



SPRING 2025

# You Feed the Need

GRATITUDE REPORT

TOGETHER, WE ARE SO MUCH STRONGER

## A note from Rachael

Dear caring neighbour,

I will be honest: these are tough times. After months of consideration, we have had to acknowledge the harsh reality that the Ottawa Food Bank is no longer able to keep pace with the growing need in our community. As you'll read about in this newsletter, this has meant some heartbreaking cuts to food distribution.



It's important to know this decision is not due to a lack of donations or community support. This is the result of governments that have neglected food insecurity and amplified a systemic issue. There simply aren't enough resources being allotted to the very real hunger crisis in our city and across the country.

Now more than ever, your compassionate support remains so very appreciated – and so very vital. **Thank you for stepping up for our neighbours experiencing hunger.** I continue to be both humbled and inspired by the generosity of our amazing community.

With warmth and determination,

Rachel Wilson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ottawa Food Bank

### WHAT'S INSIDE:

How your support is helping in 2025 – and why it's needed more than ever

**A legacy of generosity:** honouring Tahar Mazigh's compassion

**Partner corner:** The Door Youth Centre



# Your gifts in action



**Over 556,000 visits to food programs**

for emergency food assistance including healthy options like fresh fruits and vegetables.



**2.5 million meals and snacks served**

to people experiencing hunger.



**174,881 pounds of baby supplies**

including diapers, formula and cereal distributed to families through our partner agencies.



**152,992 pounds of fresh produce**

grown by volunteers on the Ottawa Food Bank's Community Harvest Farm

## Facing down a food emergency



While we have an amazing community of supporters like you, the Ottawa Food Bank started 2025 with a decision we wish we did not have to make. We are seeing more people turning to food banks, while rising costs mean we cannot purchase the same amount of food as before. There is a greater need for food than our sector can provide.

**"We remain committed to supporting the network through thoughtfully spending down our reserves, resource-sharing, and capacity-building to support each agency with operations, funding, and programming."**

- Rachel Wilson, CEO

We have to ensure available food is distributed equitably across our network of 98 food programs. That means the partners we work with will be receiving 20-50% less food in 2025 than they have in years past.

**Your incredible kindness means that we can ensure a consistent supply of fresh, healthy food is there for our neighbours.**

Last year, your support helped us achieve some truly great things for our community.

**Over 3,000 fridges** were filled during our GivingTuesday campaign, supported by a match from Empire Company Limited

**174,881 pounds** of baby supplies including diapers, formula and cereal to agencies serving young families across the city.

**More than 8.2 million pounds** of food was distributed to our community. 43% of this food is fresh food like eggs, milk, fruit, bread, and vegetables.

The support of our incredible donors remains more critical than ever. We are incredibly lucky to have the support that we do from kind people like you. We also know that we need to engage our local government to make changes that support food security in our community. We are asking you to consider supporting our advocacy initiatives.



Food is a right, not a privilege. Will you join us to demand action on Ottawa's hunger crisis?

**To learn more, visit:**  
[ottawafoodbank.ca/advocate](https://ottawafoodbank.ca/advocate)



**"It's just because I want to give back. The community helped me. And now I feel better. It's time for me to give back."**

- Sophie, Monthly Donor

# The Door Youth Centre

Fuelling the next generation through food and community

The Door Youth Centre is the only youth centre in the Centretown West area, offering educational and employment support, health promotion and recreational programs. "We provide youth with a safe space away from issues like drugs and violence while giving them a place to just be themselves," explains Susan Agobia, Program Coordinator.

**"Because of your support, we can ensure that the young people who walk through our doors have access to healthy meals essential for their well-being, focus, and growth."**

Food from the Ottawa Food Bank helps The Door provide daily meals as well as offering the Multicultural Young



Chefs program, where youth learn valuable cooking skills and explore different cultures through food.

"Having a warm and nutritious meal every day means so much to our youth," says Susan. "Your donations help us continue creating these meaningful experiences, where youth feel valued, empowered, and inspired to build a brighter future."

Learn more about The Door Youth Centre at: [thedooryouthcentre.com](http://thedooryouthcentre.com)



TOMORROW'S HARVEST | LA RÉCOLTE DE L'AVENIR

## Remembering a Father's Giving Heart



Tahar with his daughter and grandson

Tahar Mazigh immigrated to Ottawa in 1994 after spending most of his life in his native Tunisia. A career public servant, Tahar was generous with his time and his stories. He instilled the importance of education, advocacy, and social justice in his daughter Monia. "We as a family believe everyone should eat, and we see what is happening now," she shares.

Monia recalls childhood visits to the beach, where her father would buy ice cream not only for his family but also mothers and children they encountered who couldn't afford their own.

**"He always had a generous spirit and helped those in need. He was not a rich man, but always gave what he could."**

To honour Tahar's legacy of compassion, Monia and her family have chosen to gift a portion of his estate to the Ottawa Food Bank. His kindness will live on in our community.



**Did you know? May is Leave a Legacy Month.** To learn more about including the Ottawa Food Bank in your Will, please contact Jenn Graves, Major Gifts and Planned Giving Officer, or scan the QR code with your smartphone.

# A hands-on answer to hunger

Larry has spent a growing season volunteering at the Ottawa Food Bank's Community Harvest Farm, where he combines his love of gardening with community service.

A retired outdoor enthusiast, Larry was drawn to farming for a good cause: 152,992 lbs of fresh produce from the Community Harvest Farm was distributed to our food program partners across Ottawa last year.

Each volunteer farm shift starts with

introductions and a briefing on the task of the day. Larry appreciates the opportunity to learn how a farm operates while meeting like-minded volunteers and supportive staff who are always happy to answer questions.

Though he's known about the Community Harvest Farm for years, Larry was delighted to find volunteer opportunities. He shares photos of his experience on social media (#ottawafoodbankfarm) to spread the word about the Ottawa Food Bank's Community Harvest program. "If you enjoy gardening, you should give volunteering a try," he says.



The Ottawa Food Bank is grateful to Larry and all our 1,100+ farm volunteers!

## The power of monthly giving

Donors in our Nourish Forward community provide fresh food year-round.

When you join the Nourish Forward community and become a monthly donor, you are making a commitment to uplift your neighbours in times of challenge. Your regular support allows us to better plan for the future, ensuring we can maximize our efficiency to distribute food where it's needed throughout our community. Your commitment ensures we can make a lasting impact, while making it easier for you to stay connected to a cause you care about. You can cancel your monthly donation at any time.

Still have questions? We're happy to chat! Please reach out to Rebekah, Manager, Direct Response Fundraising at: [rebekah@ottawafoodbank.ca](mailto:rebekah@ottawafoodbank.ca) or 613-745-7001 x 144



## More ways to support the Ottawa Food Bank



**Make a one-time gift** to help your neighbours by visiting [ottawafoodbank.ca/donate](https://ottawafoodbank.ca/donate).



**Donate food** by dropping it off in our bins at your local grocery store [ottawafoodbank.ca/donate/donate-food](https://ottawafoodbank.ca/donate/donate-food).



**Become a volunteer** to assist with activities like food sorting and special events by visiting [ottawafoodbank.ca/volunteer](https://ottawafoodbank.ca/volunteer)



**Leave a legacy** by including the Ottawa Food Bank as a beneficiary in your will.

