

# Toys needed for Shelburne Christmas Hampers

**By Marni Walsh**

Registration for Shelburne Christmas Hampers ended this week and organizer Bobbi Ferguson says approximately 65 area families will be receiving hampers for the holiday.

This is up from 59 last year.

"We need larger toys right down to stocking stuffers," says Ms. Ferguson. "Pyjamas, mitts and hats are always a welcome surprise to our clients."

The gift hampers go to families in need in Shelburne and surrounding area.

Orangeville, Dundalk and Grand Valley also run similar programs in their areas.

"We never have a problem getting food," says Ms. Ferguson, "but toys for all ages, especially 12 and under can be a challenge."

The hamper program has been in existence for more than 25 years, when Shelburne service clubs decided that due to the growing need and the work involved, it made more sense to join forces.

"The many hands make light work theory," says Ms. Ferguson.

"The Rotary Club helps put up posters, recruits donations and drop off sites, picks up and delivers all food and toys to the collection site," she says. "The Lions Club collects large banana boxes from the grocery stores and mans the room at the Mel Lloyd Centre during the week of collection from December 12 to 16, as well as sorting the food and toys. The Kinsmen pack the hampers on the day prior to pick up and assist clients on pick up day."

This year, the Hamper program will get a welcomed extra hand from high school students in the CDDHS Business Leadership Class, taught by Julie Senese. The students will be assisting with all aspects of the program, with the exception of client registration, as part of their final grade.

Six area churches will each donate 65 personal care items like toilet paper and body wash. The local Brownies are collecting 65 pairs of crazy socks.

"Last year the Kinettes donated many pairs of pyjamas and socks for kids and adults and they were greatly appreciated," says Ms. Ferguson.

She says she also "gets requests from people who want to sponsor families" and she "works with the local schools to make this happen."

The Christmas Hamper programs offers assistance to families with an ongoing need as well as to those who only use it once due to changes in personal circumstance, such as a temporary job loss.

"We get families with many different circumstances all are welcome if there is a need," says the organizer. "Under normal circumstances most of the families we assist can make ends meet, but Christmas is tough due to the extra financial demands of the season. Who doesn't want special holiday food and a gift or two under the tree for their kids?"

According to the program, recipients of the program receive a grocery gift card that can be used for the purchase of a turkey or ham, non-perishable food items, a bag of milk, a large block of cheese and a pound of butter.

Lennox Farms is donating a crate of oranges, turnip and cabbage to each family and Downey Potato farms donates a bag of potatoes for each family. Parents can select toys for all kids under 12 and children between 12 and 18 receive a gift certificate for a local store. Each family is also given a bag of personal care items and the Rotary and Lions Clubs donate chocolates.

There is even a special treat for family pets.

The wonderful volunteers at the Christmas Hamper program need donations of toys for children from 0 to 12, gift cards from local grocery stores in \$10 or \$25 denominations, gift cards for teens from Giant Tiger or Urban Planet, and cash donations to purchase gift cards, additional fresh items for the hampers and any toys to ?fill in the gaps? for smaller children in the program.

?The Shelburne Christmas Hamper program is morphing into a true community event with the service clubs, churches, schools, Town Hall, businesses and individuals working together to do their part to make sure everyone has a great Holiday,? says Ms. Ferguson.

To donate please contact Bobbi Ferguson at 519-278-4578 or email [shelburnechristmashampers@gmail.com](mailto:shelburnechristmashampers@gmail.com)

Drop off locations for food and toys:

Shelburne Town Hall

Royal Bank

Shelburne Arena (CDRC)

Turn it Out Dance Studio

Royal LePage

Centre Dufferin District High School

Glenbrook Elementary School

Highland Heights Elementary School

Shelburne Primary Eye Care

Mel Lloyd Centre Community Meeting Room (December 12 to 16 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.)