



Overview: Throughout 2025, our 47th year of service, the Centretown Community Food Centre’s principal focus remained providing the best possible service for our clients. We did this with generous support from our parent organization, the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee (CCSAC), local churches and businesses, the Ottawa Food Bank (OFB), our community, with a host of dedicated volunteers and our two hard-working staff.

Our clients: In 2025, a year when one quarter of Ottawa families reported food insecurity, we served a total of 17,243 people, compared with 18,146 clients in 2024, a slight decrease in overall numbers, due to a gradual shift over the course of the year in the number of families with children we served, while the number of single clients increased. We have no way of accounting for the fluctuation in numbers recorded below but can speculate that the lack of available housing for large families has had a direct impact on our clientele. Another contributing factor was the new Link2Feed rules, introduced on October 1, 2025 that prevents food bank users from going to more than one local food bank each month.

	New	Visits	Adults	Children	Total	Families	Singles
2023 Total	1,272	7,504	9,688	2,690	12,437	2,298	5,296
2024 Total	1,594	10,016	13,674	4,451	18,146	3,852	6,164
2025 Total	726	9,798	13,228	3,939	17,243	3,386	6,412

Each visitor to the Centre has their own special needs and challenges and we do our best to treat each with respect and dignity, no matter how busy the Centre is on any given day. With our shopping cart service model, visitors choose the food they need for themselves and their family, giving them a sense of agency.

Our support: As in the past, direct donations from CCSAC churches (\$56,150), transfers from CCSAC, including its annual grant of \$20,000 (\$34,155) and proceeds from its annual Walkathon (\$55,100) constituted the major portion of our funding. Contributions from the Ottawa Food Bank, other organizations and foundations, many individual donors, local businesses and schools made up the rest. Our greatest expense by far was food, which this year totalled \$149,700, with staffing our next biggest expense.

In Kind Support: Another important source of support is the weekly food deliveries from the Ottawa Food Bank, which in 2025 supplied just over half of the staples and perishable foods we provided to clients. Other substantial food donations come from our member churches and our local schools. We also received weekly donations of fresh produce from local gardens such as Lansdowne Garden and Old Ottawa East Community Garden. These donations mean that more funds are available to purchase extra supplies of the most essential items (milk, eggs, margarine, rice, bread)—items that again saw large price increases during the year.

The value of the food donated by the OFB, food drives and local businesses is not reflected in our financial statements, nor is the value of the pro-bono services we receive from our volunteers and from several businesses which generously donate services in lieu of payment. Adding these amounts to our revenue would give a clearer picture of our Food Centre's contribution to combatting food insecurity in our community.



Staff: As Manager I have relied on the dedication of our Food Coordinator David Beck-MacNeil and of our Intake Coordinator Daphne Wahnnon, both of whom joined the Food Centre in 2024. Together, we form a strong team. This summer we were fortunate to hire Jaya Venasse, a student from Carleton's Master of Social Work program, thanks to a Canada Summer Jobs grant covering nine weeks of employment. Jaya's work was so excellent that we extended her term for another five weeks.

Volunteers: Volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Over 40 volunteers work weekly at the Centre, and eight more are available for occasional shifts. Others serve on the Management Committee, deliver their church's donations, help with Food Drives and assist with special events such as CCSAC's annual Walk for the Centre. As well, our previous Manager, Diana Mahaffy, has provided enormous support as a volunteer by doing payroll, making deposits and preparing income tax receipts.



Programs: The Food Centre serves visitors on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and on Friday mornings. Unlike many other local food centres, which operate on an appointment basis, we are a drop-in service, allowing people in our catchment area to come once a calendar month. With two intake workers on each shift, we serve an average of 50 each day, and on occasion, have served as many as 81. We offer an emergency bag for clients in need of help a second time that month and keep snack bags for people living in shelters or who are unhoused.

