

GLOUCESTER EMERGENCY FOOD CUPBOARD



ANNUAL REPORT

2020



From Our Board Co-Chairpersons

With tremendous pride, we present the Annual Report of the Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard (GEFC).

As an emergency food bank, we act as the community safety net, and this year, with the COVID-19 pandemic, especially so. GEFC, like all agencies, workplaces, and citizens, has had to adapt, often at lightning speed, to the seemingly ever-changing landscape of province-wide lockdowns, supply shortages, and public health measures.

Our Executive Director, Erin O'Manique, has proven her exceptional leadership, ensuring zero interruption in services, all while continuing to honour our core principles of meeting people where they are at and providing healthy, fresh food to over 2,600 people, amidst a shrinking volunteer base. All this while putting the health and safety of staff, volunteers and people who need food first. This year even saw us open our doors to Ottawa Public Health for a day, becoming a rapid COVID testing site!

Along with our Office Manager, Heather Kimbell, Erin found innovative ways to continue safely serving people who need food, including launching an online appointment system in September, anticipating the need to reduce the time waiting outside for services as the cold weather approached. GEFC was also able to successfully maintain its shopping model and avoid providing prepackaged food boxes. This allowed people to continue to choose what they needed, including culturally appropriate food – an important value of ours.

Despite the immense challenges placed on service delivery this year, the board completed its strategic planning. The plan reflects the GEFC staff, board members', and volunteers' hard work and dedication over the past year. It provides the framework for our vision of creating a more resilient, connected and vibrant community where everyone has access to good food. To do this, we will be increasing opportunities in our community to access and share good food through innovative food programming, partnerships and civic engagement.

Thank you to all of our supporters and the fantastic and caring community that continues to help us achieve our goal of providing good food to the community. We are fortunate to live in such a caring community. With your ongoing support and confidence, we will continue to build a more food secure future for everyone. As vaccines roll out and we start making our way to a new normal, we look forward to meeting together in person for future meetings, including next year's AGM.

Audrey Susin and Nadine Mansour



2020

Board of Directors

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Audrey Susin
Nadine Mansour

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Jim Bogues

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Sofi Blazeski

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Amélie Lavictoire
Andrea Balfour
Elaine O'Neill
Linda-Lou McQuinn
Sui-Ling Leung
Terrena Bennett

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Executive Director:

Erin O'Manique

Office Manager:

Heather Kimbell

Summer Students

Adèle Bluteau
Morag Mackenzie

From Our Executive Director

The year 2020 was remarkable in so many ways:

Covid-19 caused many organizations to work together in innovative ways, exemplified by the ***Cooking for a Cause*** project, which saw food-based businesses cooking meals for those who lost access to meal programs. It was win-win in that the program kept many small businesses afloat as they provided a needed service. These and other partnerships are outlined in the pages of this report.

Our community really rallied behind us so the one thing we weren't concerned about was fundraising. Our usual donors increased their donations and we received very generous first-time donations too. We were unable to hold fundraising events in 2020 (and likely 2021 as well) in anticipation of our new facility, but we were still able to add to our capital reserve. Being able to focus on coping with the pandemic itself was incredible.

This year gave us a new vocabulary:

