

Shelburne Hamper Program ready to spread holiday cheer to families in need

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The Shelburne Hamper Program is looking to give families in need in the community a helping hand this holiday season as they start collecting donations for the annual Holiday Hampers.

"It is upsetting that the need keeps growing, but we're happy that we're able to continue help people. We're very fortunate that there are very generous people in our community that can help make sure that everybody has what the need for the holiday season," said Bobbi Ferguson, chair of the local initiative.

Existing locally for over 50 years, the Shelburne Christmas Hamper program is organized and supported by the many service clubs in town. The program traditionally gives out "hampers" or boxes containing both staple and holiday-specific foods, as well as grocery gift cards for families to purchase a turkey, ham, or traditional favourites. Children are also given gifts, with those aged 12 and under receiving a toy and gift cards for ages 12-18.

Since starting with the holiday hamper program roughly a decade ago, Ferguson said they've seen a growing demand for services. Last year, the Shelburne Christmas Hamper helped over 170 families access their program.

"When I started, people were devastated and felt so awful that they didn't want to reach out for help. I think there's been this shift that they're not as embarrassed because it's becoming more and more obvious that it's not just a few people facing this," said Ferguson.

The Shelburne Hamper Program is accepting non-perishable food donations as well as monetary donations.

The program has provided examples of how accumulative cash donations are used, such as \$20 for stocking stuffers, \$50 for toys or gift cards for children, \$75 for a senior hamper, and \$150 for a large family food hamper.

"These are difficult times, more than most of us have seen, but if you can help out at all we can certainly put your donations to good use," said Ferguson.

Registration for the 2023 Shelburne Christmas Hamper has been running during regular hours at the Shelburne Food Bank, Shepherd's Cupboard, throughout November. The Shelburne Christmas Hamper will also be holding additional registration dates on Dec. 6 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Dec. 7 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Mel Lloyd Centre, located at 167 Centre St. in Shelburne.

To find out more information about the local Christmas Hamper Program www.shelburnechristmashampers.com