

## Heart of the Community Award

is presented to

### **Heeling Soles**

Heeling Soles Inc., created by highly self-motivated visionaries Steve and Niala Muir who recognized the urgency and necessity to eradicate poverty.

Heeling Soles was born out of the simple collection of shoes, many of those from the sneaker and shoe-collecting communities in the US and the UK, and the provision of those shoes to those in need. The team at Heeling Soles is entwined in the ever-growing sneaker culture and fashion world and active within the blogging community, music and arts. The members of that team were able to obtain donations of shoes from people within those spheres and change the minds of individuals about being able to help change a life – through a single pair of shoes.

How can a pair of sneakers or shoes help fight poverty? A pair of shoes, new or gently worn, donated by an individual, group or corporation, can make all the difference in the world of someone who has little to none and has lost all hope. A simple pair of shoes can be the difference between empowering someone to be self-reliant and someone who will remain reliant on others.

Joy-Melanie Jermin learned of Heeling Soles, in September 2021, when she volunteered at an Education Drive event which Heeling Soles was a part of. At the back to school event students and their families received a free backpack filled with school supplies, canned and dry foods, a free haircut certificate and a pair of shoes/name brand sneakers. Heeling Soles vision became clear - how a pair of shoes can be the difference between a child fitting in at school or being ostracized. How attire, food, and school supplies can affect how a student starts their school day and ultimately how they end the school year. In addition, Heeling Soles also goes into shelters and the streets to provide homeless people with a pair of shoes.



Photo L to R: Joy-Melanie Jermin, Jaspán Schlesinger, Steve Muir and Niala Muir, Heeling Soles and Jothy Narendran, Jaspán Schlesinger.