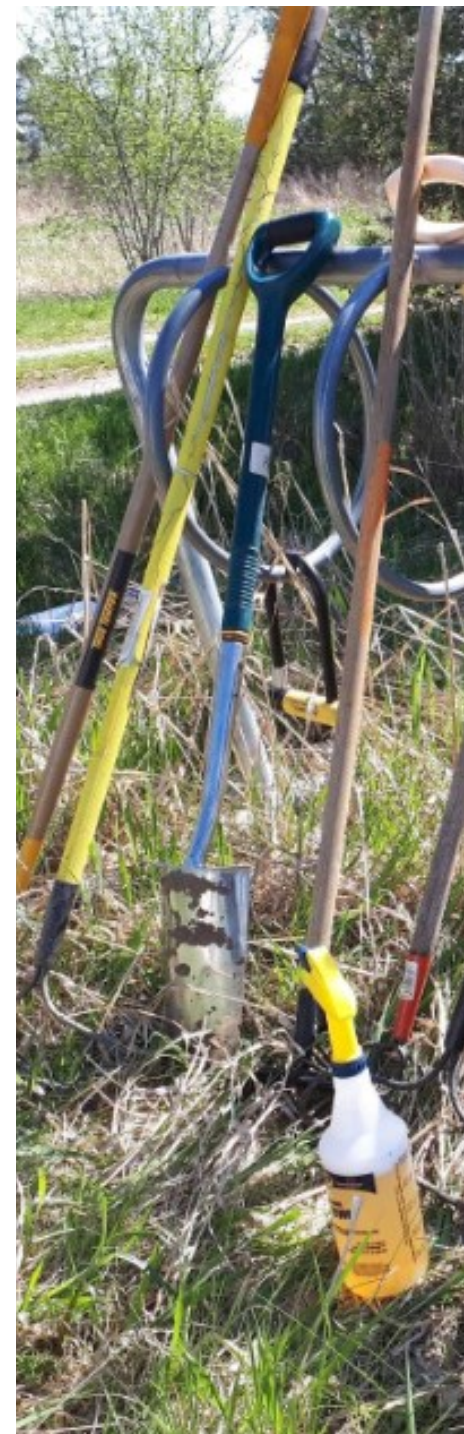
PIVOT: Every business, workplace and organization had to figure out new ways of doing things – fast! Our priority was keeping volunteers and people who needed food safe, while still providing fresh healthy food and as much choice as possible. We adapted our space and our shifts, upped our cleaning protocols, ordered masks, sanitizer and HEPA filters, and developed an appointment system that is accessible to everyone – online, by phone, or drop-in. In the early days it seemed like we were making major changes on a weekly basis.

SOCIAL DISTANCING: It very quickly became apparent that this new expectation was much easier for some than others. Living in shared accommodation, or in an apartment building with several children, without access to recreational space; having to take the bus or depend on shared rides; being an essential worker with no sick leave; needing to share child care – there are so many circumstances that make social distancing virtually impossible. The most glaring issue the pandemic highlighted was poverty and how it grinds down resiliency. It highlighted the fact that those earning minimum wage (65 per cent of the food insecure are employed) are the most essential AND the most vulnerable. It highlighted the inadequacy of social assistance rates.

SYSTEMIC RACISM: 2020 also highlighted how racialized people are more likely to experience poverty. I recently heard a great statement: it's not race, but racism that is a determinant of health.

We witness first-hand how economic and social inequity prevail here at the food bank. In our new strategic plan, we are seeking innovative, safe ways to provide healthy food and use food to connect with communities experiencing poverty and inequity. I hope that the experience of this pandemic gives us even more resolve to accomplish this.

Erin O'Manique



Coping with a Pandemic

When Covid-19 hit and the Province of Ontario announced the first lock-down on March 18, we had to move fast:

- Service moved outside - only volunteers came into the building
- For two weeks we gave out gift cards provided by the **Ottawa Food Bank** (augmented with fresh foods, milk and eggs that remained) to minimize need for volunteers
- **Feed Ontario** donated pre-boxed hampers which we distributed temporarily: they required fewer volunteers to sort and pack, were sanitized, and provided more food than usual
- We gave out soap, masks (hundreds made by community members) and public health information in multiple languages

Once we adjusted we went back to our regular service, placing a priority on maintaining our choice model. We increased amount and quality of food we give, so people could stay home longer:

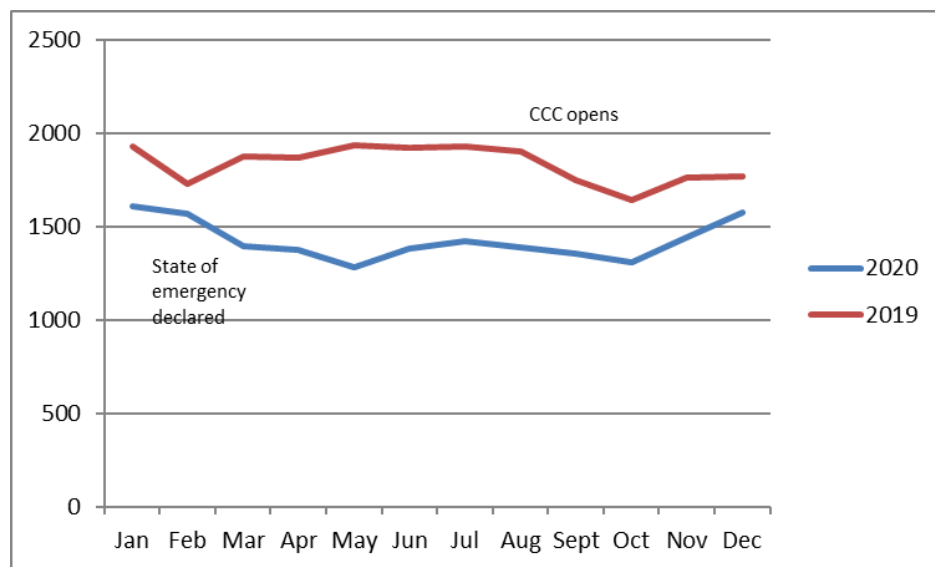
- March-August: intake/preferences taken outside on “walk-up” basis
- Volunteers logged the visits, filled the orders and rolled them outside on sanitized carts
- September: our online appointment system was implemented (can also phone in and walk-up), with our new website
- We implemented a clear communications strategy for two months before which ensured good uptake

