



Ottawa Food Bank
La Banque d'alimentation d'Ottawa



VOLUNTEER IMPACT REPORT

2023

"WE ALL DO BETTER WHEN WE ALL DO BETTER."

Senator Patricia Bovey from Manitoba shared quote recently and it really struck me. Not only does it speak to care for the whole community, and ensuring every member thrives, but it stresses the collective impact of working together. We can achieve so much more together than any of us ever could alone.

Volunteers epitomise the spirit of "we all do better when we all do better." You give of your time for the good of the community so we can truly all do better. You know what an impact one person can have in their community.

We are indebted to those volunteers who contribute their time to the Ottawa Food Bank and support the efforts of the network of 112 member agencies. In this last year, volunteers provided over \$325,000 worth of hours and this doesn't include the thousands of hours that volunteers dedicate to member agencies right across the city. Volunteers who give of their time to the Ottawa Food Bank are a critical part of ensuring our community thrives.

There is no way the Ottawa Food Bank would be able to provide food and support across the city without the incredible dedication of volunteers. We truly have the best, most dedicated, and most caring volunteers in the city.

In the last few months, you have been through thick and thin with us. You have shown your resilience and commitment to the network and the people who access food banks in our city.

Whether you have sorted and packed donations, ridden on trucks, tended crops at our farm, or helped at events and food drives, we treasure every moment you spend helping the Ottawa Food Bank achieve its mission.

A sincere thanks to Jo-Anne Turple, Manager, Volunteer Resources, for her 13 years of service and continued dedication to volunteerism at the Ottawa Food Bank. We are indebted to her for her expertise and guidance in creating a successful program year after year.

We are so honored by those who choose to spend their time and talent supporting the Ottawa Food Bank network. We know this next year will be filled with new challenges and opportunities, and we look forward to working with all of you in 2023 so we can "**all do better**".

With sincere thanks,



Rachael Wilson
Chief Executive Officer
Ottawa Food Bank

THANK YOU *to*

#OTTAWASBESTVOLUNTEERS!



Thank you for choosing the Ottawa Food Bank as your local charity of choice and for sharing your valuable time. We continue to be overwhelmed by the dedication of our volunteers.

As we celebrate National Volunteer Week, we wanted to recognize this year's Volunteer Canada theme: **Volunteering Weaves Us Together**. Volunteering is the thread that connects individuals and organizations to create a welcoming, supportive, and diverse community in which we can all be proud to live.

How are Ottawa Food Bank volunteers woven into the fabric of the city of Ottawa? What is your impact? Please take a few moments to review the highlights contained in this report. Over **2,000** individual volunteers donated more than **17,000 hours** of their time and talent to the Ottawa Food Bank during our 2021-2022 fiscal year.

Every step of the way, volunteers play an integral part in assisting the Ottawa Food Bank with the distribution of much-needed food in our community. Without volunteers, we would not have been able to meet the 44% increase in the amount of food delivered to thousands of people in our city.

Thank you for continuing to support the Ottawa Food Bank and truly continuing to be #OttawasBestVolunteers!



Jo-Anne Turple
Manager, Volunteer Resources
Ottawa Food Bank

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Ottawa Food Bank's Community Harvest Farm grew and distributed close to **180,000 lbs of fresh produce** to our community with volunteer support
- Hamper delivery volunteers drove **9,000 km** and delivered **574,300 lbs of food** to individuals
- Food sorting volunteers helped process over **10,274,328 lbs of food** for distribution to the community
- Volunteers stepped up to help with special projects and special events throughout the year

