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Monthly Message: Shelburne Food Bank keeps community fed

The Shepherd's Cupboard Foodbank was founded in 1991 out of recognition that community members in Shelburne needed support to access food for themselves and their families.

That need has only grown.

Initially, food banks started as a temporary response to cutbacks to social assistance programs that were occurring in the early 1990s. Who would have thought that 34 years later we would not only still be in existence, but with ever-increasing numbers?

Food insecurity across Canada is at an all-time high with almost a quarter of this country's population struggling to put food on the table.

As we have welcomed new clients every week and struggled ourselves to keep the shelves of the food bank stocked, we realized we needed to take some time to reflect on how we could rise to the challenge to better support our neighbours. We engaged a strategic planner to assist us in coming up with a three-year plan to help chart our path forward and help us to be sustainable in the future.

From this, we have identified the three priorities for our organization to pursue:

1. Sustainable Leadership

2. Increased Community Support

3. A New Home

As we work on these three priorities over the next few years, we will keep you updated on our progress.

This year, we have changed our name to The Shelburne Food Bank, so clients can find us more easily. Our new logo has retained the shepherd's crook as a nod to our roots as The Shepherd's Cupboard.

We have become a legal non-profit organization and will be working towards getting our charitable status. And with a lot of assistance and support from this community, we are the proud owners of a new Food Rescue Van which will help us in our food rescue efforts as well as at our Senior Markets and hopefully be present at many community events.

We want to express our grateful thanks to those who sponsored our van - The Rotary Club of Shelburne, Compass Run for Food, Shelburne Centre For Health, Town of Shelburne, TransAlta, Jimmy & Stef's No Frills, LC Auto & The Haunt, Caravaggio's Drug Store, Township of Melancthon, Steve & Joanne Bowles, Huntly Christie, GVM Integration, Kinette Club of Shelburne, Giant Tiger, Lennox Farm, Trillium Ford, Anonymous, and many others who donated what they could.

We couldn't have done this without your support! This van will be an invaluable tool in assisting our efforts to serve those in need, in our community.

We continue to operate Wednesdays and Thursdays out of the Mel Lloyd Centre.

Deliveries to medically fragile seniors happen the second Tuesday of every month and Seniors Markets occur the last Thursday of the month at five locations in Shelburne and the surrounding area.

We are so grateful for the trust that clients put in us every month, the energy and care that volunteers bring to us every shift and the ongoing support our community has shown us over the years through food drives, donations and partnerships. The Shelburne Food

Bank is totally volunteer-run which allows nearly 100 per cent of all donations to go directly towards food for those who need some help.

We are at a crossroads now. It is time for us to grow up from a small volunteer-run organization into a more mature charity that can keep up with the needs that we see in our community every day.

We need you now more than ever.