



*the* Christmas Exchange

*le Partage de Noël*

*People helping people since 1915.*

*L'aide et l'entraide depuis 1915.*

The Christmas Exchange

P.O. Box 5167

Ottawa ON K2C 3H4

613.226.6434

[www.christmas-exchange.com](http://www.christmas-exchange.com)

Charitable Registration # 13097 9172 RR0001

# 2010 – 2011

## ANNUAL REPORT



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### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

To co-ordinate services for organizations such as social agencies, schools, health services and faith communities in the Greater Ottawa Area. To provide assistance to families and individuals in the Greater Ottawa Area who face economic hardship.

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**2010–2011 BOARD**

**2010–2011 Executive Committee**

- President, Don Curtis
- Vice President, Doris Ramphos
- Treasurer, Robert (Bob) Wild
- Secretary, Samer Forzley
- Past President, Pete Larocque
- Marilyn Matheson, Executive Director (Ex-Officio)

**2010–2011 Board Members**

- Roy A. Anderson
- Thom Bourne
- Helen Byon
- L. Catherine Eckenswiller
- Candy Gaudet
- Michelle Mulligan
- Melissa Rusk

*\* Names have been changed for the quotes used in this report in order to protect the privacy of the individuals.*

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

*Submitted by Don Curtis, President*

The Christmas Exchange has proudly and successfully served the Ottawa area since 1915. Over the 12 month time frame between the Annual General Meeting in June 2010 and this AGM, we have participated in a period of perhaps the greatest change in the organization's 95 years. Pursuant to a search for a permanent President, I came forward and was elected as President by the Board of Directors to replace the interim President Pete Larocque, who had carried the reigns since last June's AGM when Rebecca Stanisic stepped down after her 10+ years of service to the Exchange.

Since April, 2011, it has been my privilege to carry on the leadership of the Board and the organization in one of the major milestones the organization will face in its history. Over the last few months Pete and I have worked closely together, along with Executive Director Marilyn Matheson and the Board Members, to ensure a smooth transition of governance and to also shepherd in this historical change for the organization.

As described in greater detail in the Annual Report, the 2010 Christmas season produced record support for families and individuals in need, demonstrating yet again the value and diversity of the Exchange's coordination and direct support voucher and hamper services. Our area residents and businesses made donations in record amounts, which enabled the Exchange to increase its levels of support to help meet the growing needs of our community neighbours. We were able to help all who applied because of the generosity that donors showed.

The merits of our coordination services were impressive again in 2010 — we discovered a number of duplicates for both the food and the toy assistance, resulting in an overall calculated savings to the giving community of almost \$600,000. We are very proud of the dollars that our Coordination Service has saved donors and agencies over the years, which in turn allows no one who seeks help to be forgotten.

Additionally, in 2011, the Exchange has taken on some new program challenges, such as providing school supplies in an effort to spread the value of our services year-round, without losing a beat in the traditional support we provide during the Christmas season.

This strategic focus on a broader program scope has necessitated the adoption of a new name for the organization, as well as the launch of a new branding and marketing/communications effort in the near future. We are confident that a new name and brand will enable the variety of year-round support programs and fundraising activities that we offer to be more successful for the next 95 years of our existence and beyond.

The Exchange enters the 2011 activity year with the same general goal as previous years, but with a revised and refocused Mission Statement: "To co-ordinate services for organizations such as social agencies, schools, health services and faith communities in the Greater Ottawa Area. To provide assistance to families and individuals in the Greater Ottawa Area who face economic hardship".

Donors, corporations, and charities like the Exchange all want to help our community. One of the greatest strengths of the Exchange is building partnerships that

## THE CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE

continue to enrich the community and effectively and efficiently serve those in need. We work with over 300 referring agencies and take great pride in maintaining the centralized database to check for duplications, ensuring that donor dollars go further.

The Exchange partners with organizations such as The Salvation Army, Shepherds of Good Hope, 2-1-1, Community Resource and Health Centres and others in order to complement and augment existing systems that are already in place to make it easier for those in need to receive these services with dignity, respect, and ease.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank Pete for his experience and leadership service as Interim President since the last AGM, and to wish him well as he leaves the Board to pursue his many other interests. I also wish to thank Marilyn and her office staff for all of their extraordinary hard work throughout the year from special events, to Board meetings, to Agency meetings; this work is what drives our day-to-day operations and it is greatly appreciated.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my fellow Board Members who have individually and collectively served as partners, guides, and visionaries for the Exchange over many years. This is a wonderful group of people who have so much to give and share with this community. Giving of your time, through busy business/personal schedules, in order to volunteer with the Exchange is very much appreciated. It has been, and continues to be, a pleasure working with you all.

I also wish to use this occasion to extend my personal thanks to Pete, Marilyn and the rest of the Board for making my transition into this role as smooth as possible and for enduring my seemingly endless

questions as I try to climb the Exchange learning curve.