We implemented all public health procedures and guidelines:

- Symptom self-screening at the door, hand washing, recording for contact tracing, masks, sanitizing surfaces
- We purchased five HEPA filters since we have no ventilation in our aging building
- We rearranged furnishings to optimize distancing
- **Heather Kimbell**, our Office Manager, started working full time

Like most foodbanks our numbers dropped as people stayed home, thought we were closed, or used the relief programs implemented by the federal government. Research shows less than 10% of food insecure people actually used a food program in May 2020. We saw the numbers increase over the year. Our numbers are also down from 2019 due to the opening of the **Community Compassion Centre** in Orleans, which took away about 15% of our catchment area. Over **2,600** people used the foodbank in 2020, a total of **17,140 times**; **44%** were children.

Year End Statistics			
	2020	2019	2018
“Services”	17,140	22,043	23,965
Individuals	2,648	3,118	3,354
Under 18	1,177 (44%)	1,432 (46%)	1,593 (47%)
Households	805	937	1,084
Household visits	4,703	6,069	6,562
New to us	275 (34%)	294 (31%)	438 (40%)



Ottawa Food Bank

As a member agency of the **Ottawa Food Bank** we were well supported. Due to the generous donations they received, the OFB was able to double our allocations resulting in reducing our spending on food. They also supported us with information from **Ottawa Public Health**, gift cards early in the pandemic, and extra funds to purchase a new cooler for fresh produce.

Government Support

As a recipient of core funding from the **City of Ottawa Community and Social Services**, we benefited from a network of information and support through the **Human Needs Task Force**. We also received funding from the **Federal Government** through the **Canada Summer Jobs** program. We are grateful to our political representatives, **City Councillor Tim Tierney**, and **Member of Parliament Mona Fortier**, for their support and opportunities to contribute to ongoing dialogues throughout the year.

Volunteers

When the pandemic hit, two-thirds of our volunteers decided to stay safe at home. Throughout the year **150 people** contributed **8,375 hours** (down from 13,251 hours in 2019). This equals **4.6 full time staff**, a reduction of almost 3 full time staff from 2019! Eight new volunteers joined temporarily in 2020, and we had **42** volunteers at the farm. Several volunteers have retired as a result of Covid-19.

Other Good Stuff

Running a foodbank in a pandemic is a compelling media story and our efforts were featured in an **Ottawa Citizen** story on April 3rd. We were thrilled to host the **CBC Ottawa Morning** team with **Robyn Bresnahan** for their first on-site broadcast since the pandemic started, on June 12 right beside our farm plot! We also loved how creative people got during lockdown—one family sold home-baked bread to their neighbours and raised over \$1,000 for us! **Telesat** staff held an online garage sale, and the **Ottawa University Stocking Drive** went virtual too, resulting in over \$2,000. And our volunteers received **#TulipsofThanks** and were included in the [Tulip Festival Video](#). The penultimate page lists all of the groups and organizations that found a way to support their neighbours through us during this epic year.



Partnerships

Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre (EORC)

Our partners at the **EORC** came to the same conclusion we did—people who are vulnerable or need to quarantine due to Covid-19 need to have food delivered. So we teamed up. We provide the food, they provide the vehicles and drivers, and together we identify those that need deliveries of food in our community. This program will continue after the pandemic is over for those who are housebound.

Ottawa Community Food Partnership—Cooking for a Cause

Cooking for a Cause is a new collaboration of non-profits and small food-based businesses created by the **Ottawa Community Food Partnership** in response to the pandemic. Restaurants and caterers that had to close are preparing frozen meals which are distributed by over 20 agencies to replace meal programs that have had to close too. Funds come from both government grants and crowd sourcing. Keeping small businesses afloat and providing much needed healthy meals - it's a win-win!

