



The

LIGHTHOUSE

Helping People | Changing Lives

1008 Bathurst Street • Toronto • ON M5R 3G7

416-535-6262

Your Friendly Neighbourhood Food Bank

Tiffany Kwok

The food bank has always been a key program of The Lighthouse, operating in varying capacities over the years to serve the immediate physical needs of the community. The program began as a “closed” food bank, providing food only to clients of The Lighthouse programs; but a little more than a decade ago it changed to become an “open” food bank, equipped to meet needs in the Bloor-Bathurst neighbourhood.

While we are blessed to be able to continue to operate in this neighbourhood, various factors and challenges in more recent years have put a strain on the food bank. Of particular note, the gentrification of the Bloor-Bathurst neighbourhood has contributed to the growing demand for food bank services.

As rent continually increases with the demand for housing, low-income households are increasingly burdened by the cost of living, and more and more family budgets are being stretched beyond their means. In 2015, the average bachelor apartment in Toronto cost \$900.00 per month, making the choice to live in the city a very expensive one. In order to cover the cost of housing, food bank clients often skip meals to make ends meet. According to a Daily Bread Food Bank report, food bank clients on average have only \$6.67 per day after housing costs are paid. That's only \$200.00 for a 30-day month to pay for everything that is not shelter such as (without limitation) childcare, clothing, food and transportation. Considering that it costs \$3.25 to ride the TTC one way, a round trip on the TTC would leave the

average food bank client with \$0.17 for the rest of the day.

Food prices have also risen dramatically, especially the prices for fresh fruit and vegetables-luxury products for food bank clients. Purchasing food at affordable prices is getting harder and harder. With the decreasing value of the loonie, the University of Guelph's Food Institute predicts that Canadians will spend an average of \$345.00 more on groceries this year than in 2015. This presents an additional hurdle for food bank clients already living in poverty.

Your donations are key to providing food assistance to the hungry in our community. As of 2015, The Lighthouse's food bank has been distributing approximately 450 food hampers to low-income families every month, and each week up to 70 households come to The Lighthouse for food. These households are largely comprised of underemployed youth, people with disabilities, newcomers to Canada and mothers with small children.

At The Lighthouse, clients are welcomed with a warm greeting, coffee and treats. Our food bank operates like a grocery store, where clients can choose and “shop” for their own food from the shelves with the assistance of volunteers. Having our clients choose their own groceries creates a welcome and respectful space without sacrificing dignity. Moreover, registration for the food bank is straight-forward, with new clients completing a basic online profile with staff or a volunteer who explains the rules of the food bank. With an online profile, clients are then able to access any and all food



banks within the network of Daily Bread Food Bank food banks, which The Lighthouse food bank is a part. For regulars, a simple hello is all that is needed to sign in, and everyone at The Lighthouse strives to learn the name of each and every food bank client who comes through our doors. Clients and staff mingle and chat with each other to catch up on the activities of the week. There is a genuine sense of community as family stories, neighbourhood news and recipes are shared all around.

Many of our food bank clients have also become food bank volunteers. From unloading the truck to stocking shelves and packaging food, our food bank volunteers work together as a team to ensure that we maintain a clean and safe environment. For 2016, one of our main growth areas is providing training to food bank clients so that they can be equipped as volunteers. If a client volunteers consistently for at least 9 months, the client is encouraged to attend further training in matters of food handling and safety, and is then given more responsibility.

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The goal of this client-volunteer development program is to promote leadership and empowerment with practical training that can lead to life improvement and potential job opportunities. We are proud to announce that Paula, our first client-volunteer, recently completed such training and acquired her Safe Food Handling certification.

The Lighthouse's food bank, though small in size, is big in respect, hospitality, quality food and warm hearts. We address the very real need of hunger in our neighbourhood, while being a source of information and referral to our clients. Our clients build community within our walls and connect us to the neighbourhood around us, allowing The Lighthouse to understand and meet our clients' needs in a real and direct way. The Lighthouse's food bank is also a place for development and growth, where we share our resources with those in need to improve our clients' sense of wellbeing. **Your donations enable The Lighthouse to demonstrate God's love to our community. We are grateful for your prayers and ongoing support.**

To ensure that The Lighthouse's food bank is able to meet the needs of our neighbours, please consider organizing a food drive for our food bank, donate to The Lighthouse, and/or join the conversation about the impact of poverty on Canadian society

Give through PAR

The Lighthouse continues to see challenges in reaching its financial goals. You can help us with monthly giving through PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) which is a "direct debit" program that allows you to give through an automatic monthly withdrawal from your bank account.