Finally, at this time I would like to acknowledge outgoing Board Members: Interim President Pete Larocque, Secretary Samer Forzley, Roy Anderson, Michelle Mulligan, and Helen Byon, who together have served the organization in a variety of ways totalling some 14 years. Your contributions have been invaluable and much appreciated. I trust you will carry fond memories of your time with the Exchange and will remain advocates for the Mission of the Exchange. I wish you well in your future endeavours.

As we now move forward to meet the ongoing and growing challenges we also at this AGM take the opportunity to elect five new Board Members into the fold. Those nominated are: Patricia Tessier, William Johnson, Bisi Olalere, Shauna Oakley, and Miriam Moodley. We look forward to the benefit of receiving your respective contributions over the coming years and trust that you will join me (also relatively new to the Board) in ensuring the future remains bright for fulfilling the Mission of the Exchange.

The 2011/2012 year has already begun to be the most interesting and strategically important period in our history. For the Exchange, the future is here now and it looks bright. As we prepare ourselves to enhance our team, our program reach, and our core strengths, we stand ready with our partners to meet new challenges and to provide widespread benefits from all of this caring and sharing.

Enjoy the AGM.



Thank you.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

*Submitted by Marilyn Matheson*

The 2010/2011 fiscal has been a time of great change for Christmas Exchange, and more change is on the horizon. While we provided assistance to a record number of people this past Christmas season, as detailed in the Program Committee Report on page 14, we also expanded our Coordination Service to include the coordination of school supplies for low-income families. This expansion has led to the addition of a new program: the School Supplies Assistance Program.

*“It was my first time asking for this support...I was able to have some well-wished-for items for my almost 13-year-old daughter, which she really appreciated. Having this extra support over the holidays as a single mother was a relief...I will always remember this support.” – Grace\**

Just as the Coordination Service (the reason the Exchange was created in 1915) continues to save the community hundreds of thousands of dollars a year during the Christmas season, which is then translated into further assistance for more people, we are confident that the coordination of school supplies will be just as successful. Although the process of coordinating school supplies has started, there is still much more work to be done. We are currently working on gathering information as to which organizations provide school supplies and how their programs function. Once we have this information, we will be better able to advise families through the 2-1-1 service on where and how to apply for assistance, in the same manner as is done for Christmas assistance. This will not only increase efficiency and save money, it will also make it easier for families to apply for the help they need.

As you will see in the Fundraising Report on page 6, Christmas Exchange was successful in our fundraising efforts this past year, raising more money than ever before. However, it was late in the year when the majority of donations were received. We experience similar problems every year, due in part to the fact that many donors don't give (and don't want to hear from) a Christmas charity between January and October. This is one of the reasons we are currently re-branding to find a suitable umbrella name for the organization. We will always provide assistance during the Christmas season, but we need to fundraise year-round, especially now that we will also be providing direct assistance for school supplies. We continue our on-going evaluation of all our fundraising efforts, eliminating or making changes to events as needed, in order to achieve our goal of being able to provide assistance to all who ask and qualify.

As you read through this annual report you will see quotes from some of the many thank you notes we receive each year. These are real people who, for whatever reason, need a little extra help to be able to get through the year. The cost of rent, hydro, gas, and food is on the rise for all of us. But for those families and individuals who live pay-cheque to pay-cheque, or who don't have a pay-cheque in the first place, the rise in the cost of living makes a significant difference in their lives — as does the help provided by Christmas Exchange. Please take the time to read their gratitude, and read some of their stories on our website.

My sincere thanks to our dedicated team this past year, who worked tirelessly to ensure funds were brought in, and assistance provided to the families and individuals in need, especially:

## THE CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE

**Sui-Ling Leung, Director of Development and Volunteers:** Sui-Ling not only spent long hours raising the money needed, she also stayed late to personally phone the families on the hamper list and many on the Toy Centre list.

**Oludayo Sola-Akinsola, Database Supervisor:** Oludayo first came to the Christmas Exchange in 2009 as a co-op student from Algonquin College. She returned last year as full-time staff to run the Coordination Service for both the school supplies and Christmas programs.

**Michèle Rogerson, Communication Coordinator:** Michèle helped to increase awareness of our charity through Facebook, Twitter, our website, and media releases.

**Susan Hopkinson, owner of Jansu Communications:** We not only contract Susan to provide accounting services, but she is also a tremendous help on the program side with the coordination database, and with the fundraising database.



Marilyn Matheson, CAE  
Executive Director



*The Christmas Cheer Broadcast 2010*

## FUNDRAISING REPORT

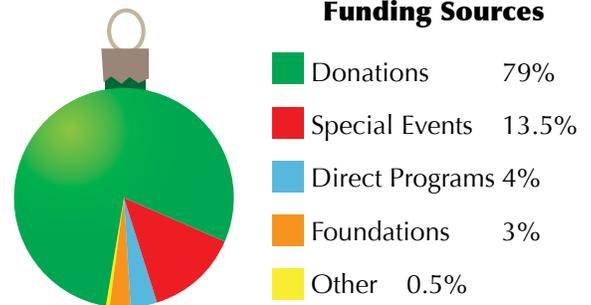
Submitted by Sui-Ling Leung, Director of Development and Volunteer Services

*“I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely.”*

**Charles Dickens**

As Dickens says, Christmas is a time of universal giving, and this past year was no exception. In 2010, Christmas Exchange raised more funds than ever before with an increase of overall revenue of almost 29% from last year. Although the demand for assistance increased to over 10,000 families, the additional funding raised from an appeal made to the general public in December led to this increase in overall revenue and enabled us to help everyone on our list.

breakdown of funding sources.



