



Newsletter

November 2023

Greetings to the Bloor West, Swansea, High Park and Junction Communities,

We hope everyone enjoyed our beautiful early fall and is settling in for the cooler weather. Our work at the food bank continues each week and keeps our volunteers very busy!

We are thrilled to share that **Bloor West Food Bank has obtained charitable status!** We are now able to issue tax receipts for all donations over \$20 and will accept monthly donations from our supporters. We are hopeful that this will jump start our fundraising to enable us to continue to help our clients in the best ways possible.

Our holiday fundraiser is launching this week with a goal to raise enough funds to purchase grocery gift cards for every client family. We encourage you to donate what you can to assist us in making the holidays a little easier for each family - whether an individual or a family of 8!

Thank you to everyone for your continued support of our work. We are grateful to be part of a wonderful community willing to help us achieve our goal of tackling food insecurity in our neighbourhoods.

With thanks,

Karen, Maggie and Mary Anne

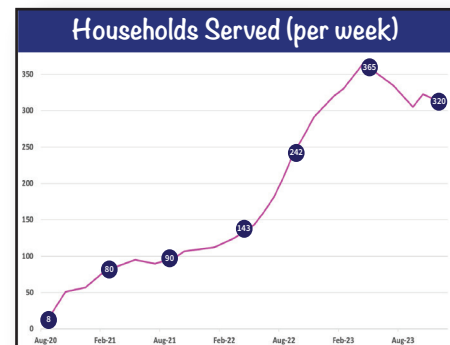


Volunteer Mark helps unload the weekly delivery from Daily Bread Food Bank.

Food Bank Client Visits

Client visits to food banks across Toronto continue to rise and our experience is no exception. In response to the drastic increases in early 2023, we needed to change our service standards in order to conserve volunteer and financial resources. To continue to effectively offer our services to local clients, we more strictly restricted new client families to those that live within our service boundary. This has resulted in the stabilization of numbers over the summer and early fall.

We are now serving approximately 300-320 families or 800 individuals weekly. We continue to register several new families each week, but we also are directing many out of area individuals and families to their local food banks for assistance.



On a positive note, we have found that several of the refugee families we have been serving over the last 18 months no longer require our services. They shared that they needed our services when they first arrived and were learning English and getting settled, but they have now found jobs and don't need us as frequently, or not at all.

Bloor West Food Bank *Holiday Fundraiser*

\$25 helps buy a holiday gift for our clients

Each \$25 donation will be entered into a draw for **court-side Toronto Raptors tickets** on January 1st, 2024!

Visit bloorwestfoodbank.ca to donate!



Welcome to Father Mani!

St. Pius X Catholic Church on Bloor has church has generously shared their space with the Bloor West Food Bank since 2020. Our convenient, accessible location on Bloor Street is one of the many things that make our food bank so special.

In June, our team joined the community in welcoming Fr. Massillamani Zacharias (Fr. Mani) as the new priest at Saint Pius. We appreciate his willingness to continue to provide us with the space essential to our food bank's operation and value his commitment as we work together to reduce food insecurity amongst our neighbours.



An example of food provided weekly for a family of four.

Neighbourhood Support

In October, Rev. Rob Mitchell of St. Olave's Anglican Church visited the Bloor West Food Bank. He came bearing gifts – a financial contribution from their parishioners that was matched by their Second Century Mission fund in honor of Bob Ragsdale, a committee member who is retiring after many years of service. Additionally, he brought food collected during their Thanksgiving food drive. We extend our deep thanks to the St. Olave's community for their generosity and support of our food bank.



Peter, Karen and Mary Anne welcome the donation from Rev. Rob Mitchell with volunteer Keith looking on.

Get involved!

Donate items: Reusable shopping bags, clean plastic and paper bags, used egg cartons

Donate non-perishable food: canned fish and meat, canned chick peas, beans and lentils, peanut butter, soups and stews, canned fruits and vegetables

Volunteer: *We are currently looking for strong people who can lift up to 30 lbs and easily climb stairs.* Contact us for more information!



