

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021

Mission Statement: To act as a food bank for the benefit of the population of South East Ottawa, distributing food directly to the needy by arranging for, collecting, processing, storing and distributing food.

As our web site states “There is nothing complicated about what we do. Working with the Ottawa Food Bank, supported by the City of Ottawa and assisted by the generosity of the churches and local residents, HEFC receives food in bulk and purchases items that are needed to supplement what has been donated to ensure that the three-day, emergency supply of food that we provide will meet the nutritional needs of our clients.”

Because of COVID, there was no Annual General Meeting in 2020. In preparing this report, I reviewed my 2019 report and noted that it ended with “as I am now the longest serving member of the board, I can say that the situation has never been better.” In many ways, this is still true. Thanks to the city, the Ottawa Food Bank, contributions from local churches and the community, our financial position is sound. I must thank our financial team for all their hard work with a special thanks to Shaina who is stepping down as treasurer. She did outstanding work for HEFC and is handing over a smoothly running operation.

Most importantly, HEFC continued to operate throughout the pandemic. For many months, HEFC was open when the rest of the building was closed. The city sent staff to open up and close for us. Numbers were down, presumably because many clients hesitated to go out during the pandemic but also because the Ottawa Food Bank began to make deliveries to seniors and other vulnerable people who would normally have come to us.

Of course, it was Louisa on the front line, ensuring that HEFC provided food while respecting the often-changing directives regarding the measures to be taken to protect, as far as possible, the health of our clients and those who served them. Her concern for their well-being is exemplary. Truly, I do not know how we would have coped without her. Our buyer, Harold, continued despite the pandemic to scour the city to find the lowest prices for the foods we buy to supplement what we receive from the Ottawa Food Bank.

I do want to make a special mention of the contribution made by the Christmas Concert presented by Immaculate Heart of Mary parish. Over the years, the concert has been a mainstay of HEFC but the pandemic made an in-person concert impossible. Nevertheless, they organized a concert over the internet with access dependent on making a contribution to HEFC. It was a great concert and an amazing financial success raising more than \$11,000 for HEFC.

It was particularly gratifying to be able to provide gift cards to our clients, thanks primarily to the extra funding received from the Ottawa Food Bank which in turn received extra funding from the city. Obviously, we cannot provide everything our clients, who have many ethnic backgrounds, would like to have. The gift cards help them obtain the foods they enjoyed before coming to Canada. We don't know how the situation will evolve but the board hopes that we will be able to continue to provide gift cards.

In closing, I wish to share parts of a letter we received from a person who had a very difficult situation and was trying to get custody of his two sons. He wrote:

“I needed a place to bring them so I had to spend every penny I received from ODSP to rent a 3-bedroom townhouse in Herongate. Without the help from HEFC I wouldn't have been able to keep a place for my children when I did get custody. It took almost a decade to get full custody of both of my sons. During that time HEFC has been invaluable to our family.

One of the great things about getting support is that I receive things that I would never buy (when I had money) and learned how to cook a whole bunch of new things.

Another wonderful thing is that I have also have been able to share with other neighbors and friends some of the extra food that I didn't need, over the years I have personally helped 8 different families.

And now my children love my cooking and are doing wonderfully.

Any help or donations given to HEFC goes a long way to helping people who are really in need. I wouldn't have my family if it wasn't for their help.

Thank you for your time,

A truly happy father

For 30 years, HEFC has been helping thousands of our neighbours like this dad who are having trouble making ends meet.

I am extremely proud of what HEFC accomplished during the pandemic. With the support of the city, the Ottawa Food Bank and the community, I am confident that HEFC will continue to serve those in need in southeast Ottawa in the years to come. We are indeed an essential service.

Thank you.

Greg Yost