In taking a closer look at the donations revenue, donations made through CanadaHelps.org decreased considerably compared to last year due to the fact that we enabled online giving through our website. This permitted donors to directly donate to Christmas Exchange and receive an immediate tax receipt at the same time. It also allowed us to capture information about our donors more efficiently. Revenue from online donations made through our website was over \$146,000 compared to the over \$17,000 generated through CanadaHelps.org. With the public appeal we made in December, online donations through our website increased tremendously, as did those made by phone, since both methods were the fastest and easiest ways to donate given the short timeframe.

The three direct mail campaigns we do each year continue to be the largest generator of donations revenue, which increased by 22% from the previous year. This year, we included a special mailing to lawyers in the Ottawa area. General donations stayed consistent, including donations made in response to an advertorial and donation envelope distributed in the *Ottawa Citizen* on October 31<sup>st</sup>, and through *Flyer Force* a few days after that. It is interesting to note that corporate donations tripled from last

**« Merci à toutes les personnes qui continuent d'année en année, à rendre possible le partage de Noël. » – Myriam\***

Donations continue to be our largest source of revenue, increasing from 70% to 79% since last year. Funds raised through special events decreased to 13.5% compared to 28% in 2009 due in part to the fact that there were fewer special events in 2010. Foundational grants and donations accounted for 3% of our revenue and less than 0.50% came from other sources of income. Direct program funding, which is revenue that is allocated to one of our three programs (School Supplies Assistance Program, Christmas Assistance, or our Coordination Services), was at 4% this year. See the following chart for a

## THE CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE

year when they heard of our public appeal for donations. This increase was in part due to a large, and much appreciated, donation of \$30,000 from the employees of Giant Tiger.

### Special Events

In 2010, Christmas Exchange held the following annual events — *Ottawa's Biggest Bake Sale*, *Pennies for Portions*, and *Running on Empties*. The annual *Caring and Sharing Charity Auction* did not take place, but was moved to the Spring of 2011. Christmas Exchange also decided not to hold the annual *Christmas in July*, which was a morning breakfast BBQ event held at the Fallowfield transit station in Barrhaven. Although the event did raise money in the past, the time commitment involved in planning the event was substantial, making the ratio of expenses to income too high to consider continuing this event. For the future, we are focusing on events that generate higher income with lower fundraising costs, such as the annual events listed above.

Some new events that were held this year included a *Mother's Day Brunch* and a *Christmas Ornament Design* contest, for which the winning design was made into an ornament that was sold to the general public.

### Mother's Day Brunch

The *Mother's Day Brunch* was held on May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Ron Kolbus Lakeside Centre in partnership with Lifetime Networks Ottawa, a charity that provides a personal support network to persons with disabilities. Over 200 people attended the Brunch, which included entertainment from the Shriners Klowns, an activity room for children, a 50/50 draw, and a ticket auction for which people could purchase tickets to

place into the draw boxes of items they wanted to win. The event raised over \$7,700, which was shared between the two charities. A special thank you goes to Dave Smith for his help organizing the event, as well as for catering the Brunch; to event sponsors CI Investments and Dynamic Funds; and to the businesses that donated items for the ticket auction.

*"Thank you very much for the gift certificate...I was able to buy socks and gloves for the children and building blocks for my grandson. The kids were very thankful for their gifts. Without the certificate they would have had nothing." — Tamara\**

### Christmas Ornament Design Contest

A *Christmas Ornament Design* contest was held in mid-August calling for design entries from artists in



*Shriners entertain at Mother's Day Brunch 2010*



*Alex Cullen Bay Ward serves at Mother's Day Brunch 2010*

Ontario. The goal of the Christmas Ornament Design contest was to end up with a winning design that could then be made into a Christmas ornament of pewter with a backing of copper made from the roofs of the Parliament buildings. The ornament would be sold by Christmas Exchange and at the Hallmark/Davis Agency stores in Ottawa. The copper for the ornament was provided by ARC Industries, an organization that gives work opportunities to mentally challenged adults. Several different designs were received, at which point they were then evaluated by a select panel of judges who narrowed the selection down to the top 3 designs. These designs were made available for public voting on our website, as well as at the Ottawa School of Art

gallery at the Shenkman Arts Centre in Orleans. The winning design was created by Anna Blauveldt and depicted the Parliament Buildings' Peace Tower.

