

The Edge

Mission Services of Hamilton

Winter 2021

Since 1956

The Power of Good Food

How your gifts help our neighbours
find hope through good food, even
during a pandemic.

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The Power of Good Food

Food is the great connector, and at Mission Services, it's been an integral part of supporting our neighbours in need during the pandemic.

“The quote ‘no one should have to choose between food and rent’ has never been more evident than now, as we continue to navigate through the pandemic,” says Susan Smith, Director of Food Services.

Many people have lost their jobs and found themselves newly without income. School-aged children who would normally participate in meal and snack programs are staying home. These are just some of the factors increasing food needs in our community.

Our Good Food Centre saw a 25% increase in individuals accessing emergency food assistance in 2020

Despite all this, food continues to be a vital part of our programs, bringing our neighbours together, even when we have to stay apart.

In order to enhance staff and community safety and assist with food insecurity our Good Food Centre (GFC) has increased distribution to ten days worth of food. This

allows individuals to safely remain at home for longer periods of time.

Many families are greatly appreciative of the amount of food we're able to provide them, with one family exclaiming ***“there's more!?”*** when staff brought out their groceries.

Marginally housed women look forward to coming to Willow's Place to pick up their meals-to-go. It gives them a chance to engage with our support workers and still feel like a part of our community.

“My mobility and health have made getting around to haul groceries very difficult for me at times. It is so nice to know there is a hot, nutritious meal available at Willow's when you're short on money for healthy food. This is something I look forward to. I cannot wait to dine in community again, but for now I am happy with my take-out meal. I hope that the chef keeps up the great work and keeps providing us with delicious, wholesome meals!” - D.C.

Our 196 Program Coordinator does weekly drop-offs of snacks and meal ingredients to support youth who cannot access meal programs. The families often tell our Coordinator how the packs are making a difference in their home. *“We love the snack packs. We get stuff that I don’t normally buy due to finances. My kids can try new things and the food activities are always a hit. My kids are always asking ‘what do we get to do today?’”*

And as always, Food Services continues to provide emergency food hampers to women leaving Inasmuch House as well as individuals securing housing through our Housing Up! Program. This makes food one less thing they need to worry about while they settle into their new homes.

Over the last year, 1,500 new families have accessed the Good Food Centre.



“Providing food to our community means less financial and emotional drain on people who are already experiencing other negative effects of the pandemic. For those at our shelters and Willow’s Place, having access to good food reduces their anxiety, allowing them to focus on meeting other needs,” says Susan Smith.

It is important, now more than ever, that we do what we can to keep our community fed and safe.

As the pandemic persists, the need at the GFC continues to grow, and we know there will be longer lines for food than ever before. You can ensure our neighbours have access to good food! Please host a food drive or give generously today at: mission-services.com/donate





Mission Services During COVID-19

Willow's Place windows with encouraging signs



Willow's staff with a to-go meal

Another lockdown, emergency orders and record number of cases in Ontario have meant many closures once again. Luckily, thanks to donors like you, this lockdown has not changed Mission Services' ability to help our neighbours. With Plexiglass partitions, plenty of PPE, increased staffing and some rearranging, we have been able to maintain our level of service, just with some new approaches.

The Addictions Services team continues to provide all of the services that had been offered in person, just modified. In fact, many positives have been reported about running the programs by phone and virtually. Distance and transportation are no longer a barrier for those wanting to access our programs and flexible appointments provide more opportunities to work around client schedules. Many clients have also identified that they feel by offering our program one-to-one, rather than in a group setting, we're able to customize the program to their individual needs.

Willow's Place has been able to connect, advocate and focus their time on the unhoused

women who access our space. We have worked more collaboratively with other Hamilton-based agencies and the pandemic has highlighted the need for supports for unhoused women.

In addition to the shelter on James Street, our Men's Services team has also been running a 100-bed shelter at a Hamilton hotel – now the largest shelter in the city.

Cold weather and pandemic restrictions highlight the need to find solutions to homelessness in our city. At our Men's Shelter we have implemented and demonstrated the effectiveness of a housing-focused sheltering model and now our efforts are being recognized! In early February, Shawn MacKeigan, our Director of Men's Services, spoke as an expert on housing-focused shelters – along with Calgary Drop-in and Montreal's Old Brewery Mission – at a virtual conference hosted by the Canadian Shelter Transformation Network. We're very proud of our Men's Services team for being leaders in homelessness sheltering services in Canada.

