

Happy New Year!

As is likely true for all of you, the pandemic has dominated our activities in 2020 and has impacted every aspect of our operation. We are extremely grateful for your ongoing support, especially throughout this unprecedented and uncertain time.

2020 St. James Food Basket Service Statistics:

- Provided food for 20,200 individuals (34% are younger than 16 yrs. old) over 33 operational Wednesdays
- Closed for 10 weeks (from March 18 to June 3) due to the pandemic
- Invested in equipment to deal with the pandemic: PPEs, tents, extra carts, windbreaks
- Distributed 281 Walmart \$20 gift cards to youth <18; and 400 Loblaws \$10 gift cards to families
- Received approx. 170,000 pounds of food from Daily Bread Food Bank, including more milk, eggs and fresh produce and approx. 54,000 pounds of food from Second Harvest
- Distributed feminine hygiene products once a month, for only 9 months this year
- Had an average of 50 volunteers working over 150 hours each week – we had to limit the number of volunteers as per public health guidelines.

As of November, we have moved the Food Basket back indoors with strict Covid-19 protocols in place. No more than 6 masked food recipients are let into the hall at any time. We established an appointment system to minimize waiting time outside and installed windscreens in anticipation of the approaching cold weather. There is a one-way route; patrons enter through one door and exit through another with no re-entry access. There are designated stations where people register and receive food.

We have indefinitely suspended our market style operation, replacing it with distributing two large bags (one with shelf-stable goods, the other with produce) and a few “choice sections” for items such as bread, eggs, and miscellany. We purchased 5 trollies, outfitted with buckets, to help clients move their bags – which have often been quite heavy – quickly along with them through the line. We try to get clients in and out of the hall within an average of 5 minutes.



Experts are projecting that more people will need food in 2021 than 2020; unemployment will continue to be a major problem and food prices are continuing to rise. A single person living on social assistance receives \$733 per month, with no talk from the government of any upcoming changes to this. Thankfully, our community members have stepped up to the plate and have been incredibly generous to us in 2020. We have a surplus from 2020 that we expect to spend on extra food in 2021 in anticipation of the increase in patronage.

We thank the following organizations for cash contributions in 2020:

- Bloordale United Church, Fellowship Christian Reformed Church, Graceview Presbyterian Church, Kingsway Lambton United Church Women Unit 2, Richview United Church, Bayview United Church, Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation, Kiwanis Club of Kingsway Humber, Retired Teachers of Ontario District 22, Rotary Club of Toronto West, Kingsway-on-the Park Condominium, Bell Canada employees, Northlea Corporation, RBC Dominion Securities; plus scores of individuals.

Due to our reduced number of volunteers, we were able accept food or other contributions from only a few organizations in 2020:

- Dymon Medical, Memnon Muslim Association, Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation, RBC Dominion Securities employees, Loblaw, Future Bakery, Cobs Bread, Community Police of 22 Division.

With your support, we can help our neighbours realize that they are not alone and, together, get through this pandemic.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy New Year!



Marie Truelove
Chair, St. James Food Basket