

The Christmas Exchange – Backgrounder 2010

People Helping People

The Christmas Exchange is a local Ottawa charity that has been providing food and hope to those in a time of need during the holiday season since 1915.

Our Mission is:

To enhance the lives of families and individuals in the Ottawa area by providing assistance to those verifiably in a time of need, primarily during the Christmas Season.

Our Values are:

- Deliver our services with fairness, respect and in a way that safeguards dignity;
- Provide our services as effectively as possible;
- Being accountable to our clients, beneficiaries, donors, and the public.

How do we know who needs help?

Over 300 community organizations, such as, schools, daycares, churches, food banks, and social service agencies that know of the need first hand, refer families and individuals to the Christmas Exchange. Our goal is to never turn anyone away.

How do we avoid duplication?

The Exchange operates a Centralized Database (funded in part by the United Way) to cross-reference the names of those referred. The other organizations that also provide help make use of this registry to avoid duplication, ensuring that every dollar goes where it is truly needed.

Where does the money come from?

The money for food assistance comes from the generosity and compassion of thousands of individuals and businesses in our community and from special events.

Three Year Comparative Results

	2009	2008	2007
Total number of people helped directly by the Exchange	24,393	25,180	23,793
Number of households	9,485	9,278	8,604
Number of seniors	2,357	2,198	1,883
Total number of children	10,414	11,278	10,967
Number of children (12 and under) referred to the Salvation Army Toy Centre	11,031	11,702	11,305
Number of duplicates found	2,406	2,357	2,539
Community savings from processing duplicates	\$240,600	\$235,700	\$190,425

What some beneficiaries have told us:

- *"I am writing this letter to say thank you to you and those who help us when we are in trouble... We used the [food voucher] to buy some food that was on sale. I hope that someday we can also have the ability to help those who are in trouble as we are now".*
- *"Thank you. I am a senior citizen with a small income so I appreciate the help for Christmas. It will help buy Christmas Food. Thanks again."*
- *"Both my husband and I lost our jobs just before Christmas and were very relieved to learn about the Christmas Exchange."*
- *"I like to take this time to Thank You to the people who helped me this Holiday Season. May God Bless you all. I appreciate the time taken to help people in need during this time of the year. Again, Thank You."*