



Centretown Emergency Food Centre Annual Report, 2021

Introduction: The Centretown Emergency Food Centre is the local food bank for people living east of Lyon Street over to the Rideau Canal, as well as in Old Ottawa East, Old Ottawa South and the Glebe. Most of our clients are single men and women living in Centretown, who access our service on foot, but significant numbers, including large families, are from the other neighbourhoods. The Food Centre operates three days a week, Monday, Tuesday and Friday, in space rented from a local church, and is run by three part-time staff with the help of a large number of dedicated volunteers. Our part-time Manager reports through a Management Committee to our parent organization, the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee, an ecumenical group of 22 local churches.

The Food Centre offers a 4 -to 5 -day supply of food, according to the client's family size, on a monthly basis. Our food "hamper" includes meat, dairy, fresh fruits and vegetables as well as staples such as pasta, pasta sauce, cereals, canned vegetables and beans, legumes, sugar, rice. Due to COVID restrictions, we prepackage as much of the food offered as possible, and provide a selection of other items for clients to choose from. While our guideline for service is once a month, during COVID, our policy has been to assist clients a second time when requested.

Our client numbers, funding sources, as well as highlights from our activities during the year are summarized below.

Food Centre 2021 Client Numbers

	New	Visits	Adults	Children	Total	Families	Singles
Jan 2021	40	344	383	95	478	70	274
Feb 2021	32	306	361	50	411	56	250
Mar 2021	41	337	418	70	488	73	264
Apr 2021	28	318	389	70	459	61	257
May 2021	17	326	396	74	470	68	258
June 2021	24	324	400	71	471	67	257
July 2021	31	341	414	58	472	67	274
August 2021	28	329	407	60	467	62	267
Sept 2021	33	331	399	67	466	65	266
Oct 2021	40	362	444	73	517	76	286
Nov 2021	50	403	486	100	584	84	319
Dec 2021	34	377	450	67	517	59	318
2021 Total	397	4105	4912	880	5790	809	3300

Approximately 35 households in our catchment area receive home delivery from the Ottawa Food Bank each month and are not included in the statistics above.

Financial:

- In 2021 a major portion of our financial support came from direct donations CCSAC churches, a large grant from CCSAC and the proceeds of CCSAC's annual Walkathon.
- An annual grant from the City of Ottawa was another substantial source of our funding. In the early fall, the City notified us that we would not qualify for its new 5-year funding stream, but has given us transitional funding for 2022.
- A generous donation from the Ottawa Food Bank (OFB) helped provide extras for clients at Christmas, and we also received OFB funding for new refrigeration and shelving (to be acquired early in 2022).
- We also received generous donations from local businesses, individual donors, local schools, organizations and foundations.
- A grant from HRDC helped pay for our summer student and part-time client service assistant.
- The CEFC was included among the recipients of this year's Christmas Cheer breakfast and was featured in a video shown during the Christmas Cheer breakfast.
- Such support allowed us to finish the year in a surplus position.

Food sources and distribution

- Each week we receive a large food order, including dairy and fresh produce, from the Ottawa Food Bank. The only items that we purchase from them is powdered milk.
- We also place a large order at a local supermarket to ensure we have sufficient protein and
- Another portion of the food we distribute is purchased from a produce company
- Throughout the year, many of our churches do monthly food drives, and almost all local schools do a major food drive once a year. A local bakery donates their surplus baking to us weekly, while many individuals bring us donated food
- In the summer we benefit from produce donated by local community gardens as well as individual gardens.
- Since we serve people from many different backgrounds, we try to offer options to meet various ethnic tastes. We are able to help clients in English, French, Arabic and Spanish, and our food selection sheets are available in Mandarin and Farsi.

