

Shepherd's Cupboard gets \$10,000 grant as demand grows



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Shelburne's food bank, Shepherd's Cupboard, will be able to purchase more food to feed residents in need this holiday season after receiving grant funding.

The local food bank was selected as a recipient of the PepsiCo Foundation's Community Impact Grants and has been awarded \$10,000 USD to help address food insecurity in North Dufferin communities.

"First and foremost, we're a food bank and we have to be able to provide for the people in need, so we were very pleased to be provided with this grant money to help those who are suffering food insecurity," said Shepherd's Cupboard coordinator Ardith Dunlop. "What is great about this grant is it's not necessarily attached to a specific project, which means we'll be able to use the money to go out and get whatever food or items we need in order to continue to fill the hampers and provide to the community in need."

PepsiCo Foundation's Community Impact Grants program aims to support local communities by providing valuable programming resources that tackle inequality challenges through access to economic opportunity, clean water, and food security.

The Shelburne Food Bank is one of 100 public charities and organizations across the United States and Canada to be awarded with the PepsiCo grant.

"We look up to the community organizations that work tirelessly every day to ensure their neighbours thrive," said C.D. Glin, President of the PepsiCo Foundation. "PepsiCo has a long history of working with local partners to invest in communities where our consumers and associates live and work. We're proud to support these organizations in making lasting change."

Like many food banks across the province, Shepherd's Cupboard has seen a growing client demand as more people struggle to access basic necessities.

Speaking with the Free Press, Dunlop said that as of 2023, the Shelburne Food Bank is seeing almost 300 families a month. This represents a sharp rise from the 70 to 80 families it served before the COVID-19 pandemic.

?We've seen a gradual increase over the last 30 years, but since probably early 2021, we've seen a significant rise in clients. There are new people coming to us every shift we have,? said Dunlop.

At the end of 2020, the food bank was serving, on average, more than 150 families.

In October, volunteers from Shepherd's Cupboard attended a special Shelburne Council meeting as part of their application for municipal grant funding.

According to their presentation to council, the local food bank has over 700 individuals that access the food bank with 20 per cent of clients being seniors and 43 per cent children. Of the areas the food bank serves; 68 per cent of clients are from Shelburne; 20 per cent are from Melancthon; and 6 per cent are from Amaranth and Mulmur.

With the holiday season around the corner, the local food bank has shared a list called the 12 Days of Christmas Giving, highlighting their most needed items, which include canned tuna and salmon, flour, cooking oil, pasta sauce, canned fruit, laundry or dish detergent, cereal, peanut butter, and cookies.

The food bank also noted that they're attempting to expand their available items to address food restrictions such as gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan options as well as low-sugar foods.

?We're very appreciative to our community for supporting the Shepherd's Cupboard Food Bank for 33 years and helping their neighbours in such a wonderful way. With the community's support we won't be able to have the food bank and service those facing food insecurity,? said Dunlop.