



## History of the Caring and Sharing Exchange

### ***How the Exchange got its name***

The Ottawa Welfare Bureau (OWB) created in 1914 set up a **Confidential Index**, later called the **Social Services Exchange**, to **coordinate** relief to families affected by the First World War. In 1915 this included a master list for Christmas aid, described by the OWB as “a Christmas Exchange for the use of all charitable organizations and individuals in the city.” The purpose of the Christmas Exchange was to coordinate distribution of food and gifts by churches and other community groups, through crosschecking names on their respective lists and notifying them of duplications.

In 2011 the Christmas Exchange took on the challenge of providing assistance to low-income families for school supplies. However, it was difficult to raise funds for school supplies under the name ‘Christmas Exchange’. Therefore the organization was re-branded as the Caring and Sharing Exchange, under which for run the Christmas Exchange Program, Sharing in Student Success, and the Coordination Service.

### ***The Coordination Service***

In 1915, 62 letters were sent to churches, service clubs and societies asking them for a list of families they propose to help during the Christmas season. In response 552 families names were received, of which 138 prove to be duplicates. This proved the value of the Coordination Service, which continues today.

Today Coordination Service coordinates the Christmas and school supplies assistance programs in the city, as well as coordinating the Toy Centre (Toy Mountain) program application for Salvation Army.

### ***When the Exchange began giving gift certificates***

The Second World War and the beginning of food rationing put a temporary end to the distribution of hampers during the Christmas season, so in 1943, the Exchange gave out gift certificates for the first time to 634 families.

### ***Becoming an Independent Charity***

In the 1930's the City of Ottawa began to provide social assistance, so there was no longer a need for the Ottawa Welfare Bureau. The Christmas Exchange together with the Social Service Exchange, was transferred to the fledgling Ottawa Council of Social Agencies, which is known today as the Social Planning Council.

During the last 1969's and early 1970's it became increasingly clear that the Social Planning Council could not continue to carry the administrative burden of the annual campaign so on September 19, 1974 the Christmas Exchange was incorporated as an independent charity.