

Hereward Farms Turns Field Ticket Costs Into Nearly \$30K for Local Charities — Now the Community Decides What Comes Next

After nearly \$30K in local giving since 2020, Hereward Farms is asking the community to nominate who needs it most—and businesses to help match it.

EAST GARAFRAXA, ONTARIO, CANADA, August 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For the past six years, visitors have come to [Hereward Farms](#) for the lavender, the sunflowers, the photos, and occasionally to find out where Gordie the farm cat is hiding.

But their \$10 field admission has been doing something much bigger.

Since 2020, Hereward Farms has donated nearly \$30,000 from its field admission fees back into the local community, supporting organizations serving families, individuals and animals throughout Dufferin County and Centre Wellington.

Past recipients have included organizations such as Family Transition Place, local food banks, the Alzheimer Society, Headwaters Healthcare Centre, Wellington Pregnancy Care Centre and the SPCA, among others.

Now, Hereward Farms founder Julie Thurgood-Burnett wants the



Hereward Farms Lavender Fields



Stephen Burnett + Julie Thurgood-Burnett on their 250-acre lavender + sunflower farm

community to help decide where the money should go next — and she's challenging other local businesses to join in.

Where Does the Money Need to Go in 2026?

"We live here. We work here. We raised our family here. Our customers are here. So when thousands of people come through our fields every summer, it has always made sense to us that some of that money should stay right here," says Thurgood-Burnett.

"This year, I don't want to assume that I know where it's needed most. I want people in Centre Wellington and Dufferin County to tell us. Who is doing incredible work? Who is struggling for funding? Where could a few thousand dollars actually make a difference?"



Hereward Farms is inviting residents to nominate local charities, non-profits and community organizations working in areas including food security, family support, mental health, seniors, youth, animal welfare and other areas of community need.

But Thurgood-Burnett doesn't want the initiative to stop at Hereward Farms.

A Challenge to Local Businesses: Help Us Make It Bigger

Hereward Farms is also inviting businesses throughout Centre Wellington and Dufferin County to participate by matching, contributing to or adding to the funds being donated in 2026.

"We're already giving the money away," laughs Thurgood-Burnett. "So my thought was: what if somebody matched \$500? What if another business threw in \$1,000? What if 20 businesses each did something? Suddenly this isn't just our field admission anymore. It becomes something our whole business community did together."

Businesses could participate at a level that works for them — whether that means matching part of Hereward Farms' donation, committing a set amount or supporting one of the organizations ultimately selected.

There is no elaborate program, gala or fundraising dinner planned.

And, according to Thurgood-Burnett, that is intentional.

"I don't want to start a charity. Please don't make me start a charity," she jokes. "I just want to see how much good we can do when a bunch of people decide to help at the same time."

From a \$10 Ticket to Something Much Bigger

Hereward Farms began charging admission to its seasonal lavender and sunflower fields as visitor numbers grew. Rather than treating the admission solely as farm revenue, the business began directing the proceeds back into organizations serving its surrounding communities.

Six years later, those \$10 visits have added up to nearly \$30,000 in community giving.

For Thurgood-Burnett, the amount is significant — but the stories behind it matter more.

"When you hear what some of these organizations are dealing with every single day — families who need food, women who need somewhere safe to go, people caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's, animals needing care — writing that cheque becomes emotional," she says.

"We grow lavender and sunflowers. We make skincare and home products. We're not solving all of those problems. But we can take something we **do** have and turn it into something useful for somebody else. That's the part that matters."

The Community Gets a Say

Over the coming weeks, Hereward Farms will ask the public to nominate organizations in Dufferin County and Centre Wellington and explain why they should receive support.

Local businesses interested in joining the initiative are also encouraged to contact Hereward Farms to discuss contributing or matching funds.

"We've always said, 'From our soil to your soul,'" says Thurgood-Burnett. "This feels like another version of that. People come here and enjoy something beautiful, and somehow that \$10 ticket gets to travel a little farther and help somebody else. That's pretty amazing."

"And if we can turn nearly \$30,000 into something much bigger by getting our community involved? Well, let's see what we can do."

How to Get Involved

Community members are invited to nominate a local organization by following Hereward Farms

on social media and commenting on its 2026 community giving callout, including the organization's name and why they believe the funds would make an impact.

Businesses interested in contributing to or matching the 2026 donation can contact Hereward Farms directly at hello@herewardfarm.com.

About Hereward Farms

Hereward Farms is a 250-acre lavender and sunflower farm located in East Garafraxa, Ontario. What began with 40 lavender plants has grown into thousands of lavender plants, hundreds of thousands of sunflowers and a Canadian-made collection of farm-grown skincare and home products.

The farm is also home to the year-round Lavender Lounge + Boutique and welcomes visitors for seasonal field experiences, workshops and community events.

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