The public and media support for the design contest, and for the ornament sales, was tremendous. Pre-orders were taken before we actually had the ornaments and since there were only 1,300 limited edition ornaments produced, they sold out quickly. Fortunately, ARC Industries had some additional Christmas ornaments that they had produced for their own organization. Christmas Exchange sold these ornaments for ARC Industries to those who weren't able to purchase the Parliament design. We received a certain dollar amount from the sales. Overall, sales from the ornaments were over \$38,000. Due to its success, the design contest for a new Christmas ornament will be held in early 2011 with the ornaments available for purchase in September 2011. Thank you to ARC Industries, the Ottawa School of Art, and Hallmark/Davis Agency for their support.

### **Ottawa's Biggest Bake Sale**

The **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Ottawa's Biggest Bake Sale** sponsored by TD Canada Trust was another successful event, raising over \$8,815. The Bake Sale was held at centre court at Billings Bridge Shopping Centre with 13 participating community groups and churches and 17 local bakeries donating baked goods for Christmas Exchange to sell. Something new at this year's event was a Best Tasting Pumpkin Pie Contest, which saw 6 entries of delicious pumpkin pies for judging by Gay Cook (Food writer and Chair of the Bake Sale Committee), Judson Simpson (Executive Chef at the Parliamentary Restaurant), and Jim Watson (who was running for City Mayor at the time of the contest). The Best Tasting Pumpkin Pie winner was Buttercream Bakery.

*"I wish to thank you with all my heart for the much needed help you have given me this Christmas season." — Mary\**

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*Gay Cook, Jim Watson and Judson Simpson judging pies.*

Our thanks to the following sponsors and supporters: TD Canada Trust, Billings Bridge Centre, EMC Ottawa South, McDonough's Your Independent Grocer, and Tim Hortons at Billings Bridge Shopping Centre. Thanks also goes to the following community organizations that participated in the event: Blair Court Community House, Breast Cancer Action Ottawa, Centretown United Church, Daughters of Penelope, Euphrosyne Chapter #292, German Martin Luther Church, Nelson House of Ottawa-Carleton, Orpheus Choral Group, Ottawa Dragon Boat Foundation, Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre, Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, The Ottawa Mission, and The Pavilion Food Bank. And a special thanks also goes to the following bakeries for donating baked goods to sell: Aladdin Bakery, Artistic Cake Design, Buttercream Bakery, Château Fine Pastry and Bakery, Chelsea Bakery, Hamlet Carling Bakery, Isobel & Company, Margo's Homemade Desserts, Morrison's Fudge, Ottawa Bagel

Shop & Deli, Priceless Cake Design, Pasticceria Gelateria Italiana Ltd, Second Avenue Sweets, Sweet Mama's Bake Shoppe, Swiss Pastries, Three Bakers & A Bike, and Three Tarts.

### **Pennies for Portions**

The **16<sup>th</sup> Annual Pennies for Portions** held its kickoff event in early December at Sawmill Creek Elementary School. The overall campaign saw the participation of 6 schools and one private group and raised an overall total of over \$2,800. Our thanks to the following schools and groups: Sawmill Creek Elementary School, York Street Public School, J.H. Putnam Public School, Robert E. Wilson Public School, Lakeview Public School, Manordale Public School, and staff of Health Canada's First Nation's and Inuit Health Branch (Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Dept).



*Pennies for Portions 2010*

**Running on Empties**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Running on Empties event was held on Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 21 Beer Stores in the Ottawa area. Over 80 volunteers, including volunteers from various service clubs and a few City Councillors, were stationed outside Beer Stores to collect donated empty beer, wine, and liquor bottles from customers. The event was a huge success, raising over \$15,900. Thanks goes to all the volunteers, the staff and management at all the participating Beer Stores and to Kevin Leonard, Manager at the Beer Store, Carling Ave location, and Chantal Rock, Manager at the Beer Store, Northside Road location for their support and assistance in organizing the event.



Members of the National Capital Kin Club, with Beer Store patrons

**Third Party Events**

Throughout 2010, individuals, groups, and organizations held their own fundraisers to benefit Christmas Exchange. Some of these third party fundraisers included:

Giant Tiger held a “Round Up” fundraiser from November 20<sup>th</sup> to December 5<sup>th</sup> at all Ottawa-area stores during which customers could round up their purchases to the nearest dollar when paying at the cash. The extra money was then donated to Christmas Exchange. The “Round-Up” fundraiser raised \$3,355 for Christmas Exchange.

Rebecca Stanisic, a past Board member and past President of Christmas Exchange, held a “Shopping and Sweets” fundraiser at the Shenkman Arts Centre on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and raised \$1,000 for Christmas Exchange.

Recycle Frog held three Gold Drive events in December in Kemptville, Stittsville, and the City of



Christmas Exchange volunteer Rod Ferguson with Ottawa City Councillor Maria McRae

## THE CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE

Ottawa offices at 100 Constellation Dr. With the price of gold at an all time high, the events gave people the opportunity to sell their unused and broken gold, silver, and platinum jewellery with a portion of the proceeds being donated to Christmas Exchange. The three Gold Drives generated over \$900 for Christmas Exchange.

