

THE  
SHARING  
PLACE  
FOOD CENTRE

*A healthy community through access  
to nutritious foods.*

2021-2022  
IMPACT REPORT



The Sharing Place Food Centre is a grassroots, not-for-profit, community food centre, offering a diverse set of programs that address food insecurity and poverty in Orillia and surrounding areas. We reduce food insecurity through food education programs, community partnerships and advocating for food security, and we believe in a healthy community through access to nutritious food.

## A Message from Chris



With another year behind us, it is always important to look back at what we have experienced and how we have managed the challenges and successes that defined us from July 2021 to June 2022. It is incredible to think about all the people and organizations that helped us achieve our goals, but more importantly, helped us to work through our challenges. We are reminded each week of how lucky we are to be surrounded by an incredible network of support that helps our organization grow and become better at what we do. This is something that we do not take for granted and we are thankful for every person who has contributed to the change we are trying to make in our community.

However, individuals experiencing poverty are not as fortunate as The Sharing Place Food Centre. A significant number of people living in poverty are faced with a crumbling foundation of support during some of the most challenging moments in their lives, without a team or funds to help solve those problems. In 2022 this has been compounded by the increased cost of food, gas, housing, and other essential items. The increasing cost of life's necessities are not just unfortunate for those living in poverty, they are catastrophic. It has placed many families and individuals in the position of having to choose between paying for rent or buying food. Unfortunately, it looks to be getting worse as we navigate these challenging global issues.

Addressing the lack of income and fractured support network for those living in poverty will be what The Sharing Place Food Centre is focusing on in the 2022/23 fiscal year.

We know that through our Food Recovery program and strategic sourcing, and with the labour of our exceptional volunteer team, we can take \$1 in donations and convert that into \$5 in healthy food. We distribute this food through our Food Bank and Meals-4-Change programs, and to 21 local schools through our School Fuel program. This maximizes the return on our donor's support in improving access to healthy food for all members of our community.

The fractured support network that exists for many individuals in poverty has only been exacerbated by COVID-19. The opportunities for social connection and coming together in groups have been limited. We look forward to building out our programs to provide many more opportunities for people with lived experience in poverty to come together in a dignified and welcoming space. As I write this, we are almost through the construction process of our new commercial kitchen and improved Food Bank layout. We look forward to welcoming our community into these new spaces where stories and recipes will be shared, people will connect and help create a healthier and more loving community.

The team at The Sharing Place Food Centre understands that providing people with free food and a place to connect will not solve poverty. With this knowledge we are working with a select group of strategic committees to establish long-term solutions to poverty. We will continue to direct our time and energy to improving the system of support for those in poverty, and advocate for bold and effective income and housing solutions. Without significant changes in how we deliver our social support services we will continue to see an increased need for our services and a decrease in our community's health.

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2021/22 Impact Report and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions about the work we do for our community.

Kind Regards,

*Chris Peacock, Executive Director  
The Sharing Place Food Centre*

# The Reason for the Need

“

“Food insecurity is not just a lack of food, but rather an experience of pervasive material deprivation due to financial constraints.”

(PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research)

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## Levels of Food Insecurity



(PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research)

## Cost of Housing

Average home price in Orillia up **36.8%** in one year causing increased rental costs and shortages.



## Inflation

Inflation increased to 6.8%, reaching an 18-year high.



**50%** of visitors cite inability to pay for housing and utilities as the reason for food bank usage.



Feed Ontario – Hunger Report 2021



A family of four will see a **7% increase** in the cost of food in 2022.

Agri-Food Analytics Lab, Canada's Food Price Report 2022

## Low Income



**1 in 3** Ontarians are working in jobs with low pay.

The Closing the Enforcement Gap Research Group 2020

Hourly wages rose by **0.2 per cent** in the first three quarters of 2021.



The Conference Board of Canada, 2020, September 21

Benefit amounts for social assistance recipients have been **frozen since 2018**.



Who's Hungry Report 2021

# Our Programs

## Meals-4-Change

This will be an exciting year for Meals-4-Change as construction of The Sharing Place Kitchen will be completed late summer 2022. The new kitchen will provide the opportunity to develop programming that results in even more healthy, ready to eat meals produced and distributed, transferable food preparation skills for participants, more types of prepared food items shared with an increased number of people, and the creation of a social arena where people feel they are connecting and contributing to their community.

2021/22

### Meals-4-Change Impact

- 24,982 total meals prepared and distributed



Goal for 2022/23 is to increase the total meals prepared and distributed to 36,000



*I wanted to thank you for the delicious and healthy meal that was provided to me at The Sharing Place. I thoroughly enjoyed the Chana Masala with basmati rice!!! I have to say that everything about my experience at The Sharing Place was beyond my expectations and greatly appreciated. Everyone was absolutely fantastic and it's uplifting to experience such compassion during times of hardship. Many, many thanks."*

**Janice Wooder - Member**

## Food Bank

The Food Bank program at The Sharing Place Food Centre provides dignified access to a 6-day emergency supply of food, 14 times a year. We respect people's preferences and offer quality food, with accommodations for dietary and cultural requests. 2022 will see the completion of renovations to ensure The Centre is accessible to all, providing healthy food in a welcoming environment. The volunteers who help to run the Food Bank program are an understanding, dedicated group who work together to address food insecurity, poverty, and stigma in Orillia.



