



## UPDATE FROM ST. JAMES FOOD BASKET

Thank you! We appreciate everyone's donation for our gift cards. We gave out 397 \$10 Walmart gift cards to all children whose family attended on the last Wednesday we were open in December, and 82 to one- and two-person families without children. Special thanks go to Rotary Club of Etobicoke, Graceview Presbyterian Church, Richview United Church, Rehoboth Fellowship Church, and the Charles and Thelma Baker Foundation. These numbers are higher than in 2017: we have more children and more families in 2018, particularly in the fall.

Our January 2019 numbers are higher still, and getting scary: in January 2019 we averaged 14 more families per week – representing 40 more people per week on average – than in January 2018. We suspect that rising rents are the main cause.

We are gratefully using our new van! You can see it, with the Kiwanis and Food Basket logos, in the church parking lot. Donations by Kiwanis Club of Islington Humber and RBC Dominion Securities (Bloor/Islington branch) and 2 individual donors, mean that this new van came to us fully funded. This van is safer and more comfortable to drive and has more storage space than the previous one.

Our volunteers are the only reason the Food Basket can successfully help such a large number of people. We work hard to maintain an environment that, despite the many challenges, volunteers find rewarding, inspiring, supportive and personally uplifting. We see this because most volunteers maintain a long-term commitment of several years. They form solid networks within the areas they volunteer. "George" is one example: he used to be a food recipient and volunteer. Now he has a job that keeps him very busy; he volunteers when he has time off, and always wants to catch up with people, especially retired volunteers. He also donates money for gift cards. We are very grateful for all our volunteers.

Marie Truelove, Chair