Staffing/Administration

- The Food Centre is capably managed by a part-time Manager, Diana Mahaffy and a part-time assistant, Billy El-Cheikh.
- The Manager reports to a Management Committee, appointed by CCSAC, our parent organization, which in turn reports to CCSAC.
- For much of the year, our former summer student, Kevin Chatter, worked as part-time Assistant. In the fall, when he resigned, we hired Aimee Brito Castro to replace him.
- Vaccine policy was established in early September to ensure the safety of staff, clients and volunteers.
- Another student, Ed Fites, worked part-time during the first months of the year; Todd Ruthig and Doug McMillan helped as honorarium workers to unload delivery vans and such.
- In order to maintain social distancing, the number of volunteers working has remained limited to two people per shift. In the fall, we added an extra shift each day to safely serve clients downstairs.

Management Committee:

- The Management Committee (MC) met monthly on Zoom throughout the year, except in July and August.
- In May we held two strategic planning sessions under the guidance of Joe Gunn, which resulting in a new Mission Statement, Terms of Reference and Communication Strategy.
- Under the guidance of our Manager, and with the continued spread of COVID in the community, the MC adapted a strict vaccination policy in the early fall.
- Martha Musgrove, our CCSAC liaison member, reports regularly to the MC about the Ottawa Community Food Partnership, and keeps us up to date with broad needs in our community.

Community Connections

- In the summer we received donations of fresh produce from several of the local community gardens. The products are very popular with our clients and help us encourage a well-balanced diet.
- In the fall we wrote to the school in our catchment area. All but one of the local public and separate schools responded with wonderful food drives for us.
- We maintain an up-to-date list of local meal programs to help assist our clients, many of whom have little in the way of food storage and cooking facilities.
- A donation of a large number of new, high-quality children's books has enabled us to offer reading materials to our client families with young children.
- Throughout the year, the Ottawa Food Bank has been our closest working partner, supplying PPE, extra food, special funding, training seminars, and expertise.
- We reached out to the Dalhousie Food Cupboard, a neighboring food centre, to discuss accommodation needs and City Funding.
- We work closely with Centre 507, the adult drop-in in the same building, and this year have reached out to strengthen our connections with the Centretown Community Health Centre, the Housing and Youth Programs at the YM/YCCA on Argyle, and with Ottawa Community Housing.
- Our Manager is helping Glebe Collegiate establish a food bank in the school, while Lisgar Collegiate is arranging for three students to volunteer on Monday to help unload deliveries.

Communications

- Our volunteer webmaster, Elspeth Tory, added information on our news and events throughout the year, and updated website with information re holiday closings.
- Gary van der Meer, Rector of St. John's, interviewed our Manager on December 10 for a short video that was shown at their December 19th service.
- An end of the year email and letter were sent out to our mailing lists in December.
- Chris Kincaid, VP of MediaPlus Advertising, has joined our Management Committee and as of November is heading our Communication Committee.

Facilities

- With the support of our landlord, Centretown United Church, we have been able to keep the Centre open, and to serve our clients indoors.
- Throughout the year, we have encountered various challenges maintaining social distance to protect health and safety of our clients and staff. Allison Dingle, Chair of MC and Kristine Burr, Chair of CCSAC, have been engaged in various meetings with Centretown United Church re protocols for the building and improvements to our accommodation.

- We started the year serving clients upstairs, but at the request of our landlord, shifted our service to downstairs in October. This requires more volunteers and an extra layer of precaution in our basement space.
- In late December there were two incidents of leaks in the heating pipe in our main room. The first time a leak was discovered we were not able to open that day. The pipe has been repaired twice with a temporary patch, and our landlord will arrange permanent repair in the summer when the heating system is off.

Special December activities:

- We provided Centretown United Church with a list of names and contact information for 40 client families to receive Christmas hampers that were distributed, and gratefully received, on December 20.
- All other regular clients were offered a \$20 grocery card to help them over the holiday season.
- A number of schools (Lisgar, Hopewell, Lady Evelyn, First Avenue, Glashan) held food in December, filling our storage space with useful items for use in early winter when food donations dwindle.

In conclusion: The Food Centre is grateful to all its donors, supporters and loyal volunteers, and wishes to thank in particular CCSAC Chair Kristine Burr who continues to provide steady leadership and encouragement under challenging circumstances.

CEFC STATISTICS 2021 vs. HISTORICAL PATTERN