Our clientele is multi-cultured, with diverse needs. Many are recent immigrants. We offer halal meat to our Muslim clients, and keep a small supply of tofu, gluten free products and milk alternatives for people with allergies and food intolerances. Our supply of diapers, wipes and baby formula comes from the OFB, which also supplied cat and dog food in limited quantities through a grant from the Ottawa Humane Society. We share surplus produce and staples on a regular basis with Public Foods, a project of Glebe St. James Church, and on occasion with Centre 507, helping to strengthen the network of support for those in need in our community.

With a generous grant from CCSAC, we were able to purchase a new commercial freezer and refrigerator, greatly increasing our ability to offer more perishables, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, and to store them properly. This protects the quality of our offerings and has reduced waste through spoilage.

Working with the City staff at the Hub, we strive to give as much information as possible about other social services, both at the Hub and in the nearby community, and provide a list of meal programs and where to go for help to our new visitors.

In June a grant from the Ottawa Food Bank helped cover the extra staff costs of several time-consuming tasks incurred in preparing for the OFB's intake system, Link2Feed, which transitioned to an open system on October 1. With this open system, we now know if a visitor has used another food bank or food cupboard that month—something that disqualifies them for the current month at our Centre. While it restricts service, it also helps ensure that we have enough resources for the people in our catchment area.

In July we conducted our annual summer survey of client satisfaction. Consulting with staff, our summer student Jaya designed and executed a successful survey with 406 of 823 clients in July responding. The analysis of the survey responses has been a useful guide for our adjustments to service and food purchases—most notably in the provision of more fresh fruits and vegetables.



In December, in keeping with our long tradition of giving extra help to clients that month, we added five items—sugar, flour, coffee, salt, cooking oil—that had been requested in the summer client survey, as well as a small cake, to our offerings. We were pleased that the items were well received and grateful to the OFB, the annual Christmas Cheer Breakfast and CCSAC whose grants partially covered these extra purchases, and to support from the Red Apron and Sweet Cheeks bakery for the cakes.

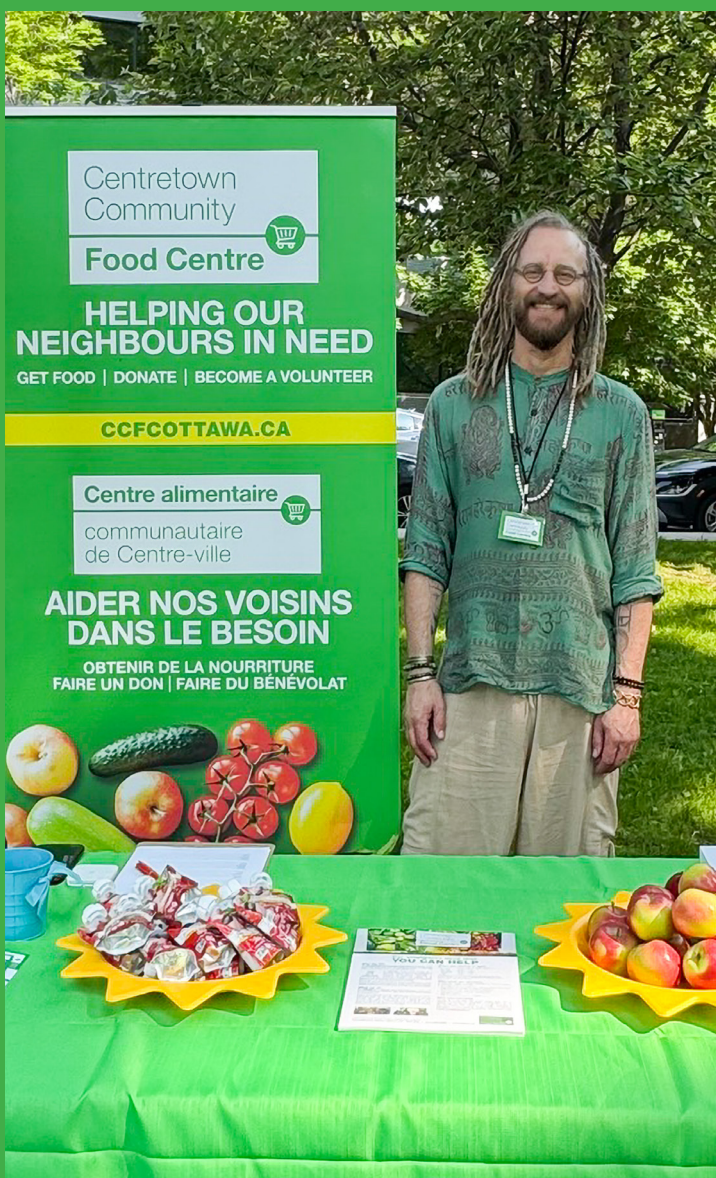
Challenges: Funding remains our greatest challenge; shifting demographics is another. While an unexpected gift from a generous Anonymous foundation, the proceeds from this year's Walkathon, and the upsurge of donations at Christmas helped us end 2025 with a surplus, we are very aware of how uncertain revenue from donations and special events can be. The Management Committee hopes to apply for multi-year funding from the City in 2026, with revenue starting in 2027. Such funds would stabilize our finances and leave us less vulnerable to fluctuations in revenue.

