



Ottawa Food Bank

FALL 2025

You Feed the Need

GRATITUDE REPORT

TOGETHER, WE ARE SO MUCH STRONGER



A note from Rachael

Dear caring neighbour,

I'm so very grateful to every single one of the Ottawa Food Bank supporters who continue to provide healthy and fresh food through almost 100 food programs across the city. These vital programs help people stretch their budgets, keep their homes, and maintain stability in their lives. When people have access to good food, our whole community thrives, which impacts us all. It's inspiring what our community can do together.

From the generosity of volunteers who pour thousands of hours into sorting food, preparing deliveries, and even cultivating fresh produce on our Community Harvest Farm. To the generosity of the organizations who step up to partner with us on events. And last but definitely not least, the generosity of Ottawa Food Bank donors, like you, who ensure we have the funds needed to continue acquiring food and getting it into the hands of families across Ottawa who are facing hunger.

I am moved every day to see what we can accomplish for our neighbours when we work together with a common goal: to ensure *everyone* in our community has fresh, healthy food. Thank you so much for your vital support!

With heartfelt appreciation,

Rachael Wilson
CEO, Ottawa Food Bank

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Our Community Farm

A Milestone Gift:
Smarter Systems,
Stronger Support

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Heron Emergency
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Your gifts in action



98%

of OFB funding
comes from the generosity
of donors in our community
just like you



7,090

snacks distributed weekly
through 30 Summer Nutrition
Programs throughout the city



23

different crops
grown on the
Community Harvest
farm



20,125

hours given
by volunteers – the equivalent
of 12 full-time employees!

You Made This Possible:

A Fresh Future for Our Community Farm



Did you know 43% of the food we distribute is fresh—including bread, milk, fruits, and vegetables?

Over 150,000 lbs of fresh produce a year comes from our Community Harvest Farm, which just underwent a major transformation.

Over the past two seasons, our team tackled a key challenge: inconsistent bed spacing for different crops. Vining crops like squash need wide beds, while others like broccoli thrive in narrow ones. Mixing them caused soil issues and made crop rotation harder.

Thanks to your support, we redesigned the farm with permanent rows—some wide, some narrow—all the same length. This makes crop rotation easier, helps break pest and disease cycles, and improves fertilizer

targeting. We also added cover crops like clover and rye to naturally restore soil health.

The new layout also supports better use of tools like insect netting and irrigation systems, saving time and energy. And healthier soil means stronger crops and better harvests.

Another exciting update: we've boosted our solar power system by 50% with new panels and modern batteries—making our farm more sustainable and resilient.

Thanks to you, our farm is growing smarter, greener, and more productive—bringing fresh, nutritious food to more families across Ottawa.



"We've been taught that it's okay to be the person to give the help, but not to be the person who needs the help... Giving money to the food bank so that someone can survive, there has to be a big thank you there. You're giving me the ability to go on another day."

– Stephen, OFB volunteer and client

Heron Emergency Food Centre

Providing critical relief for families experiencing hunger

With support from the Ottawa Food Bank, Heron Emergency Food Centre (HEFC) distributes emergency food supplies to approximately 4,000 people in 1,300 households annually. Louisa Simms has been the centre's Executive Coordinator for the last 20 years.



"I love serving people and seeing their faces change from despair to gratefulness," she says. "There are so many different languages spoken in our community, but a smile is universal." In her role, Louisa ensures there is enough food and volunteers to meet the needs of people who turn to HEFC for assistance.

"Please take pride in knowing your caring heart and kindness make a huge difference in so many people's lives. The impact is HUGE."



When asked about the difference Ottawa Food Bank donors make, Louisa explains just how vital nutrition is to people of all ages. "The elderly have food to take with their medication, adults have the strength they need to be productive, and children can grow and thrive," she says.

Thank YOU for supporting HEFC and other Ottawa Food Bank partners!

Smarter Systems, Stronger Support

The Ottawa Food Bank leverages \$1M gift for greater reach

Earlier this year, Ottawa came together for the Gold Hearts Gala: The Mayor's Charity Ball Presented By Fairmont Château Laurier, in support of the Ottawa Food Bank. The evening took a powerful turn when the Ottawa Community Foundation's CEO Michael Maidment shared his personal experience with food insecurity – and announced the Foundation would grant \$1 million to the Ottawa Food Bank, the largest cash gift in our 40-year history.

A portion of this historic \$1 million grant has been invested in unifying Link2Feed, our secure intake database, used to collect and protect private client information. This upgrade has a broad reach across our network, helping agencies access accurate, real-time client data. Better client data helps agencies make smarter decisions about where resources go and offer support that's more tailored to what people need.

The remainder of the funding is going toward fresh, healthy food for the network—including a temporary increase in quantities for certain items and short-term access to popular products we don't usually stock.

With food bank usage at record highs, maximizing efficiency and getting more food to those who need it has never been more critical. This historic gift from the Ottawa Community Foundation, alongside your continued generosity, helps us nourish a healthier, more resilient city.





2025 Holiday Food Drive

Help collect food and funds for our neighbours in need!

Each November, we call on YOU and challenge neighbourhoods, sports teams, faith communities, workplaces, and other groups across Ottawa to collect funds and non-perishable food for families in need, as part of our Holiday Food Drive.

The Holiday Food Drive is a great way to kick off the giving season. Proceeds help the Ottawa Food Bank provide food and support to our network of member agencies well into the winter months.

Did you know? The Ottawa Food Bank receives an influx of desserts and sugary treats during the holidays. We need help providing healthy food for the holidays and beyond!

The most-needed items this holiday season include canned fish and chicken, pasta and pasta sauce, rice, nut butters, canned fruits and vegetables, and diapers.

Visit ottawafoodbank.ca/holiday-food-drive to learn more and register your virtual or physical food drive.

Supporting your neighbours

Wonderful Ottawa Food Bank supporters like you uplift our neighbours in times of challenge. There are many ways to get involved as we work towards a city free from hunger by 2050:



Make a one-time gift
to help your neighbours by visiting
ottawafoodbank.ca/donate



Commit to a monthly gift
for maximum efficiency and
make a difference year-round



Donate food
by bringing healthy wish list items
to one of our drop-off locations



Become a volunteer
to assist with activities
like food sorting and
special events



Leave a legacy
by including the Ottawa Food Bank
as a beneficiary in your will.
Contact Jenn Graves, Manager,
Major Gifts and Planned Giving
at jenn@ottawafoodbank.ca
for more information.



Questions?
Please reach out to our
donor care team at
foodbank@ottawafoodbank.ca
or 613-745-7001 x 222.



Donate online at: ottawafoodbank.ca/donate
or scan the QR code with your smartphone



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