ONFE School Breakfast Program

When schools closed and learning moved online many families lost access to an important resource—school breakfast and snack programs. We are distributing boxes filled with the same familiar foods to families with school age children who come to the food bank.

Ottawa Mission Food Truck

This new program was launched at the GEFC in September and since then it comes by every Wednesday to serve hot meals to anyone in the community. It stops at 15 other locations across the city too.

Algonquin College SLIDE Program

Thanks to the brilliance of our office manager **Heather**, ably assisted by volunteer **Les**, we developed an online appointment system that integrates telephone appointments and deliveries, lets people select their preferences, and prints out lists, orders and delivery slips. **Algonquin College** computer science students made some refinements to make it even more manageable and robust.



Good Food for All

There is more than one way to tackle food insecurity, and for many people the dignity and activity of growing their own food has multiple benefits.

Arrowsmith-Thyme-less Community Garden

Our first season managing this garden happened in a pandemic! The Provincial government declared community gardens essential and we went forth with new protocols and signage. Thanks to our garden coordinator **Jaide**, and all of the other gardeners, we had a very successful season.

Beacon Hill Community Garden Network

This network aims to grow fresh produce, increase social connections and share food knowledge within the local community, and donate extra produce to the GEFC. This year with funds from the **Ottawa Community Foundation**, the GEFC contributed to the new community garden at **Rothwell United Church**. We look forward to celebrating the harvest and holding other events across the network!

Seeds and Soil Home Garden Project

The **City of Ottawa Covid-19 Human Needs Task Force Sub-committee on Food Insecurity** initiated this project as a result of the pandemic. Seeds, soil (and in our case seedlings) were made available to households across the city, and the GEFC hosted a distribution site. It will be repeated in 2021.

Plant-a-Row, Donate-a-Row (PARDAR)

PARDAR encourages gardeners to grow extra food for their local food program, and our 1/3 acre plot at the Just Food farm exemplifies that. Under the leadership of our summer student, Morag, 42 volunteers grew beautiful, fresh, organic produce for the GEFC, much of it from donated seedlings!

The Commons/New Roots

In partnership with **Just Food**, we support refugee families, who were farmers, to grow food for themselves and learn about our climate and growing conditions. We supported nine extended families this year. CBC Ottawa did a lovely story on one of them, as did Edible Ottawa magazine.



Funding our Future

The year 2020 was unparalleled for us financially. It is clear that food banks were front of mind when the pandemic hit for those who were in a position to donate. While the amount raised from fundraising events decreased our community and the government stepped up in a big way. In addition to receiving almost \$200,000 in donations from individuals, we received \$50,000 from the **Federal Government** via the **Ottawa Food Bank**. And we were up in donations in most categories compared to 2019.

Some Highlights

Dominion City Brewing Company

Our favourite brewery outdid themselves this year. Despite also having to pivot themselves in March 2020, the brewery thought about us and added a donation to the GEFC to their online checkout. Four months later they had raised an astounding **\$35,603** dollars, and an additional **\$6,000** in December. They are now a fundraising machine using this mechanism to raise funds for many other worthy causes too. Very good beer, and very good partners!

Greenbelt Church *Big Give Caravan*

Annual events, such as the *Big Give*, could not be held safely this year. But creative folks found a way to brighten the community and help others. In June a parade was held through a few neighbourhoods, complete with costumes, music and gift cards to give out, many that were donated to the GEFC. Food, cash and housewares were collected, for us and **Helping with Furniture**.

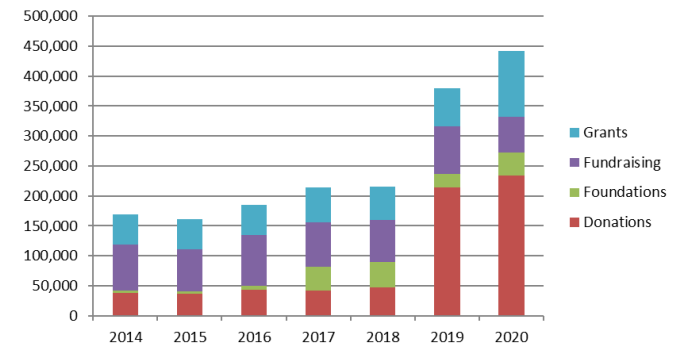
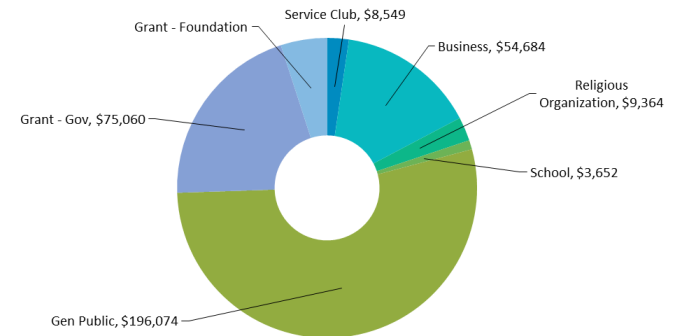
Clairmont Real Estate

