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URGENT APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

Over 2,600 families are still waiting for assistance this Christmas!

OTTAWA, ON – With just two weeks until Christmas Eve, the Caring and Sharing Exchange is reaching out to the generous people of Ottawa for support of their Christmas Exchange Program. Through this 104-year old program, community members in need, most of which are seniors and children, receive food assistance in the form of a voucher or a food hamper. This program ensures that struggling families can enjoy a warm festive holiday meal, leaving them with a sense of dignity and hope for the new year.

While many of us regard this season as being the most wonderful time of the year, less fortunate members of our community are burdened with a sense of worry and grief as they struggle to make ends meet. **This year, the Caring and Sharing Exchange has almost 20,000 individuals on their list requesting assistance over the holidays.**

"The amount of people turning to us for relief this year has been overwhelming," says Cindy, Executive Director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange. "So far, we have been able to guarantee assistance for three quarters of those on our list. Although we are working tirelessly to ensure that no one requesting our help goes without this Christmas, **we unfortunately still have 2,604 families waiting for assistance.**"

The food hampers provided through the Christmas Exchange Program contain all the fixings to create a festive holiday meal: from turkey and stuffing, to cookies and hot chocolate. They also include a variety of vegetables and fruits, which are crucial additions to a nutritious meal but are not always accessible to those on tight budgets. They offer vouchers as well, in partnership with Giant Tiger, for those households who may have dietary restrictions or do not feel comfortable having a hamper delivered to their door. These vouchers offer recipients the flexibility to shop for themselves, purchasing items that uniquely suit the needs of them and their family.

"To have the means to prepare a homemade meal to celebrate the season with loved ones is something many of us take for granted, but we truly believe it is something everyone deserves," says Cindy. "We are depending on the generosity of our community to help us eliminate our waiting list all together. Every donation we receive, big or small, moves us one step closer to ensuring our neighbours in need can celebrate the holidays with full stomachs and full hearts".

Those interested in donating can do so by visiting www.CaringandSharing.ca, or by calling 613-226-6434.

Join their Sponsor-a-Hamper program and deliver Christmas directly to someone's door!

The Caring and Sharing Exchange's [Sponsor-a-Hamper Program](#) offers people the opportunity to get personally involved in supporting the cause. Each sponsor is matched with a family in need, purchases all the ingredients for a festive meal, and delivers the hamper directly to their match's door. Those interested in becoming a hamper sponsor can learn more at www.CaringandSharing.ca under "Ways to Give."

- 30 -

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