Onkel Hans Food Drive, presented by Piller's Fine Foods, helped provide 37,162 meals in support of The Food Bank of Waterloo Region. Adding to this year's success, donations collected during the Thanksgiving Day Parade increased by 23% compared to last year.

Through the K-W Oktoberfest Thanksgiving Day Parade and other Onkel Hans Food Drive events, community members came together to make a meaningful difference for individuals and families experiencing food insecurity across Waterloo Region.

This year's collective efforts resulted in:

- 8,915 pounds of food collected
- $14,866.50 in monetary donations
- 37,162 meals provided through combined food and monetary donations (overall 9.2% increase from 2025)
- **More than 1.5 million meals provided since 1995 through the Onkel Hans Food Drive**

A special danke schön to Piller's, the presenting sponsor of the Onkel Hans Food Drive, for their continued generosity and commitment to giving back to our community. We also extend our sincere appreciation to Jamieson Car & Truck Rental and Chef D Catering, whose sponsorship helped make this year's food drive possible.

Our heartfelt thanks also go to Grand River Transit for providing the bus for our Stuff A Bus events and to Fairview Park Mall, the Kitchener Rangers and Centre In The Square for their support in making the food drive events a success.

"To everyone who donated, volunteered or helped spread the word, a heartfelt danke schön," shares Tracy Van Kalsbeek, Executive Director of K-W Oktoberfest. "Your generosity continues to make a difference, helping nourish our community well beyond the festival season."

The Onkel Hans Food Drive is a key component of the Oktoberfest Cares program, highlighting K-W Oktoberfest's ongoing commitment to supporting the community.

PHOTOS ENCLOSED OF VOLUNTEERS COLLECTING DONATIONS AT PARADE AND MASCOTS AT STUFF A BUS EVENT

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About Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest

The first Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest was celebrated in 1969 at Concordia Club in Kitchener, organized by a group of dedicated founders. The keg was tapped and history was made. Since then, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest has developed its own traditions, becoming one of the largest Bavarian Festivals outside of Germany. Tens of thousands of visitors celebrate annually in our Festhallen, at local restaurants and by attending one of our many family and cultural events. More than just biergartens, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is committed to supporting the cultural, economic and social vitality of Waterloo Region, bringing millions of dollars in economic benefit to the Region each year. *Oktoberfest Cares* provides funding for charitable partners and supports Festival initiatives that enrich our community such as the Onkel Hans Food Drive and keep admission costs low or free for favourites including the Waterloo Region Women's Expo and Women of the Year celebration as well as family-friendly events like KIDtoberfest, Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Willkommen Platz. For more information visit www.oktoberfest.ca.

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