



December 10, 2020

Barrhaven Food Cupboard Newsletter #2020/04

To all the members and volunteers of the Barrhaven Food Cupboard, best wishes for the Holiday Season. We have had a busy Fall since our Annual General Meeting in September and I would like to bring you up to date on a number of areas.

Director of Operations

Before he left the BFC, our former Director of Operations, David Swol, participated in a thorough period of transition with our new Director, Desa Grivas. Desa has been a volunteer with the BFC so is familiar with the organization. Even so, she has had a steep learning curve to assimilate, but is now quite comfortable in the position. Additionally, we have established the position of deputy for her to share some of the operations load – Olga Oleinikova. Together they will carry on the very important role of supervising BFC operations, which includes arranging appointments, dispensing food to clients, delivering food, sorting and stocking, shopping, and coordinating school food drives. They are supported by many, many dedicated volunteers, all of whom contribute to serving our clients.

COVID-19 Issues

We continue to carefully follow COVID-19 restrictions to ensure that our volunteers and clients are as safe as possible. This includes limiting the number of people in the facility, ensuring that only one client at a time is allowed in, and wearing masks and maintaining social distancing throughout. We have restarted collecting food donations from grocery stores and several schools have already conducted food drives this Fall. Some businesses and other organizations are also providing support in the form of food and/or monetary donations. This has reduced somewhat the need to purchase non-perishable items, but we will always have to purchase the majority of perishable food that we provide. To this end, we have some designated shoppers that focus on one store or one type of food to ensure that we have sufficient inventory to meet the weekly demand.

Although we haven't seen a dramatic increase in food orders in 2020 compared to 2019, it has been evident and steady, generally on the order of 10%. Throughout, the generosity of Barrhaven schools, businesses, churches, and individuals continues to be most gratifying. We really appreciate everyone who contributes to our ability to fulfill our mission.

Christmas Hamper Program

This most successful undertaking helps to augment food during the holiday season, whether you celebrate Christmas or not. In 2019, we assembled 198 hampers (two banana boxes of food each) and delivered them to individuals and families who registered with us. This year we are unable to meet the logistic requirements to put the hampers together. We simply could not have the required number of people together in a confined space to unload food, set it up for an assembly line, and put the hampers together for dispatch. Accordingly, we have had to resort to substituting PC gift cards which are being distributed to those requesting assistance. This is not ideal, but at least we will ensure that those in need have the wherewithal to have enough for a holiday dinner and more.

Donations for our Christmas Hamper program have been pretty robust in the past. Financial support this year will be more important than ever, given the need to purchase the gift cards and the anticipated demand which now numbers 297 requests! Some of our supporters choose to donate \$125, which is the established value of a Christmas hamper, or multiples thereof, but we are happy to accept any amount of course.

Volunteers. We are always on the lookout for volunteers to help in the facility, transport donations, do deliveries, etc. on an on-going basis or for special events. If you are interested in helping, please contact our Director for Volunteers, Aaron Lemieux at lemieux-aaron@live.com.

Peter Oegema. Peter was Director of Operations for several years before transitioning to be Head Dispatcher earlier this year. He has recently indicated his decision to resign from this position. We will miss Peter but want to wish him the very best in the future. He has been the anchorman for the BFC for years and has more corporate memory than any of us. His tireless dedication to food security issues has been extraordinary and we thank Peter for everything he has done for us over a very long period of time. Many will know that Peter also supervises operations for the community garden on the Barrhaven United Church property. He will continue to do this, to include a number of plots that are dedicated to supply produce to the BFC. Best wishes Peter!

Ross' Independent Grocer. Kelly Ross, the Independent owner and manager, is retiring at the end of December. Board members presented her with a certificate of appreciation in recognition for all the assistance she has provided over the years. Ken Ross was, of course, the first President of the BFC and Kelly has carried on his vision of helping those challenged by food security. We are truly grateful to Kelly and her staff for all that they do for us and look forward to a similar arrangement with the new management.

Sobeys. Another store which has been very supportive of the BFC is Sobeys, now closed. We are very appreciative of the dedicated efforts of Chris Kimball and the Sobeys staff. To a person, they were always very cooperative and ready to "go the extra mile" for us.

Social Media

We depend very heavily on multiple forms of social media to get our messages out in the community and to say thank you for the community support. I encourage you to monitor our posts and join our social media family so we can keep you up-to-date on what is happening with the BFC. Here are the coordinates for reference:

Website: www.barrhavenfoodcupboard.ca

Facebook: @barrhavenfoodcupboard

Twitter: @barrhavenfood

Instagram: Barrhaven_food_cupboard

Check out the many entries of initiatives taken by the Barrhaven community to support the BFC. These are living evidence of what the BFC is all about -- NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS!

George Macdonald

President@barrhavenfoodcupboard.ca

President