Hallmark/Davis Agency once again had the Christmas Exchange donation boxes and Christmas pins in their stores for the month of December, which raised \$2,850.

On December 3rd, the Christmas Cheer Foundation held their annual Christmas Cheer Breakfast at the Westin Ottawa followed by the Christmas Cheer Broadcast on 580 CFRA live from the Rideau Centre, with 25% of the proceeds going to Christmas Exchange.

Craig Dorris, an employee at the Hard Rock Café, approached Christmas Exchange about holding a fundraiser, an Open Mic Night at the Hard Rock Café on December 14<sup>th</sup>. With monies raised from the event, and at the staff Christmas party, Craig donated over \$930 to Christmas Exchange.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed in one way or another to

*"I want to thank you many thanks for the gift...this is the first gift I have received since my arrival in Canada...I felt great in my gift but not the size of happiness of my children when they received your special gifts." — Aisha\**

the Christmas Exchange's fundraising efforts in 2010. Together we reached our goal of helping those in need enjoy a decent meal at Christmas. With the new School Supplies Assistance Program for 2011, we will be increasing our fundraising efforts to also provide school supplies to children from low-income families in the Ottawa area.



*Max Keeping serves at Mother's Day Brunch 2010*

**NOMINATIONS REPORT**

*Submitted by Pete Larocque, Past-President and Chair of Nominations*

As this is my final year on the board of Christmas Exchange, I wish to thank all the Board members I have had the privilege of working with over the past years. Thanks also to the members of the Nominations Committee this year, Doris Ramphos and Marilyn Matheson, who helped review applicant CVs and who met with potential Board candidates.

drive to think outside the box was always refreshing and welcomed and will be missed.

**Helen Byon**, who joined the Board in 2009 and has served on the By-Law and Policy Committee and has been involved in fundraising activities, is leaving the Board to spend time with her first newborn. Her articulated thoughts and contributions will be missed.

**Roy Anderson**, who joined the Board in 2009 and has served on the Finance Committee in addition to being involved in fundraising activities. Roy has always provided thought provoking questions and has been a key contributor to the Board. He will be missed.

I respectfully submit the following names for election to the 2011–2012 Board of Directors:

*“Please don’t waiver in your effort to help the needy in Ottawa...I believe that putting food into the hands of those who, like myself, are sometimes hard pressed to find a decent meal, is going to go a long way to benefit not only the recipients but others in the community as well.” – George\**

Special thanks are due to the following Directors who gave their personal time to serve on the Board and who are now leaving our Board this year:

**Michelle Mulligan**, who has been on the Board since 2007, first as a City of Ottawa representative, and then as an independent Director starting in 2010. She has also served on the Program Committee. Michelle has been central to the Board maintaining a focus on its recipients and while she will be leaving the Board where she will be missed, we are very fortunate to have her continue on with the Program Committee.

**Samer Forzley**, who joined the Board in 2007 and has served in the positions of Board member and Board Secretary on the Executive Committee. Samer will be remembered most for his active role in leading the review of the coordination function analysis and the rebranding move within the organization. Samer’s

**Terms Expiring in 2012**

Thom Bourne

**Terms Expiring in 2013**

Don Curtis  
Catherine Eckenswiller  
Melissa Rusk  
Robert (Bob) Wild

**Terms Expiring in 2014**

Candy Gaudet  
William Johnson  
Miriam Moodley  
Shauna Oakley  
Bisi Olalere  
Doris Ramphos  
Patricia Tessier

## TREASURERS REPORT

*Submitted by Robert Wild, CMA, Treasurer*

Fiscal year 2011 ended on February 28. The year saw a significant strengthening of the financial position of the organization as well as a record number of households and people who were able to receive assistance.

The total amount of money raised increased from \$555K for fiscal 2010 to \$705K for fiscal 2011. The large increase was the result of two new initiatives to raise funds. The Christmas Exchange website allowed donors to contribute \$146K directly to the organization. The sale of the Christmas Exchange copper ornament contributed over \$30K. Both of these initiatives will be counted on in future years. These increases were partially offset by reduced special event revenue.

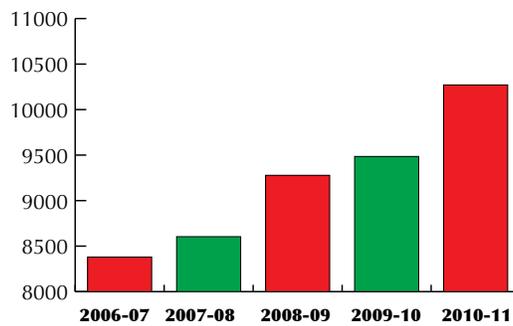
Program Expenses for the Christmas Program and the Coordination Services increased significantly along with the increased funding. The disbursement of funds can be seen in the chart below and it should be noted that our administration and overhead expenses were relatively low at 9%.

