

Spring Gleanings 2020

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Connect With Us:

Home gardens can help Edmonton!

Dear Friends,

With spring, we welcome warmer, longer days and melting snow, making it easier to meet with friends and connect with nature. I am looking forward to walking my dog on clearer streets and planting my modest garden. Hopefully, I'll have better luck with my green beans than I did last year!

Last fall, at our Harvest Luncheon, horticulturist Jim Hole spoke and challenged everyone to a simple commitment for 2020: to plant and grow their own vegetables; "you don't have to be a green thumb, it's not that tough to do." It's really true. Gardening is an easy and wonderful way to spend time outside and have tasty results, too.

At Edmonton's Food Bank, we are so fortunate to benefit from local gardeners as they participate in the Plant a Row, Grow a Row, Share a Row initiative. Last year, we received thousands of kilograms of potatoes, carrots, turnips, and other vegetables from home gardens, and from the harvest at the Lady Flower Gardens and the Fort Edmonton Park Garden. Root vegetables from our local growers fit so well with all the many food sources we use to build our hampers. Home gardens help create local food infrastructure and provide an opportunity for anyone to support those in need. The produce from these gardens was shared with our clients so they can have more fresh, whole foods. These were clients like Amber, who hadn't received a hamper since 2013, but has had a rough time in the last few months. Amber was so surprised by the amount of fresh produce and breads in the hamper, and choked back tears. Thank you so much for all of this."

We glean (or gather) dairy, breads, and other produce from grocery stores and food warehouses, which makes up the largest percentage of the food donated to the Food Bank. Donations of garden fresh vegetables and fruit, and our purchases of fresh eggs and milk, supplement this gleaned food. When combined with the donations we receive from our food drives and our other, non-perishable food purchases, our clients' hampers are built from a large and diverse number of sources.

The requests for food services and help in Edmonton remains high. We are continuously humbled by the ongoing assistance from our community. Thank you so much for your help - because of you, we have put hope on the table.

Sincerely,



Marjorie Bencz, CM
Executive Director



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GIVE
FOOD AND FUNDRAISING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES BELOW



LOOKING FOR WORK IN ALBERTA? YOU'RE NOT ALONE

These are tough economic times for Edmonton, and Alberta as a whole. Our city and province have the dubious distinction of bucking national trends of increasing employment rates. According to Statistics Canada at the end of 2019, Alberta had an unemployment rate of 7% (compared to 5.6% nationally), and Edmonton had the highest unemployment of the 33 census metropolitan areas at 8%.

Although the forecast for growth in Edmonton is rosier in 2020, City of Edmonton senior economist Felicia Mutheardy said “she’s not expecting brilliant results.” These difficulties will be compounded as we have a higher concentration of public service workers, who are facing significant cuts over the next few years, and only moderate growth in manufacturing and professional services.

We’re expecting an increased demand on our food and employment services this year. Higher unemployment means those who could be donors instead become clients, and those who might only need our help once or twice a year will instead be calling in every month.

On the bright side, our Beyond Food program helped provide hundreds of job training tickets last year and saw thousands of client visits. In a follow-up from November/December of 2019, 58% of clients who responded had found work!

We are asking for your support where you can, whether that’s food, money, or time. And we are asking for your help to share the good work we are doing with friends and neighbours. Together, we will be able to carry out our mission and help those in need.



A VOLUNTEER STORY:

I didn't realize how much of the system was volunteer run! I've been there a couple times before, but the last time was really impactful. We brought our kids and they had such a good time, they were so eager to help out and see how it ran. A few years ago we needed to use the food bank, so it's an honour to give back and pay it forward.

A Message from Mary:

I was in the Beyond Food program to get a safety ticket in First Aid and CPR and I got the ticket on January 19th. With the resume you helped me put together, I applied for work as a community social/service worker, and I had an interview on Monday.

I just want to inform you that I got an email with the job offer! Thank you to everyone at the Food Bank for your support and being part of my Canada success story. I never thought I would get a good transition job within the first month of being in Canada.

Best Regards, Mary