

# Community Ministries Shining Waters Regional Council

# Sharing Strategies and Information

During the COVID-19 PANDEMIC

APRIL 1, 2020

A shared document for community ministries in our region.  
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## FOOD MINISTRIES

What strategies are people following to respond?

- [Toronto Drop-in Network COVID-19 Guidance and Resources](#) A coalition of over 50 drop-in centres throughout Toronto that work with people who are homeless, marginally housed, or social isolated. Includes a list of safe practises.
- A pre-arranged drop off where people can come and deliver donations and just pop open their trunk that is unloaded by one member in a safe way
- Churches on-the-Hill Food Bank is sponsored by 8 ecumenical churches in the Yonge and St. Clair area and is still open. Housed in Timothy Eaton Memorial Church. I think it is by appointment and prepackaged bags are ready and put out on the sidewalk for pickup.
- public health is suggesting that volunteers in food banks wash hands every 15 minutes. wearing gloves is a false sense of security since people still tend to touch face and means all the time using the gloves could contaminate food
- <http://dpnchc.com/>
- We're supporting those who are isolated and need groceries. We used google forms to find people who had needs (like grocery shopping) and volunteers. We better and trained the volunteers on safe practices.
  - I need Help: <https://forms.gle/BiMAMGppood9ggWK9>
  - I want to Help: <https://forms.gle/hrqGrr9nkqg5moPAA>
  - Religious Organizations: <https://forms.gle/JWv1Mu5o1zdYkS117>

Alexa Gilmour is available to talk about grocery support and how to do it with PPE, hygiene practices and vetted volunteers.

What strategies are being used and considered for ongoing food prep and distribution of meals (knowing people can't gather in a dining room together)?

- Knox Out of the Cold affiliated with Agincourt Community Services Association to distribute food packages at major Scarborough intersections on Sunday for the homeless. Their Outreach team will deliver to "hot spots" for guests that "live rough".

Continuing until the end of April with assessment of need for May. Knox OOTC host groups, consisting of faith based and community organizations are facilitating preparation of packages. Supportive and uplifting literature is included in packages.

- Caledon Community Services - Bolton Site ... As much as we'd love to welcome volunteers to assist, we simply cannot. What we can do is encourage those that are able, to visit our website at [www.ccs4u.org/donate](http://www.ccs4u.org/donate) to make a gift which can then be turned into food/supplies and necessities for our clients.

Due to the nature of the challenges surrounding food donations at this time (cleaning, sorting, packing etc.) we are not making any emergency appeals to the public, but know that the members of your congregations may have it on their hearts to provide. If that is indeed the case, we will still be accepting non-perishable food items, at the rear doors of the Exchange (55 Healey Rd.) on Mondays, Wednesday & Fridays from 10:00am-3:00pm. Donations can be placed in the large red bins provided. Items high on the priority list include:

canned tuna and meat, canned vegetables, cereal, boxed milks (almond, rice, etc...), pasta sauce, peanut butter, juice boxes or family size cans

Thank you so much for all that you have done and continue to do for our community. If you know of any resident that requires assistance at this time, we want to help! Please have them reach out to us at 905-951-2300 ext. 276. Counseling and food support appointments can be arranged this way.

- Heart Lake Food Cupboard - Brampton - The Food Cupboard will be continuing to operate providing what they can in food and gift cards each week until they have further instructions from the City of Brampton. The City of Brampton will have information out to them shortly on what the Food Bank Task Force has planned for Food Banks around the City.

As donations of food cannot be picked up from MUC at this time and as Heart Lake United Church is closed Heart La gift card donations preferably from Fresh Co and Food Basics and/or cheques made out to Heart Lake United Church can be mailed to Valerie Benson, Heart Lake Food Cupboard Co-ordinator at the following address: 22 Peggy Crt, Brampton, Ontario, L6Z 3E8.

- St Luke's Toronto - The one outreach ministry continuing in our building is the Allen Gardens' Food Bank where we distribute to over 300 people each week. We can always need more food. Also, as many of our guests are elderly and vulnerable we would like to initiate some temperature assessment for them and then follow the public health guidelines of steps after that. Most live in multiple room buildings so if someone gets infected it spreads quickly. We are connected in interfaith and interagency groups in our area. My request is someone knows where I can order an infrared thermometer? I can't find a place to order one anywhere.
- Infrared Thermometer go to Omega.com mail order from Laval PQ  
<https://www.omega.ca/en/sensors-and-sensing-equipment/temperature/thermometers/p/OS542-Series?searchterm=infrared%20thermometer>

- Black Creek Farm is delivering good food boxes in the Jane Finch Community through food share. There is a cost for the food boxes so we are trying to raise funds for this cost.
- We have a traditional food bank. We sanitize everything, about 5 people come in at one time sanitize their hands, shop and exit through another door...volunteers wear gloves, are briefed each shift of any new practices, on our property, we have chalk lines spaced out 2 metres. Another program we do and are just about to do is with city of Toronto, good food boxes, membership program, geared to lower incomes approximately \$15 for fresh fruits and vegetables, that will begin next week, this food will be packed ahead of time and members have pick up times, and it all happens outdoors...
- We're also sharing on social media, just reaching out to anyone who might need help, even a phone call, running errands that sort of thing, we have volunteers from church ready to lend a hand, if needed
- Brampton Emmanuel We also support Regeneration Outreach, which prepare and serve breakfast (takeout) 7 days a week. Lunch is provided (takeout) Mon to Thur. They allow 5 people at a time into the hall to get a meal. We have 5 people from Emmanuel in the kitchen on Tuesday.
- Daily Bread Food Bank is using Amazon for delivery and also, dropping off food boxes at local libraries.
- Dixon Hall has 45 beds at 188 Carleton St. They also do 2 meals a week - Tues lunch and Fri dinner. This is where I am delivering fresh produce once a week - instead of it going to Eglinton St Georges Thurs drop in program