We continue to be preoccupied with the rising cost of many of the essential foods we offer clients. Also, a downturn in our local economy will have an immediate effect on the Centre both as an increase in client numbers and a reduced ability of some donors to contribute. Another challenge is that as of January 2026 we have taken over responsibility for providing the food for home deliveries to our shut-in clients (about eight deliveries each week). This important service that had previously been provided by the Ottawa Food Bank will require additional food purchases and more staff and volunteer time.

We are very fortunate to be located in the City's Catherine Street Social Services Hub, but with our expanded fresh produce offerings, our storage facilities are once again stretched, limiting our ability to save money by making large-scale purchases at lower prices.

Management Committee: During the year, our Management Committee (MC) met monthly to review the quality and effectiveness of our service, and to provide guidance to me as Manager. Many MC members are regular volunteers at the Centre. I want to note the special contributions of Kim Burnett, our Treasurer, for working closely with me to ensure careful management of resources, monitoring our cashflow and providing detailed monthly reports and forecasts for our meetings; of Christine Kincaid, Chair of Communications, who helps get the message out to the community about the work we do; of Colleen Leighton, Human Resources Chair, who advised the MC on pay levels, in particular, to ensure that we met inflation rates and Living Wage standards; of Secretary, Nancy Jonah, who also serves as the Volunteer Coordinator; as well as Members-at-large Neil McCormick, Michael Hatfield and Kamal Aboulmagd whose counsel and connections ensure the smooth operation of the Centre. But most notably, I would like to recognize our Chair, Allison Dingle, for her vision, commitment and steadfast dedication to helping the people in our community we are privileged to serve.

Events and Advocacy: During the year, I spoke at several of our CCSAC churches, attended several community markets and fairs to raise our profile in the community, participated in CCSAC's AGM and Walkathon as well as the OFB's AGM on June 28 and numerous OFB meeting and information sessions. In December I attended two fundraisers—Thirteen Strings' Christmas Concert and the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa's holiday concert.



In conclusion, I would like to express our great thanks to Centretown Churches Social Action Committee, its chair, Kristine Burr, its representatives and church congregations; to all our donors and funders, local schools, and especially the growing number of local businesses that support us through the Walkathon. Many thanks to the Crabtree Foundation which gave us funds to enhance our perishables and fresh fruits and vegetable offerings; and an Anonymous Foundation that also made a generous donation, the Red Apron for their generous donations of funds and food throughout the year; the Management Committee for their ongoing support and guidance; our partners at the Catherine Street Social Service Hub; and especially to our loyal and dedicated staff and volunteers. As I noted in last year's report, the team spirit, energy and care that the volunteers bring to the Food Centre is one of our greatest assets.

Dennis Hansen
Manager, Centretown Community Food Centre