## 2021/22 Food Bank Impact

- 1,360 people, on average, visit the Food Bank each month
- 13,266 volunteer hours
- 989 new members served



Goal for 2022/23 is to increase the amount of fresh, healthy food distributed from 50% to 60% per grocery order, and to create a more dignified, welcoming experience through renovations and volunteer/staff training.



*I had never been in this situation before. When I was able to work, I used to donate. I didn't want people to know that I needed help and when I finally called, I was terrified. The person who answered the phone was so kind to me and made me feel comfortable. I have my confidence back because of the way I have been treated by the people at The Sharing Place.*

*Lillian Sheppard - Member*

## Food Recovery



The Sharing Place Food Centre partners with local farmers, grocery stores, and food service providers to recover surplus food that is within a few days of its best before

date. We collect, prepare, and store this food in a responsible way, meeting all local food safety and health regulations. This allows us to distribute food to our members and share with community partners while it is still fresh, or after it has been prepared and stored through our Meals-4-Change program. Any waste is transported to local farms for compost and animal feed. The Food Recovery program is a successful collaboration between food industry partners, providing access to healthy, nutritious food and contributing to a more balanced circular food economy.



*I have seen a big increase in the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables over just a few years ago. Now there is a produce rack of lots of fresh stuff to choose from. I am not able to afford fresh things like lettuce, asparagus, peppers, and tomatoes. I buy a bag of frozen beans and a bag of frozen corn, and that's what I eat for vegetables all month. But now, The Sharing Place gives me fresh things that I am not able to buy myself.*

*Samantha Lions - Member*

## 2021/22 Food Recovery Impact

- 376,133 lbs of fresh, healthy food recovered from grocery stores and farms
- 22,868 lbs diverted from waste to local farmers



Goal for 2022/23 is to increase the amount of food recovered to 425,000 lbs.

# School Fuel

The School Fuel program began in 2020, distributing healthy breakfast foods and snack bags to students every school day. Food is safely delivered to local schools and local agencies to provide healthy snacks for children and youth in the Orillia area. When schools are closed, and throughout the summer, we work with school staff and local agencies to provide healthy snack bags for children and youth in the Orillia area. Only one in four households that experience food insecurity use a food bank. The School Fuel program reaches food insecure households that do not access our Food Bank program.



*We know that students don't learn well when they are hungry. Quite often students will have a clementine or an apple before the learning even begins, and then the students are in a place where they are more able to learn because they are not hungry.*

*Just recently, we had a parent call and say, 'I don't have food for lunches, but I'd really like to send my kids to school. Do you have something there for them?' Because of the partnership with The Sharing Place Food Centre, we actually do have lunches for them that we provide.*

*If our school didn't have the School Fuel program, there would be a big need and I would say that the staff members would be providing that food from their lunches. We are very thankful."*

**Jennifer Cornick, Principal - Harriet Todd Public School**



## 2021/22 School Fuel Impact

- 4,245 students have access to healthy breakfast foods and snacks each school day, an increase of 2,605 students over last year
- Food is safely delivered to 21 school partners and five agency partners



**Goal for 2022/23 is to increase the amount of healthy food options for students in the coming year.**



# Our Plans for the Future

## Areas of Focus

- › Poverty
- › Social isolation
- › Dignified services
- › Healthy food access
- › Circular food system

## Community Gaps

- › Low income, high housing costs, and rising inflation impacting food security
- › Lack of affordable, social, food share/food preparation programs
- › Stigma attached to accessing food services
- › Inability for community members to travel to and transport food
- › Waste in our food system

## Solutions

- › **Develop and deliver programming in The Sharing Place Kitchen**, allowing us to offer social, food share programming to marginalized populations and expand our Meals-4-Change program. This will result in ready-made soups, breads, and meals to be shared with community members through the Food Bank program and community partner agencies.
- › **Develop and deliver Service with Dignity training** for all staff, volunteers, and Board of Directors. Individuals who have accessed programming will have the opportunity to be involved in development and provide feedback, reinforcing person centred, dignified food access.
- › **Continue working as a partner in our community's circular food system** by collaborating with food industry partners to recover surplus food for use in our programs and transporting waste to local farms, and transitioning to environmentally responsible, compostable packaging in our Meals-4-Change program.
- › **Involve community members and collaborate with partners** to identify the structures that keep people in poverty and advocate for systemic change and long-term solutions in addition to meeting basic needs.

# Here's How You Can Help

### Donate

[sharingplaceorillia.org](http://sharingplaceorillia.org)

Become a recurring donor and donate weekly, monthly, quarterly, or on an annual basis.

### Volunteer

[sharingplaceorillia.org/how-to-help-2/](http://sharingplaceorillia.org/how-to-help-2/)

### Like and Follow Us

@sharingplaceorillia

### Partner

[christine@sharingplaceorillia.org](mailto:christine@sharingplaceorillia.org)

Partner with us to raise funds, collect food, or help deliver programs and services.

### Sign up for The Feed

[sharingplaceorillia.org/thefeed/](http://sharingplaceorillia.org/thefeed/)

### Invite Chris to speak at your event

[chris@sharingplaceorillia.org](mailto:chris@sharingplaceorillia.org)