### **Where do we find up to date info on food distribution and housing**

- York Region Food Network has a listing of all food banks/community meals - take out etc. that are currently operating across York Region. The listing is on the home page [www.yrfn.ca](http://www.yrfn.ca)
- Thurs 8 am webinar given by Toronto Foundation. 4 agencies each week give an update re: housing and feeding centres. <https://torontofoundation.ca/better-toronto-coalition/> ... An excellent webinar resource to find out what agencies are doing to continue business as usual, if they can. The webinar is recorded, so you can watch when you have the time to do so.
- Jane Wedlock: United Way Greater Toronto and Regional Municipality of York are working collaboratively to work with other groups, agencies, partners to support vulnerable populations. There are two initial areas of focus - homelessness and food access. I am involved in the food access work and we are mapping services that available across the region and understanding which programs have been suspended, where there are gaps, opportunities for partnership etc. WE want to link the efforts agencies working on the front lines and faith communities and other groups that are

willing to help in the community. I will provide additional information as this starts to roll out.

- The City of Toronto FAQ on homeless is not on line. Email me if you want it [john.ryerson@bell.net](mailto:john.ryerson@bell.net)
- Toronto Drop In Network is one good network with a lot of city wide information <https://tdin.ca/announcement.php?id=2127&fbclid=IwAR245lv8RSq27yUO5BXiPRWXNQA345g58x3r0XpNIqok5l1ek0E75fJj9gU>
- Jane Wedlock: There is also much collaboration going on in York Region related to homelessness. There are significant concerns about the lack of personal protective equipment and struggles with safe distancing. There are resources from the federal government that are being provided to help stop the spread of the virus among the homelessness population.

## ADVOCACY

What other things have people been doing or considering in response to people who are vulnerable due to food and housing concerns?

- <https://www.cathycrowe.ca/> Cathy Crowe

## MUTUAL AID NETWORKS (NEIGHBOURHOOD PODS)

- MUTUAL AID NETWORKS (Neighbourhood Pods) are hyper local phone and text trees (usually geographically based but can be special interest groups like ethon-specific or support group) of people who are providing mutual aid to one another in safe ways. They support one another in ways that larger organizations cannot and often discover the hidden needs and resource one another  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GuxcK\\_4IPYiaOawJenVk3JVCdLXj5AOG?usp=s\\_haring](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GuxcK_4IPYiaOawJenVk3JVCdLXj5AOG?usp=s_haring) ... This google drive is how we are resourcing the pods and pod leaders.

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

What considerations are people using around Community Gardens for this year?

- use Sign Up Zone for booking times in the garden <https://signup.zone/>
- I have a sign in sheet, if anyone wants one [dlang@faithcommongood.org](mailto:dlang@faithcommongood.org)
- Planting day is staggered for 2-3 days, and the public at large is not being invited to plant, so people have control over the # of people at the garden at all times.
- Stay 8" away from others. Use plastic gloves at all times. Throw them out after each visit to the garden. Email the group with what you have done, after you have visited the garden and let them know any tasks that still need to be done.
- Rik Aikman : Our community garden is a partnership with City of Brampton. Because all city parks are closed, so is our garden. When the garden first opened, Emmanuel members were given preference. 11 of 32 garden plots are Emmanuel members. The remainder of the plots are community people who signed up on the City website.

- Nick : I would like to hear from others about community gardens. ([nr\\_wh@yahoo.com](mailto:nr_wh@yahoo.com))
- Q: does anyone know if garden centres will be open? ...A: Apparently Sheridan is just opening and you can order for pick up
- Check out <https://www.seeds.ca/> for seeds and how to harvest your own
- for gardens, Google permaculture and Toronto for info on urban gardening

## OTHER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

- Homeless Memorial Facebook Live on Tuesday  
<https://www.facebook.com/holytrinityTO/>
- Alexa: We have a food pantry at our church and were in the opening days of the pandemic a drop off centre for non-perishables heading to the Food Bank. People were getting food from our door daily and especially when the local Food bank ran out mid-day. With the government's directive our building was closed and I'm wondering if there is still a way to be part of food access locally or should we only be donating to Food Share and Daily Bread?
- <http://sanctuarytoronto.ca/> a place of refuge

## LINKS

### [Toronto Shelter and Housing Justice Network](#)

[Assaulted Women's Helpline](#) 416-863-0511 or 1-866-863-0511

[Toronto Drop-in Network COVID-19 Guidance and Resources](#) A coalition of over 50 drop-in centres throughout Toronto that work with people who are homeless, marginally housed, or social isolated.

[COVID COMMUNITY \(mostly Toronto\)](#) A great list (Google Doc) of community resources compiled by local people to connect and share includes support for youth, LGBTQI2S, racialized and Indigenous peoples.

### [How to Start a Neighbourhood Pod](#)

[Community Ministries Zoom Meeting Notes](#) March 18, 2020

[Alcoholics Anonymous Online Inter Group](#) A link to the on-line directory

Toronto Foundation Better Toronto Coalition: info and webinar to disseminate info about agencies on the front lines in Toronto through the COVID pandemic.

<https://torontofoundation.ca/better-toronto-coalition/>

Agincourt Community Services Association (ACSA)

<http://sanctuarytoronto.ca/>