



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec 14, 2021

URGENT APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

Over 20,000 individuals from over 6,500 households turn to the Christmas Exchange for help!

OTTAWA, ON – There are just 11 days until Christmas, **but there are still 310 households in Ottawa** who are waiting to hear if the Caring and Sharing Exchange can provide them with a warm meal for Christmas. With support from the generous people of Ottawa, we don't think they will need to wait much longer!

Through the 106-year-old Christmas Exchange 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 healthy and festive meal, leaving them with a sense of dignity and hope for the new year.

We have all faced challenges in the face of the pandemic, but it has been exceptionally hard on families who were already struggling to make ends meet. For families who have lost income or seniors who have been living in isolation, being able to shop for food or having money to purchase all the fixings for a Christmas dinner is a privilege they cannot afford. **This year, the Caring and Sharing Exchange received applications from over 6,500 households requesting food assistance over the holidays, as of today 310 households are still on their waitlist to receive help.**

“The amount of people turning to us this year has been overwhelming.” says Cindy Smith, Executive Director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange. “With the support of our generous community here in Ottawa, we really hope to meet that need. There is no greater gift for us than knowing every person on our list will have the means to celebrate the holidays with the ones they love.”

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. In partnership with Giant Tiger, they also offer gift vouchers to 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 items that suit the needs of their family.

“Many of us take a homemade meal on Christmas for granted, but for many families it is a luxury,” says Cindy. “We are reaching out to the generous members of Ottawa today to request donations so that we can eliminate our waiting list all together. Every dollar counts and will put us one step closer to ensuring not one person on our list goes hungry over the holidays.”

Those interested in donating can do so by visiting www.CaringandSharing.ca.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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