The organization provided assistance to 10,271 households in Fiscal year 2011. This number is up from 9,485 the previous year. Further, the amount of assistance provided per household was increased based on the number of people in each household.

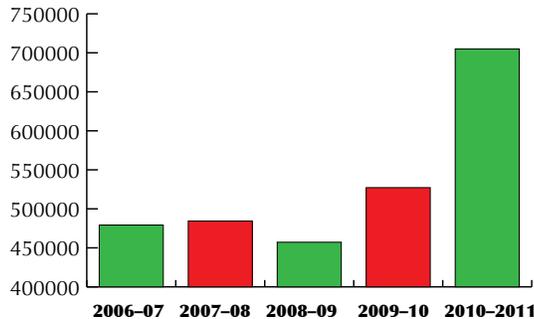
The results of this strong year allowed the organization to increase its reserves for continuing operations to \$140K, recognizing the need to grow the organization to meet the needs of a new program. The Restricted fund set up in Fiscal year 2010 of \$20K was rolled

back into operations. Therefore, there was no net change in total reserves. The organization now enters Fiscal year 2012 with a healthy surplus of \$106K. This surplus provides the organization with the foundation for an effective year in Fiscal year 2012, the ability to embark on a major new program, and the resources to rebrand the organization, making the organization more relevant to this new program.

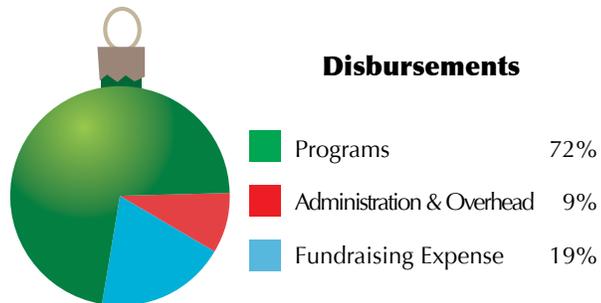
**Households Assisted**



**Total Revenue**



**Disbursements**



**PROGRAM REPORT**

*Submitted by Catherine Latham, Chair, Program Committee*

This past year proved to be nothing short of a miracle when close to \$140,000.00 was donated between December 20th and 25th. The lines were ringing off the hook; our website crashed because people were flooding it with transactions; and our online credit provider couldn't even keep up with the rate of generosity flowing in. As a result, we once again provided help to everyone who applied for assistance. In fact, in contrast to the previous year, we were even able to increase the dollar amount of each redeemable gift certificate we sent out—something that greatly pleased everyone in the office and on the Board of Directors.

*“We are both extremely happy with your generosity and hope one day to help in our way. Merry Christmas to all and thank you.” — Jim and Jean\**

As you can see from the following table, 786 more households were provided with assistance in 2010 than 2009, which is a substantial increase since the difference between 2008 and 2009 was only 207 more households. The total number of people who received assistance also increased, unlike last year. This indicates a rising need in the community for the services that Christmas Exchange provides, especially since we are one of the few organizations that provides seasonal assistance to people living by themselves. The rise in the number of clients seeking assistance is likely due to an increase in living costs caused by such things as higher utility bills, the rising cost of food, and the increasing cost of gas for those who drive to work.

Christmas Exchange	2010-11	2009-10	Change
Total number of people helped directly by the Exchange	25,000	24,393	607
Number of Households	10,271	9,485	786
Number of Seniors	2,901	2,357	495
Total number of Children (under 18 years of age <sup>1</sup> )	11,573	10,414	1,159
Number of duplicates found for food assistance	2,350	2,406	-56
Community savings from processing duplicates <sup>2</sup>	\$235,000	\$240,600	-\$5,600
Toy Centre	2010-11	2009-10	Change
Number of Children referred to the Toy Centre	12,035	11,031	1,004
Number of duplicate children found for toy assistance	2,411	3,316	-905
Community savings from processing duplicates <sup>3</sup>	\$361,650	\$497,400	-\$135,750
Total Community savings processing duplicates for food and toys	\$596,650	\$738,000	-\$141,750
Number of Households helped by other organizations	3,398	3,225	173

1. This does not include parents under 18 years of age.
2. Based on the average gift to families of \$100 from a 2009 survey of agencies.
3. Based on the average gift of \$150 per child.

**Christmas Assistance Program**

This year over 10,000 redeemable Giant Tiger gift certificates were mailed to our clients, and 250 hampers were delivered. Each hamper consisted of the following items:

- 14 oz can peas or beans
- 14 oz can corn
- 1 can cranberries
- 1 Box stuffing
- Package or can of instant coffee
- Package of 36 tea bags
- Can of hot chocolate
- Package of chocolate
- Fruitcake cake
- 1 lb butter
- can of apple juice
- 2 lb bag of carrots
- 5 lb bag of potatoes
- 2 lb bag of onions
- Fruit (a bag of apples or oranges)
- 1 loaf of bread
- 1 litre of milk
- 1 box biscuit mix

In addition, small hampers for 1 and 2 people contained a chicken; medium hampers for 3 to 5 people contained an 18 to 22 lb turkey; larger hampers for 6 or more people contained a turkey and chicken, an extra loaf of bread, an extra litre of milk, and a 5 lb bag of rice. All hampers with a turkey contained a foil turkey pan as well.