Thank You

***To our friends at the Shelter Health Network!
Your responsiveness and dedication has helped keep our staff
and community members safe and healthy.***



In Our Community

Thank you to **North Star Technical, Calvin Christian School, Dundas Valley Secondary School, Compass Community Health, North Point Financial, Shopper's Drug Mart Meadowlands, Mulberry Wellness, To Gift Lists, McMaster Men's Health Society, Synonym Coffee Shop, Farmway Foods** and **Sherwood Secondary School** for hosting food and hygiene drives.

Mohawk Women's Basketball Team, and Project Outreach GTA provided gift baskets and Christmas gifts for the women and children at Inasmuch House. We also thank those who responded to our call, donating Christmas trees, lights, and cookie decorating kits.

We thank **Urban Barn, Paramount Pharmasave, Our Lady of Assumption Catholic School, Columbia International College, Christ Latvian Lutheran Church, Toques from the Heart, Dundas Rotary Club** and **Needleworks** for donating winter gear to keep our neighbours warm.

Offord Center for Child Studies and many individuals supported Willow's Place this Holiday season with care packages, food, toiletries and winter gear.

Hart Department Store continued their annual tradition of contributing gifts for our toy room.

Elevation Church dropped off cleaning supplies and laundry detergent to distribute at the Good Food Centre.

Hamilton Shoebox Project donated many wonderful gift cards.

Hamilton-based shops, **Lulu and Lavigne Home Studio** and **VintageSoulGeek**, donated a portion of their December sales to Mission Services.

Thank you to our community partners who generously supported us through financial donations: **Mohawk College, Hamilton Health Sciences, Your Little Bit of Help, Desjardins, City of Hamilton Compliance and Regulations, Correctional Services Recruitment and Training Centre, and Ancaster Laser.**

Our sincere gratitude to **all the participants of our 2020 Sponsor a Family Program!** Whether you dropped gifts off in person or supported the program with an online monetary donation, you provided a Christmas filled with hope to families in need.

THANK YOU to everyone - individuals, families, organizations - who gave this Christmas. Your generosity gave hope to our community!

Thank you! If you, your family, friends, or business want more information about holding an event or running a drive for Mission Services, please contact communityrelations@mission-services.com

More Than a Meal

FOOD, as I have said before, is thought to be the great connector. At Mission Services, one of the phrases we use is “more than a meal”; when people come to our programs they often first receive food, then get connected to staff, vital supports, and other services.

That “more” has changed since the onset of the pandemic. Sometimes changing daily as we work through closures, restrictions, and safe distancing measures. Many of our neighbours are unable to access other vital programs in Hamilton, so we want to be sure we’re providing as much support as we can.

The pandemic has caused disparities to deepen, and has brought to light the many crises that are affecting thousands of Hamiltonians. We are here, supporting those experiencing new or ongoing addiction, food insecurity, homelessness, poverty, and more, but we can’t do it without you.

We know you see the need, and are so thankful for the swell of support we have received during this

pandemic through food and gift drop-offs, monetary donations, and encouragement.

Your amazing support has helped us transition to the world we currently live in, but we still expect to see more and more people accessing our programs as the effects of COVID-19 continue to devastate our neighbours.

In order to continue helping our community, we need people to come together while we’re all apart. We want to reduce the disparities we see in our city and in order to do that, we need **you**.

You can help those who have been hit the hardest by the effects of COVID-19 by giving today.

Always Grateful,

Carol Cowan-Morneau



Carol Cowan-Morneau
Executive Director

YOUR Gifts at WORK

November - January

 **19,494**

Meals Served

 **4,054**

Food Assistance
Packs

 **79**

NEW Women
Accessed Willow's
Place

 **491**

Men and Women
Sheltered

 **471**

Men and Women in
Addiction Treatment

No one should have to choose between
FOOD & RENT

To support Mission Services, call 1-877-542-2732 ext. 2222, donate online at mission-services.com/donate, donate with online banking (RBC, BMO and Central 1 customers), or on site with debit/credit card machine.

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