



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec 14, 2020

URGENT APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

Only 202 families are still waiting to for assistance this Christmas!

OTTAWA, ON – There are just 7 days until Christmas Eve, **but there are still 202 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 105-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 this year 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 almost 20,000 individuals requesting food assistance over the holidays, and only 202 households are on their waitlist to receive service.**

"The impact that Covid-19 has had on our community's citizens is clear," says Cindy, Executive Director of the Caring and Sharing Exchange. "There has been an 11% increase this year in requests for Christmas food assistance but we have also lost crucial funding due to the cancellation of some of our major fundraising events. We are so close to being able to help the families on our waitlist who are still looking for food assistance. This is the most wonderful time of year, and while we may be celebrating differently in 2020, we still believe everyone should have a festive meal to enjoy in their homes on Christmas day."

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:

Leslie O'Sullivan, Communications Coordinator, the Caring and Sharing Exchange

c: 705-760-0616 e: communications@caringsharing.ca