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# THE HAMPER



# BLUFFS

food bank

*Because everyone deserves  
3 squares a day.*

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## Our Annual Report

This January we celebrated the 13th year of your support for Churches by the Bluffs Food Bank, which is also known as The Bluffs Food Bank.

Thanks to you, your generosity has enabled us to help so many families in this community that it is mind boggling. Together, we started as an idea involving five local churches and then you blew us out of the water with your financial and grocery donations and volunteerism. Together, we have grown and continue to serve as many as 300 or more families each and every week

Every week, The Bluffs Food Bank is serving over 300 families.

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and this is all done by about 100 dedicated volunteers.

Thanks to you, we have expanded our services beyond groceries. With your financial donations, we are able to purchase tea, coffee and sugar along with tuna fish, eggs, ham, bread, mayo, margarine and condiments to make sandwiches to accompany the soups provided by Daily Bread for our meal program. Mary Haines continues to offer a free income tax service and we continue to offer referrals to other organizations including Social Services, and the Toronto Star Christmas programs. Your generosity makes such a difference in the lives of those who are less fortunate and live right here in Birchcliff Village. This fall, we partnered with Birchmount Neighbourhood Centre and Goodwill Services to add to our network of connections. How great is that?

### Helping our neighbours

Ben (not his real name) is a client. In his 40s, single, suffers from cancer of the liver and anxiety. Ben tells us that he has gained weight since coming to the food bank and he is feeling so much better because he is eating healthier now. The crowd of clients in the hall on Thursdays is too much for Ben, so we serve him as soon as he arrives and rush his hamper of groceries in order to shorten his visit. If it were not for your generosity, we would not be able to provide nutritious food for Ben every Thursday. Ben enjoys the hot soup and homemade sandwiches while he waits for his hamper to be filled. Ben thanks you too!

### A grade six student collected food donations instead of candy on Hallowe'en

Your generous gifts include finances and food from your streets, churches, businesses, birthday and anniversary food drives. We even had one grade six student collect food on Hallowe'en, in place of candy to support those who are hungry in our community. She has learned about giving through the "We to Me" Program that encourages youth to think of others. She dropped off "Scare Hunger



The clothing boutique continues to outfit clients for affordable prices. Many clients come to see us for an outfit for special occasions.

Away” flyers in her neighbourhood a week in advance of Hallowe’en that included a list of suggested donations. With the help of her mother, she brought a whole car load of groceries to the food bank following her Hallowe’en caper. It’s not just the adults who donate and help, it’s our youth too.

## Local schools support The Food Bank too!

The students and staff of **Blessed Cardinal Newman Catholic Secondary High School**, donated funds from SCAR TREK to Churches by the Bluffs for the second time, this fall. Last year, it was \$8,000 and this year it was another \$8,000. The youth in our community are involved and caring and this is such a blessing for all. **RH King Academy, Birchmount Collegiate, Glen Ames Senior School, Birchcliff, and Chine Drive** Schools have also done food drives and donated to support hungry folks in our community. **John A. Leslie** School held a food drive and it took two cars and one large van — filled to the top — to deliver the groceries to us in early December.

Who says our youth are not aware, caring and responsive? Thank you to our youth and their leaders!

## Neighbourhood businesses make a difference

Individuals, local businesses, employee groups and neighbourhoods also make donations.

**Griffith Laboratories** on Pharmacy Avenue regularly donates skids of pancake & soup mixes, flavoured rice, and stuffing mix to fill our shelves.

Through our partnership with Birchmount Neighbourhood Centre, the employees of **Nelson Education Ltd.** on Birchmount Road recently donated boxes full of gently used and brand new clothing along with cases full of non-perishable groceries.

**Loblaw’s** at Gerrard and Victoria Park regularly donates cases of plastic bags which we use to bag up fruit, veggies and bread. Loblaw’s donated turkeys this Christmas, which were delivered to us by Second Harvest. We requested 450 turkeys and all of our families received a turkey for their Christmas festivities.

**Cobs Bakery** in the Beach donates day old bread and pastries which volunteers pick up on Wednesdays at closing time for our families to receive on Thursdays.

**Nick’s No Frills** at Kingston Road and Midland has given us permission to leave a donation box in the store and these donations are picked up every Monday by volunteers.

A new community organization, the **Kingston Social** made a donation of 60 hams (a welcome option for some for Christmas 2015 as well as Stuffing Mix to go with turkeys. Thank you so much!

On Saturday December 5, two communities conducted huge food drives for The Bluffs.

**Fallingbrook Presbyterian Church** did a food drive in the Fallingbrook area and the **Guildwood**



**community** delivered four truckloads of groceries from their annual food drive. We are so thankful for the generosity of those who arranged these food drives and to the drivers and all of those who participated. These donations were so huge, that we had to put out an APB to get more volunteers to help sort and store them. We will be better prepared next year! Groceries were plentiful this Christmas and on into January when food help is so desperate.

Your financial donations enable us to purchase enough fresh milk and eggs to supplement what we get from Daily Bread and Second Harvest, so that every family gets these items in their grocery hamper each week. This cost is just over \$1,100 a month. We also purchase items in short supply – when they are on sale. This includes chicken, beef, cheese, fish, fresh vegetables, diapers and toilet paper. If funds are available, this often is up to an additional \$2,000 each month. Now, you know why we are able to offer more than just 2 or 3 days’ worth of groceries that other food banks provide.

### You're changing lives

Sheila (not her real name) is a senior who comes to the food bank by Wheel Trans every Thursday. She feels completely ‘at home’ when she comes in. Sheila loves to shop in The Boutique and she was ‘over the moon’ one evening when she found some plus sizes that were a perfect fit for her and her meagre budget. For the next few Thursday evenings, Sheila gave us a fashion show of her Boutique finds. Such a delight see such a positive outcome from your generous donations of clean and in season clothes to The Boutique. Everyone calls Sheila by name and she never leaves without calling out “Thank you everyone! See you next week!” I am passing those weekly “thanks” to you! You need to hear them too!!

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## Your donations help change lives.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, you may send me email with stories, events and updates about The Bluffs Food Bank.

Please return to: 33 East Road, Toronto, ON M1N 1Z9

Make cheques payable to Churches by the Bluffs Food Bank