

Christmas Exchange is Looking for New Team Members

Christmas Exchange is a non-religious local Ottawa charity that provides food assistance to those in need at Christmas regardless of age, ethnicity, creed or culture in the form of either a food hamper or redeemable grocery voucher. The Exchange also manages a centralized database to coordinate the seasonal giving for over 300 community organizations, including the Salvation Army Toy Centre. This database not only ensures that assistance is distributed evenly and fairly and that no one in need is left out, it also helps avoid duplication of giving.

Every year thousands of men, women and children rely on the services of Christmas Exchange to be able to share a decent holiday meal with friends and family. Last year the number of families that received help increase by 8% to over 9,000, which included 11,000 children and 2,000 seniors.

*If it weren't for you, we would not have had a Christmas dinner
— Jennifer, mother of 2*

For those who have never faced the overwhelming challenge of living on a fixed income, it is difficult to appreciate how tough the holiday season can be for these families. They are people who through no fault of their own find themselves in a time of need during the holiday season because of a sudden work lay-off, an illness, the death of the family breadwinner, or as a result of spousal abandonment leaving the children behind.

*We hope next year not to have to ask for assistance,
but if we do it's certainly nice to know it is there.
— Frank*

We Need Volunteers like YOU to Continue This Work

There would not be a Christmas Exchange without volunteers. We rely on volunteers as Board of Directors and committee members; for office help; to assist at special events; and to help deliver our services. Volunteering just a few hours a month would help thousands of families a year.

*Volunteering creates a national character in which the community
and the nation take on a spirit of compassion, comradeship and confidence.
— Brian O'Connell*

Board of Directors meet 6 times a year for not more than 90 minutes, plus a strategic planning session once a year. The board is responsible for the financial well being of the agency, as well as setting policy. We need people with backgrounds in business, law, accounting, fundraising, or non-profit management.

Program Committee meets at least 3 times a year to monitor and review the programs, and hold biannual agency meetings. A background in social services or charitable organizations would be welcome.

Fundraising Committee meets at least 4 times a year, with sub-committees meeting as needed to plan and run various events including the Caring and Sharing Charity Auction, Ottawa's Biggest Bake Sale, Running on Empties bottle drive, Pennies for Portions School Program, and Christmas in July BBQ. A background in fundraising, public relations, event planning or marketing would be welcome.

Office Help is needed to stuff fundraising letters 3 times a year; help answer phones and input names of families in need into our centralized database from November until December 24.

Special Events take place throughout the year. If you are a 'people person' who enjoys dealing with the public, and like to have fun we would welcome you to the team.

For more information on Christmas Exchange, please visit our website at www.Christmas-Exchange.com, or call 613-226-6434 or email merryxmas@storm.ca .