



September 20, 2020

## **Barrhaven Food Cupboard Newsletter #2020/03**

Quite a bit has happened since the last newsletter in May, so it is appropriate to bring everyone up to date on activities at the Barrhaven Food Cupboard. I write this having just been named President at the recently held Annual General Meeting.

### **Annual General Meeting**

The AGM was held at the Barrhaven Legion Branch 641 on Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. It was delayed from the originally planned date in June due to COVID-19 issues. It followed a standard format and agenda focusing on reports from directors and the election of new board members. The annual report is attached to this email for those who wish to review it in more detail.

### **BFC Board Members**

Throughout the year, the Board appointed several members to address vacancies for eventual confirmation at the AGM. With some positions becoming vacant as well, this resulted in a number of changes. The new board members, as of the AGM, is shown below:

President – George Macdonald (formerly Vice-President)

Vice President – Janet McCausland (formerly Director-at-Large)

Secretary – Shannon Van Luven (confirmed in position)

Treasurer – John Falkingham

Director of Volunteers – Aaron Lemieux (formerly Director-at-Large)

Director of Community Liaison and Fundraising – Ross Fetterly

Director of Operations – vacant (currently held by David Swol until the end of September)

Director of Communications – Harpreet Singh (confirmed in position)

Director-at-Large – Alain Latula (confirmed in position)

Director-at-Large – Gord Crumpler (elected)

Past President – Kevin Miller (ex-officio)

Community Advisor – Dave Humphries (non-voting position)

We have a strong team of dedicated individuals who are committed to helping those challenged by food security in Barrhaven. Many thanks to Kevin Miller for his leadership during his time as President, his involvement before that in other positions, and his acceptance to remain on the board as Past-President. Kevin's predecessor, Dave Sereda, took over the position with the untimely passing of Ken Ross and has served the BFC through some challenging times. He has been instrumental in our move to the Walter Baker Centre facility, and the dramatic evolution that has been so enabled.

Also, many thanks to Michele Morris for her work as Director of Volunteers and to David Swol who has filled in as Director of Operations for several months. They have both been of invaluable assistance during the "new-normal" precipitated by the pandemic. Finally, a very heartfelt thanks to Peter Oegema, who has been our Director of Operations for many years and continues to volunteer with the BFC. Peter has devoted countless hours to food security in Barrhaven and has been the well-known "face" of the BFC for many years.

### **Director of Operations**

Clearly, one of our top priorities is to find a new Director of Operations. This is an important position which has been quite time-consuming in the past. We are currently working hard to share the duties with other volunteers to ensure that the duties are manageable. While we have had discussions with a few potential candidates, we are still actively seeking someone to take on this supervisory position. If you are interested, or know of someone who might be interested, please contact me so we can explore the possibility.

### **COVID-19 Issues**

With the risk of infection at the facility, we initially adopted an approach where food orders were pre-assembled for clients to come at their appointed time and pick them up. Now, with strict protocols in place, clients are allowed into the facility part way to be able to indicate their food choices and preferences to a volunteer who loads the order into a cart for the client. This process is a good compromise between clients simply getting what we think is best and physically choosing it themselves. Throughout, everyone must wear a mask, use hand sanitizer, and respect social distancing.

We continue to review the suspension of food donations at local grocery stores, which was implemented to minimize the amount of time that volunteers have to spend sorting items at the facility and dealing with the possible risk of transmission by the items themselves. We have received some donations of food, but the vast majority of the support over the past six months has been through financial aid. We have been totally overwhelmed by the generosity of Barrhaven schools, businesses, and residents during the pandemic period. This additional funding has allowed us to offset the cessation of food donations with the purchase of food from local grocery stores. This has presented a logistical challenge to move the food to our facility but Dave Swol has done an incredible job of inventory management and procurement. As such, we have been able to keep up with orders, which have increased by about 17% over last year. Additionally, we have expanded the range of items available to include dairy products and more fresh produce. To do this, we have expanded the refrigerator capacity in the storage area.

Overall, we continue to provide a great selection of food by the 350 families that come to us regularly for assistance.

### **Operations**

As indicated in the last newsletter, we have continued to assist in the distribution of food in response to a request from the Ottawa Network for Education's (ONFE) School Breakfast Program. With the reopening of schools, this arrangement with us has now ended. We are approached from time to time, however, to cooperatively partner with other organizations in distributing food and will continue to evaluate such proposals in the future.

We are also very aware of the key role that our Director of Operations plays in the overall process of procuring, sorting, storing and distributing food. As indicated above, with the changeover in the position, we are looking at ways to share this workload to the extent that we can with other volunteers to ensure that no one person is burdened beyond what can be considered a reasonable commitment of time and effort. Also, we want to ensure that there is some redundancy in the system so we have the ability to continue operations even if key people are unavailable at times.

### **Community Garden**

The BFC has several plots in the community garden located on the property of the Barrhaven United Church. We have recently approved to expand this operation, ideally by putting additional plots in place for planting next Spring. Obviously, the garden requires a number of volunteers so if you have an interest in helping out, please contact us as [info@barrhavenfoodcupboard.ca](mailto:info@barrhavenfoodcupboard.ca).

### **Social Media**

This is a very important tool to get our messages out in the community and to say thank you for the community support. I encourage you to 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](http://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

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President

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