We would like to extend our thanks to Century Public School in Nepean, who once again allowed us to make use of their facilities to pack hampers. Thanks also goes to Paul Beddoes, who organized an efficient and energetic hamper-packing team; to Staples, who provided the boxes we used to pack the food; and to Sue Goddard, who once again spent hours coordinating the delivery routes. And finally, thank you very much to all those involved with the hamper delivery process, from those who made phone calls to recipients, to those who loaded their personal vehicles with boxes of food for delivery.

Your efforts were much appreciated.

### **New School Supplies Assistance Program**

For the past few years, many of the over 300 agencies with whom we work during the Christmas season have asked us to consider using our Coordination Service for school supplies. So, in 2010 we formed a partnership with Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa (CAYFO) and the Ottawa Food Bank to start the process of coordinating the distribution of school supplies to underprivileged children in Ottawa. That year, over 5,000 applications for supplies were received. While supplies were provided through CAYFO to approximately 3,000 children, 2,000 children did without.

The Program Committee therefore recommended to the Board of Directors of Christmas Exchange that consideration be given to the development of a new program that would provide direct assistance to low-income families for school supplies. The Board has agreed to incorporate this new program, however, minor changes had to be made to our charitable purposes in order to indicate that assistance is now being provided during seasons other than just the Christmas season. A re-branding of the organization has also been undertaken so that the charity will no longer be seen solely as a Christmas charity.

For the past year, we have been working closely with the School Supply Working Group (SSWG), chaired by the Social Planning Council, in order to develop more efficient and effective ways of providing essential school supplies to those in need. This year marks the start of what will hopefully become a long and successful history of ensuring that all underprivileged Ottawa children receive the tools they need to succeed in school.

**VOLUNTEER REPORT**

*Submitted by Sui-Ling Leung,  
Director of Development and Volunteer Services*

Volunteers are invaluable to Christmas Exchange and without them we wouldn't be able to carry out our mission. In 2010, over 1,700 hours were contributed by over 200 volunteers who did everything from committee work, envelope stuffing, data entry, Toy Centre phone calls, and general office administration, to helping at special events, and packing and delivering food hampers.

The busiest volunteer activities took place in the month of December. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Exchange participated in Community Action Day organized by Volunteer Ottawa and United Way Ottawa. This day provided companies with an opportunity to volunteer at various non-profit organizations throughout the city. Two different groups helped at the Christmas Exchange office. One group of 5 volunteers was from the Pepsi Company who, being call centre representatives already, were perfectly matched for doing the Toy Centre phone calls to confirm appointments for toy pick-up at the Salvation Army Toy Centre. A second group of 6



*Christmas Cheer Broadcast 2010 Volunteers.*

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Ottawa Convention Centre provided 23 members of their staff to volunteer for a couple of hours at the Christmas Exchange office. This marked the most volunteers we've ever had in our office at one time. Being in a small office, we had to think fast as to where we could put all these eager and willing volunteers. Spacing was a bit tight but we managed to have everyone in helping with envelope stuffing as well as making Toy Centre phone calls.

Hamper packing and delivery of food hampers took place on December 22<sup>nd</sup> with 125 volunteers. Fifty teams of two people each were responsible for the delivery of our 250 hampers throughout the city, and close to 25 volunteers were stationed at Century Public School in Nepean to pack the hampers. Many of the hamper delivery volunteers have been doing it for a number of years and deemed it as an annual tradition, but we did have a few new volunteers help out this year.

*“When I received your letter, I was so happy because I knew I would have lots of food to eat. Thank you very much for making a gift like you sent me.” – Lynn\**

volunteers came from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. They helped with preparing our redeemable gift certificates that were then mailed to our recipients. December 7<sup>th</sup> was certainly a very busy day in the office, but everyone had a great time knowing that they contributed in some way to helping a worthy cause.

## THE CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE

Our thanks goes to all 200+ volunteers for sharing their time, expertise, kindness, and warm hearts with those less fortunate during the Christmas season. We would also like to thank Peter Mellen who volunteered endless hours doing Toy Centre phone calls, taking donations over the phone, delivering and picking up signage for our *Running on Empties* event, and helping with hamper packing and deliveries. Peter was always willing to help when we needed it. He even donated some gently used office furniture to replace some of our older furniture.

In closing, I would like to include a story from one of our volunteers, Sarah Fodey. Sarah is V.P. and Senior Producer at inMotion, a video and film production company in Ottawa. Sarah started volunteering with the Christmas Exchange in 2007 with hamper deliveries and still continues to do so each December. This story is about a touching experience she had while delivering Hampers, which inspired her to produce an online public service announcement to generate awareness and donations for Christmas Exchange. This video can be seen on the Christmas Exchange website ([www.christmas-exchange.com](http://www.christmas-exchange.com)) and on YouTube.