Volunteers packing bags and distributing food for our clients.

Volunteer SPOTLIGHT



Meet Wendy, one of our original volunteers, who's been with us since day 1.

Under Wendy's leadership, essential toiletries and baby items are kept in supply and distributed to those who need them.

Thank you Wendy!

Preventing food waste

Each week we distribute:



	380 Litres of milk
	200 Loaves of bread
	500 Buns and flatbread
	300 lbs of meat
	2300 Eggs
	2000+ lbs of fresh produce

At times, we're left with extra perishable items such as fruits, vegetables, bread or dairy products that cannot be stored until the following Friday's food distribution day. To prevent waste, we send it to other organizations in need. Let's take a recent partnership of ours with the Revivaltime Tabernacle as an example. During the shelter space crisis in Toronto, the church generously provided housing for over 200 asylum seekers. We were able to support their efforts by providing our surplus food, which was used to feed the individuals and families under their care.



Laura taking a load of extra produce to refugees housed at Dominion Church.

How do we use financial donations?

Cash donations from the community – both individuals and organizations – to keep our work going. Here are some of the ways we use the funds:

1. Purchasing Food. We often need to supplement what we receive from Daily Bread Food Bank and Second Harvest to make sure all of our clients are getting enough of certain items. These are the top 4 food items that we purchase:

- Canned and frozen meat
- Milk
- Oatmeal
- Soup

2. Rent. We pay a monthly rent to Saint Pius X that has recently increased from \$250 to \$1800 per month.

3. Elevator maintenance at the church

4. Plastic Bags. We currently give out 80% of our food in plastic bags and are working on ways to eliminate them.

Contact Us!

For more information about our work, to volunteer or to arrange a food donation:

infofoodbank.LF@gmail.com

www.bloorwestfoodbank.ca

Community Partners

Grumpy Gourmet

Every week we receive 320 litres of milk, 1200 yogurt cups and 200 dozen eggs that require cold storage. We are limited to a small number of donated fridges and freezers and do not have room for everything that we need to safely store.



Enter the Grumpy Gourmet on Bloor at Durie! Owned by a local female entrepreneur, they are a purveyor of fine foods with a focus on distributing local, multicultural and women-owned food production.

They generously give us access to their large walk-in refrigerator to store milk and other items that require cold storage. We couldn't do our work without you!

Meaty Eats

Last spring Bloor West Village welcomed a new business - Meaty Eats! They offer a wonderful selection of meats, bakery items and prepared foods that are made from high quality ingredients and are quick and convenient to prepare at home. Each week they provide the food bank with dozens of loaves of bread and loads of sweet bakery items that are enjoyed by our clients.



MEATY eats

Thank you to all of our Supporters!



Donation of egg cartons and paper bags from Airfoil Media leftover from a film shoot.



Staff at Cobs Bread on Bloor St. W



Pack a cruiser - St. Pius X Catholic School Food Drive, June 2023

St. Pius X Catholic Church
Rotary Club of Parkdale High Park Humber
Cobs Bread Bakery
The Grumpy Gourmet
Runnymede United Church
St. Olave's Anglican Church
Nicholson's No Frills
Meaty Eats Bloor West
Ruffin's Pet Centre
St. Vincent De Paul
Royal LePage Bloor West
Bloor West Village BIA
Crocker Web Design
St. Pius X Catholic School
Runnymede Public School
HumberSide Collegiate Institute
St. Pius X Catholic Women's League
Church of St. Martin's in the Fields
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
West Toronto KEYS to Inclusion
Illso of Canada
St. James' Gate
The Coffee Boutique
Acart
Fer-Pal Construction
Fresh Avenue
Bloor Meat Market
Nature's Path
Pet Value
Red Label Hair Company
JC Salons
Cheese Boutique
Snappers
Capital One
Wisacre Rentals



Maggie and Karen receive a donation from Rotary Club Parkdale High Park Humber, Oct 2023



West Toronto KEYS drops off a cheque and donations from their food drive.

Thank you to our volunteers and the many individuals who have donated funds and food to support our efforts.

