

Community Cupboard puts on Christmas dinner

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By Kristena Schutt-Moore

The North Hastings Community Cupboard has started assembling the hampers for the annual Christmas hamper program as well as putting together a community take-out Christmas dinner, and is looking for community support. This program helps many area families celebrate the holiday season so The Bancroft Times asked the NHCC chair Monica Lumley-Piercey about the program.

Q: What are the Christmas Hampers made up of?A: Not the same. I hadn't heard of the Tenthory's. NHCC does a Holiday Hamper every year. See attached flyer for more details. We typically have anywhere between 140-150 households each year. with well over 100 households registered to date. New registrants are added daily. We provide a turkey (ham or chicken if turkey is not suitable) some standard traditional holiday foods, a grocery card so families can add their own traditional favourites, and some assorted extras should they be donated (small toys, candies, stocking stuffers, hats, mitts).

Q: How do people donate to the NHCC hamper program?A: Monetary and shopping card donations can be made in person at the food bank 2 Madawaska Street. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursdays 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., e-transferred to northhastingscc@gmail.com or through our Canada Helps online donation account. <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/the-north-hastings-community-cupboard/>. Food donations and small gifts will also be accepted at the food bank and in the donation bins at No Frill's, Foodland, IDA, and now at Re/Max Country Classics on Hastings Street.

Q: How do people sign up for a hamper?A: Drop by the food bank before Dec. 11 during the hours listed above to ensure items are reserved for your family. Late registrations are not guaranteed to have the same quantity of items available and may not have shopping cards. Please bring ID for each member of the household you are claiming.

Q: How will the hampers be given out, where and when?A: Each household will be contacted to arrange pickup when hampers are ready, which could be between Dec. 16 and 23.

Q: The Christmas meal, how many people do you expect and do people have to sign up for it?A: We already serve an average of 100 meals per day at The Cupboard Cafe, seven days a week at Club 580 and we have made the commitment to always have a hot meal available. Our philosophy is quite simply that hunger does not simply go away on weekends and holidays. We have big hearts and enjoy serving through the holidays when so many people struggle. The holiday meal will consist of turkey, stuffing, potatoes, gravy, cranberries, vegetables, desserts, and beverages, and will be served in takeout containers between 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Christmas Day. All are welcome. We will estimate 100 to 150 that day and folks simply need to show up with no need to register in advance.

Q: What inspired the Christmas meal?A: We had so much fun serving Thanksgiving dinner that we knew Christmas was also in order. To witness the faces on those special days and to extend compassion and good cheer to everyone builds stronger communities and better immune systems for all. We genuinely care for every single person who accesses our services. This is also the second time we've opened for Christmas Day. We served a smaller version of Christmas dinner at the food bank two years ago that was spearheaded and deliciously prepared by former board secretary, Donna Chenoweth and her husband Dale. The day was so special we were encouraged to make sure we were available to the community as much as possible throughout the holidays!

Q:- Are you looking for volunteers for that night?A: We have enough volunteers assisting us at this time and we have to be cautious of social distancing as we follow the guidelines given by the Health Unit. If anyone is interested in participating then we can take names and we will let you know if there's a space open. The crew at the local Curling Club have offered to help prepare some of the food in advance and we are going to be also using the Legion kitchen, in addition to Club 580 where The Cupboard Cafe serves the meals through the window until Dec. 31.

Q: How do people contact you for more information?A: Call 343-476-0177, email northhastingscc@gmail.com, or message us on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/NHCommunityCupboard>.

Q: Is there anything else new and exciting happening at the NHCC?A: Another important announcement of changes in service as of Jan. 1, 2021.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2021 the Cupboard Cafe will move from Club 580 and will continue serving meals seven days a week out of our home location of 2 Madawaska Street. Food will be served takeout style in the same fashion and through the window on our front porch. Cooking operations will be moved to the Legion kitchen. The hours of service will be changingFood bank services will remain Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Thursday evening 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The Cupboard Cafe is open seven days week from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.