We thank Sarah most graciously for her volunteer work with Christmas Exchange, for the PSA she produced for us, and for sharing her hamper delivery experience. In her own words, here is Sarah's volunteer story...

**"Please don't judge me."**

**Four small words that ended up having a very large impact on my life.**

**It was right before Christmas, five years ago. I**

**was feeling sorry for myself — newly separated, overworked, stressed out from running a small company. A good friend of mine mentioned in passing that she was looking forward to delivering food on behalf of The Christmas Exchange. My curiosity was sparked, as was my selfish desire to try to boost my own flagging morale by doing something nice for strangers.**

**I remember arriving at the pick-up location and being impressed with what appeared to be such organized chaos. Warm (well, slightly frozen) bodies everywhere, maneuvering supplies into cardboard boxes and hefting them to waiting delivery vehicles. They were the faces of dedicated enthusiasm. Not a melancholic soul among them. From those first seconds, my delivery partner and I were welcomed into this wonderful family. A family of virtual**



*Volunteers pack Hampers in the Century Public School gym.*

strangers, united in our desire to help deliver a Christmas meal to those who would otherwise go without. I forgot about my own morose wish list and was gratefully drawn into the important task.

With my SUV loaded and holiday music and a city map in hand, we set off. The first delivery was to a townhome in the city's southwest end. The walk hadn't been shoveled and it seemed to take an inordinate amount of time for someone to answer our knocks. But then the door slowly opened, revealing a small boy of around six or seven. He was very quiet and wary of us as he asked, "Are you the food people?"

We looked at each other, looked down at his meager frame and watchful eyes, and said yes.

There was no one home at our next delivery stop. We would try again later.

It was the third home that changed me as a person, and as a citizen of my Ottawa community. It was a small house in a badly neglected neighbourhood. At this address, we didn't even have to knock. They were waiting for us.

We walked up the steps and the door was flung open, presenting an excited young boy wearing pajamas and clutching a toy in his hand. "Mom, they're here!" he yelled as he scampered away from us down the hall. We entered the home and took off our outdoor shoes, offering to carry the heavy box and the turkey into the kitchen. The boy's Mom, the only adult of the household, appeared. Though beautiful with large, brown eyes and milky skin, her hair was unkempt and her nervousness spoke of a woman very unsure of herself. As we were putting the food on her counter, she turned to a little girl who was sitting on the stairs, hiding her face in her hands, and said, "I told you they would come." The little girl didn't even react. The Mom looked back at us and told us how she had been telling her four children that magical people were going to arrive with free food and milk for them. She told them we were sent by Santa. The little girl looked at me and asked if Santa brought chocolate too. I was relieved to be able to say, "Yes, of course he did."

When we walked back to the door to put on our boots, the woman reached out and pulled me into the nicest embrace I had had in months. When we each pulled back and locked eyes she said in a



*Rotarians John van Noort and Rob Scaife with Brianne Whitecross, filling in for her mother Brig. Gen. Whitecross who is currently serving in Afghanistan.*

## THE CHRISTMAS EXCHANGE

whispered plea “Please don’t judge me.”

That’s all that needed to be said. She didn’t need to explain that her husband had left them or that she never had a chance at schooling or that she was trapped in a cyclical pattern of poverty. Those four words said it all and the visual look that accompanied those words told me everything that I needed to know. The look that let me know that she hadn’t always been poor; that she hadn’t always been raising four children on her own; and that she had definitely enjoyed making her own turkey dinners in the past, with food she had paid for.

“I’d never judge you.”

Four words back, with two more barely manageable before my own tears fell: “Merry Christmas.”

I walked back to my warm SUV, staring down at my boots that were probably more expensive than the cost to fill one hamper. I knew in that instant that I had to do more, be more, have more of a place in my community than I ever had before.

I am incredibly grateful to The Christmas Exchange for everything they do for members of our community, and feel so fortunate that our company was able to help them in some small way by producing a fundraising and awareness video for them. It is the first of what we hope will be many extensions of support from our work family to theirs.

And to that young mother: thank you for making me a better person.

Sarah Fodey  
Proud Hamper Volunteer & VP at inMotion

*“This year, with your generosity, I was proud to be able to give a little something to the people I love.” — Rita\**



*Volunteers cradling turkeys destined to grace the dinner tables of needy families in the Ottawa area.*

*« Sincère remerciement de votre aide. J’ai passé un très beau Noël avec une de mes filles et mes deux petits fils. Merci de l’aide. » — Julie\**

**CORPORATE, COMMUNITY AND MEDIA SUPPORT 2010-2011**

We would like to give our many thanks to the following organizations for their invaluable support and contributions. Without their help, Christmas Exchange could not have achieved what we did over the past year.

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*(We apologize to any organization whose name was left out in error or misspelled)*



*the* Christmas Exchange



*le* Partage de Noël

*People helping people since 1915.*

*L'aide et l'entraide depuis 1915.*