Wayne and Lucie distributed **1,000 shopping bags** with a list of our most needed items to Beacon Hill neighbourhoods in December. They gathered and delivered them to the GEFC throughout the month giving us lots of Christmas foods and treats!

Mazon Canada

We are always grateful to the visionary people at **Mazon Canada Foundation** who have expanded from funding groceries to giving grants for equipment and growing food also. They make much of what we do at the farm possible. In addition to a **\$3,009** grant we also received **\$1,000** as a special pandemic grant this year.

What we did with the money: We **increased the amount of food** we give out. We **upgraded our computers and software** so we could implement our appointment system. We purchased a third **cooler** to be able to handle more fresh food, and we bought **five HEPA filters**. Our **office manager has been working full time**, which makes up a little for losing over 3 person-years worth of volunteers. In December we purchased over **\$60,000 in gift cards** to distribute. And we were able to add to both our **6-month operating reserve** and our **New Building Fund**, which now stands at **\$225,000**, thanks to last year's bequest and this year's generosity.



Our Community of Supporters

The GEFC provides the space and the infrastructure for community members and groups to ensure that no one goes hungry in our area. In addition to many individuals and families the following schools, churches, clubs, teams and businesses work with us by donating food, funds, conducting food drives and volunteering.

180 Fitness	Fruits Express	Pineview Community Association
40th Orleans Brownie Pack	Global Affairs Canada Employees	Pita Pit (Gloucester)
2020 Jasmine - Sutton Place	Gloucester High School	QuadReal Property Group
42nd Brownie Pack	Gloucester Horticulture Society	Quality Meats and Foods
Action Martial Arts	Gloucester North Lions Club	Quilty Pleasures Inc.
Alex Wolfe Real Estate	Gloucester Senior Adults Centre	Resurrection Lutheran Church
Algonquin College Slide Program	Greenbelt Church	Retired Skiers
Annunciation of the Lord Parish	Grow and Give Community Garden	Riverview Park Church of Christ
Beacon Hill Community Association	Herb & Spice Wellington	Rogers Group Employees
Benevity Community Impact Fund	Katherine Kurdyla Physiotherapy	Rothwell United Church
Boom! Savings! Charity Shopping Club	Kiwanis Club Of Orleans	Royal Canadian Legion- Branch 632
St Brother Andre Catholic School	Ladies Auxiliary Branch 632	St Helen's Anglican Church
Cadence Ecological Farm	Ladies Who Garden	St Kateri Tekawitha Catholic School
Cairine Wilson High School	Le Phare Elementary School	St Matthew High School
Capital Bees	Lester B. Pearson Secondary School	Subway (Canada)
Carson Grove Elementary School	Macartney Farms	TD Bank
Centre éducatif Séraphin-Marion	Mackenzie Investments	Telesat Canada Employees
Colonel By Secondary School	Mattamy Homes	The Beacon Learning Centre
Conquer Covid-19	MG Acoustics	The Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre Employees
Cosmic Adventures	MPAC Employees	Thomas D'Arcy McGee Catholic School
Curves (Montreal Road)	My Little Farm	Titan Performance
Ecole Elementaire Publique Seraphin-Marion	Myers Orleans	University Of Ottawa Employees
Enbridge Gas	NBL Plumbing	Urbandale Corporation
Export Development Canada Employees	Nerds on Site	Valecraft Homes Limited
Epiphany Anglican Church	Orchardview Montessori School	Wayne and Lucie Clermont Real Estate
Firehouse Subs	Orleans United Church	West End Learning Unlimited
Flying Squirrel Trampoline Park	Paroisse Saint-Gabriel	
Forest Valley Elementary School	Pine Grove Bible Church	

* We apologize if we have inadvertently misspelled or omitted the name of any organization on this list and we ask that you please advise us of any errors.



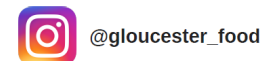
Our Sponsors and Partners



Our Memberships



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