

## MEDIA RELEASE

### URGENT APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

**Over 15,000 individuals have been helped, but a 23% increase in need means 4,155 are still waiting for assistance!**

Thursday, December 8, 2016 — After years of creating holiday memories with our loved ones, the scent of a Christmas meal cooking in a home has the power to bring us back to some of our first holiday seasons with our families. Coming in from the cold to the smell of a turkey roasting in the oven is something that nearly all of us experienced during the winters of our childhood.

Imagine being a parent and not being able to provide your children with these memories that you yourself hold near and dear to your heart. There are thousands of families across Ottawa who will not have the opportunity to share a warm holiday meal with their loved ones were it not for the support of the Christmas Exchange Program.

The Caring and Sharing Exchange is working hard to provide assistance to the nearly 20,000 individuals who have turned to them for help this holiday season. With Christmas just a couple of weeks away, the Exchange is proud to say that 15,511 people on their list will definitely be receiving assistance this year.

“Last year we were able to help every single person on our list, which was a grand total of 16,012 people,” said Cindy Smith, Executive Director of the Exchange. “This year we are already in a position to once again help very close to that number, but due to a 23% increase in demand we are still facing a large waiting list.”

**As of now the organization has a waiting list of 4,155 individuals, which is almost a thousand more than at the same time last year.** The charity had anticipated an increase in demand, but had not expected such a drastic jump in requests.

“We knew that our list would likely grow due to the cost of living increasing, particularly in reference to hydro costs, however we did not expect an increase of this size,” said Smith. “Despite this, we still feel that with the support of our community we can once again help every single person on our list enjoy a festive meal with their loved ones this Christmas.”

To make a monetary donation to the Christmas Exchange Program, please visit [www.CaringandSharing.ca](http://www.CaringandSharing.ca) or call 613-226-6434.

#### **Sponsor a hamper and you can deliver Christmas directly to a family in need!**

Now in its fourth year, the Sponsor-a-Hamper program is an exciting way for the community to help those in need. Because the Christmas Exchange Program assists so many people across the entire city, sponsors are able to choose the size of family they would like to sponsor, along with their preferred location in the city, based on availability. So far this year, more than 275 families have been sponsored by caring individuals and groups within the community, but there are still hundreds of households waiting to be matched with a kind sponsor.

Sign up today and you can deliver Christmas directly to a family in need.

#### **For further information:**

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