

Nobody was turned away

How Harvest stars shone during COVID



Even in times like these there are silver linings that lift our spirits — and you are part of the story of where Manitoba truly became 'our best selves.'

The hidden multiplier

This has been a record year. In a province of 1,365,000 people, more than 260,000 Manitobans applied for the Canadian Emergency Recovery Benefit when the COVID-19 pandemic sent us into lockdown. That's about one in five, or 20 per cent of our family, friends, neighbours and co-workers applying for income assistance — and there is a hidden multiplier in that number.

It wasn't just the CERB applicants who needed assistance — it was their families, too. At approximately 3.5 people per household (a conservative estimate), the wages lost by the 260,000 CERB applicants could easily have impacted 520,000 Manitobans.

Unfortunately, the greatest impact is likely on our young people. When parents struggle between paying for rent or food, utilities or food, childcare to return to work or food — the kids see the uncertainty and they worry, too. Right now, a whole generation of impressionable young Manitobans is feeling vulnerable. They are starved of reasons to believe their futures will be full of hope and happiness. Multiply all those lifetimes framed in insecurity and you begin to see both the darkest cloud in our sky and the silver lining of what Harvest supporters have done in the last six months.

The magnificent, magnanimous magnitude

Early in the pandemic, Harvest came within a whisper of shutting its doors due to a decrease in food and volunteers to deliver essential food and other services.

Then our community stepped up and we received more new cash donations than in any comparable period in our 35-year history.

Across Manitoba, nobody who relied on the Harvest food bank network for assistance was turned away. We broke every record we had, assembling, and distributing more than 100,000 Harvest hampers. We are happy to tell you that our community also stepped up

with donations of food and time.

These contributions, along with funds needed to keep operations open and food flowing, have had direct and positive effects, both immediate and long-term on the lives of our young people.

The power of the hamper

When a family puts a Harvest hamper on the table and begins 'unboxing,' they see enough food to stretch their budget and feed a family of four during the month. Precious funds are now free for other necessities such as rent, school supplies or running shoes.

As they put food in the cupboard, it is already nourishing their feelings of relief and well-being, their hopes, and their resolve. When kids see their parents like that — with choices, hope, and a measure of control, they can feel it. It nourishes their confidence.

Everybody's doing it!

As the scope and impact of the pandemic grew, the number of Harvest stars making donations also began rising. Individuals, businesses, Scouts, photographers, T-shirt makers, local shop owners... everyone realized that we are all in this together. These Harvest stars made sure no COVID-affected families were turned away, and that the nourishment received went beyond the food in their Harvest hampers. Applicants got helpings of hope and goodwill that come from knowing you live in a kinder, more caring community.

New to charity

Some 25 per cent of Harvest applications this spring were from Manitobans and families who had never needed food assistance before. They were new to food insecurity, rent insecurity, job loss, and payment-income imbalance. In their time of vulnerability, the Harvest Hamper you helped provide was more kindness than they had ever dreamed of needing. That it came with no judgements or strings made it feel like a warm blanket in the coldest season of their lives.

It was a gift of hope and goodwill beyond measure. And for that, the magnitude of our thanks to you cannot be measured.

The pandemic is still on. The need continues. We can only hope that your willingness to help continues as well.

Help us celebrate 35 years of community. Help us feed and comfort so many Manitoba families during the re-start, re-open Manitoba period to come. Chip in whatever you can at WinnipegHarvest.org/donate

It's what we do.



File photo

Keren Taylor-Hughes, CEO of Winnipeg Harvest, is pictured at the organization's warehouse earlier this year. Harvest staff and volunteers have been overwhelmed by the support the organization has received and want to ensure it is maintained as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

For more information, visit winnipeg Harvest.org

Thanksgiving Drive

Any donation of food, time or money will be warmly welcomed and appreciated. Please chip in whatever you can!

- **\$35**
- **35 Hours**
- **35 Tins for our Grocery Store Bins**

WINNIPEG HARVEST

Thank you for helping to nourish our community for 35 years!

WinnipegHarvest.org