PAR is giving, made easy. You just provide The Lighthouse with your bank info and your monthly giving amount, and the rest is automatic. No more cheques. No more fees. Of course, you may cancel or change either the amount of your monthly gift or other information at any time.

PAR is advantageous:

- It provides regular, dependable flow of contributions
- It reduces bank fees for The Lighthouse
- It provides an opportunity to give faithfully

For more information concerning the PAR program, please contact The Lighthouse at 416-535-6262 or rob@lighthousecentre.ca



**Want to see more
Christmas Celebration
pictures?
Check out our
website today!**

Welcome!

New Board Member: Harley Dekker



Harley is a self-employed accountant with many years of experience in commercial real estate. He is currently working with Global Scholars Canada (a charity) in a financial capacity. As an active volunteer, he has sat on various finance committees, held the position of church treasurer (nine years) and regularly participates at the annual Lighthouse income tax clinic. Harley is a Chartered Professional Accountant and holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from McMaster University.

New Vietnamese Assistant: Tracy Nguyen



Hello, my name is Tracy Nguyen and I'm the new Vietnamese program assistant at The Lighthouse. I have been a volunteer at The Lighthouse for the past 5 years and started working here last October. I love being able to help others and get to know them in the process. I'm excited to see old and new faces here and being able to hear their stories. I pray that God can continue to open my eyes and heart and help me grow as I continue to work at The Lighthouse.



Upcoming Events

Annual General Meeting - April 30

The Lighthouse Phon-A-Thon - May

Ride for Refuge - October 1

Annual Dinner & Silent Auction - November 5

Coldest Night of the Year 2017 - February 25, 2017

From the Desk of Rob

Last Fall refugees, especially the Syrian refugees, became the focus of many organizations and individuals. This also became a pressing concern for The Lighthouse. Churches and individuals called with questions, ideas and deep worry. We were all pointed in the direction of refugees needing our immediate attention!



The Lighthouse has worked with refugees since the early 1980's when refugees came from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. They were then commonly referred to as "boat people". Today a major part of The Lighthouse's work continues to be with refugees. However, unlike the '80s our work has shifted from refugee sponsorship to holistic work with refugees for healing, learning, and community-building.

In order to discern our role in this present-day refugee crisis, The Lighthouse created a Task Force to see what role The Lighthouse should best play. Since many churches are sponsoring refugees, The Lighthouse plans to focus on ways to help churches offer unique services to refugees. Some of these include: helping new refugees file their income taxes, providing a refugee tool kit with resources for sponsoring churches, and offering workshops to better know our Muslim neighbours.

We need to continue our current work with refugees and newcomers to Canada, as well as start this important work of supporting churches and groups sponsoring individuals and families. Please help us help others with your prayers and financial assistance. There has never been a better time to support The Lighthouse.

To support you in your journey with refugees, go to the resources at www.lighthousecentre.ca. Hosting the workshop "Journey with Me" is a great place to start.

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Helping People Changing Lives

Thank you for being partners with us in this ministry.

Yes, I would like to help with a donation of \$ _____

☐ Cheque enclosed

☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD # _____ Expiry Date. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Other Ways to Help - Contact us for details

- ☐ PAR PreAuthorized Remittance
- ☐ Monthly Visa or MasterCard donation - makes it easy for you and for us
- ☐ Canada Helps on line at www.canadahelps.org
- ☐ Giving through Christian Stewardship Service
- ☐ United Way Payroll Deduction - just provide our CRA # and address
- ☐ Matched Corporate Giving - many companies match employee donations



Please mail your contribution to:

The Lighthouse
1008 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON M5R 3G7

Receipts will be issued in the New Year.
Canada Revenue Agency #13036 3740 RR0001