HELLO from
ADAM JANES
Volunteer Resources Coordinator

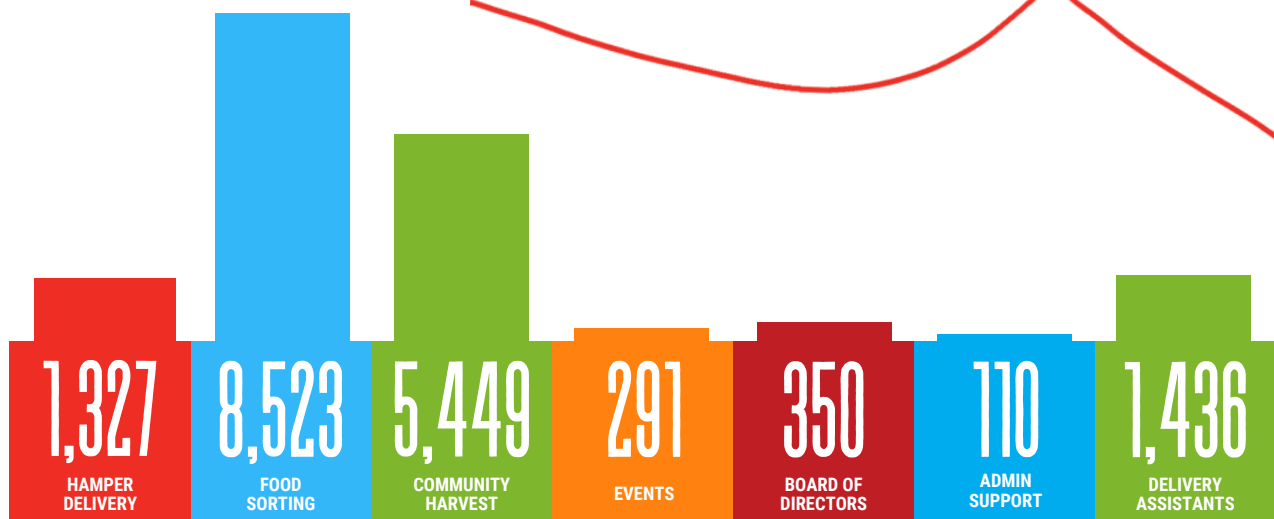


It is with great joy that I join the Ottawa Food Bank team. I come from an almost 20-year career in not-for-profit and over seven years leading and developing volunteer engagement programs at local non-profits including Christie Lake Kids and Volunteer Ottawa. As I'm truly passionate about this environment, I also volunteer at my local association of volunteer leaders and am the Chair of Advocacy for the Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada (VMPC).

I aim to work diligently with the whole Ottawa Food Bank team to continue to support and grow one of Ottawa's largest and most highly regarded volunteer programs (yes that's you and thank you for being amazing!).

Let's get up to some good together!

WHAT'S YOUR VOLUNTEER IMPACT?



During our busiest year in nearly four decades of service, we were fortunate to have had the continued support and dedication of Ottawa's Best Volunteers. With the increased need for volunteer support, we are grateful people continued to donate their time and kindness. In fact, the Ottawa Food Bank saw a **5% increase in donated volunteer hours** compared to the last pre-pandemic fiscal year. Thank you to all the wonderful individuals, groups, and organizations who volunteered to support the Ottawa Food Bank – we couldn't do it without you.

In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, #OttawasBestVolunteers contributed

17,486 HOURS

A VOLUNTEER'S JOURNEY:

FROM CATERPILLAR REMOVAL TO CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Michaela Tokarski's first stint volunteering at the Ottawa Food Bank (OFB) was sorting food in the warehouse where she quickly realized the volume of food moving through the warehouse and out to the community was far greater than she ever imagined.

"Previously when I thought of a food bank, I thought of small groups of people in small community spaces, getting food directly to those who needed it. I really hadn't thought much about the logistics behind the larger network of food banks across our city. It was very eye-opening to begin to be a part of that."

Michaela was amazed by how much food got sorted when the volunteer group, who enjoyed chatting away, all worked together. From the regulars who refer to themselves as the 'A-team' and have been sorting together for years, to those who are just getting started, everyone tries to sort as many cages of food as they can during their three-hour shift.

It was while sorting food that Michaela heard about the OFB's Community Harvest Farm and decided to check it out. There, she learned so much about butternut squash, potatoes, cantaloupes, how to raise a hoop house, and more from Jason Gray, the Community Harvest Manager. She was immediately hooked. She brought several neighbours to help out and learn. Her most memorable time on the farm was when she was joined by her eldest teenage son, and they helped with tomato caterpillar (hornworm) removal.

She notes plucking those large pests (which average 8cm in length) off the tomato plants and dunking them in soapy water was "a disgusting and hilarious memory that we now share." Together, they also learned that this teen loved being out on a farm. He went to the Community Harvest Farm to volunteer a few more times and went on to get a part-time job at a dairy farm.

His connection to food and farming is strong even though he was raised in the city, and Michaela credits the Community Harvest Farm with this discovery.

The Community Harvest Farm produced nearly 180,000 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables last summer which was distributed to the member agencies. That could not have happened without volunteers.

Michaela learned there is a seasonal cycle to food donations. In a typical year, more food is donated during the holiday season from October through December, and then this is run down over the course of the year. By the end of the summer, the warehouse doesn't have much donated food left. Because of this, she decided to start an end-of-summer food drive to help fill the need.

Michaela joined the Board of Directors in 2019, where she began volunteering as a member, became the Treasurer, then the Vice-Chair and is now the Chair of the Board.



VOLUNTEERS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE HAMPER DELIVERY PROGRAM.



"Volunteers are an important part of the hamper delivery program because, using their smaller vehicles, they relieve pressure on the operations logistics department when we are at peak capacity. They are also great ambassadors for the Ottawa Food Bank and their interactions with clients are well received. Our volunteers are all amazing and it's great to have the community see them in action."

Chris Kennedy
Operations Manager
Ottawa Food Bank

VOLUNTEERS MEAN EVERYTHING TO FOOD SORTING.



"Put simply; volunteers mean everything to food sorting. That's not hyperbole either, they are quite honestly the gas in the Ottawa Food Bank's tank. Without them, we practically could not process any donations, tons of food would go to waste, and far more people would go hungry. The only reason we can do this good a job is because we have consistent, passionate volunteers."

Nic Hupé
Warehouse Coordinator
Ottawa Food Bank

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEARTBEAT THAT KEEPS THE COMMUNITY HARVEST PROGRAM GOING.



"It's because of their time, muscle and goodwill that we are able to grow such a huge quantity and quality of fresh produce. As we like to say we are a volunteer-powered farm!"

Jason Gray
Community Harvest Manager
Ottawa Food Bank

Tom Robson
Community Harvest Coordinator
Ottawa Food Bank



THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO

