



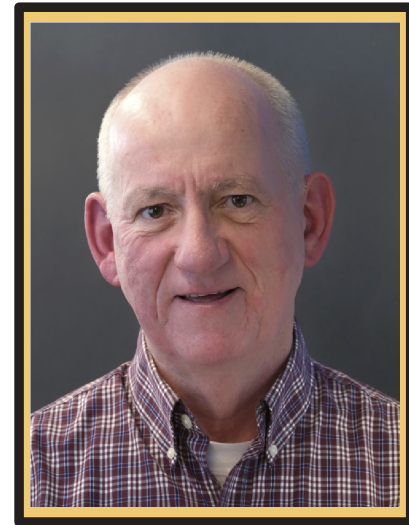
**Welcome to the inaugural edition of our Volunteer newsletter!**

In 2023, the Board of Directors approved a new strategic plan for The Compass, which we boldly titled **Compass 2.0: Every Client, Every Need**. The team that worked so hard on creating the plan was made up of Board members, staff, community representatives, and importantly, several volunteers. As we looked ahead to what it would look like to grow our organizational capacity to meet the growing numbers of clients and the broadening range of the needs our clients present, we set out an important objective to “elevate volunteer engagement.”

What makes The Compass unique among its peer organizations is the significant role that volunteers play in our day-to-day operations; indeed, this was a key part of the vision for The Compass when it was founded by a group of churches in south Mississauga 22 years ago. We are so incredibly grateful that in 2023, we had 400 active volunteers. Did you know that on a busy market day, we need up to 100 volunteers to make things run smoothly? So what does “elevate volunteer engagement” mean? Allow me to expand:

**Communication:** We are ramping up our communication with volunteers to help ensure they are aware of what’s going on at The Compass. It’s also important for volunteers to understand how your volunteer time contributes to the achievement of our mission to provide “HELP FOR TODAY AND HOPE FOR TOMORROW.” If you volunteer in the market, you will have noticed regular short briefings by Trish at the start of each shift. Hopefully, you have received and watched some of the short videos featuring Trish. And this newsletter is a key part of our commitment to improving our communications with our volunteers.

**Training:** In addition to the task-related training that all volunteers receive, we are looking to increase training opportunities on broader subjects to enhance the ability of our volunteers, so that they carry out their roles in an increasingly difficult environment. We have introduced monthly online sessions with The Homeless Training Institute, and a monthly online “Volunteer Education Series”



where we talk about specific videos. And, with support from the Region of Peel, this month we will begin rolling out several full-day workshops on “Customer Service and De-escalation Training”, led by CAMH, Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital and one of the world's leading research centres in its field. We hope to have at least 80 front-line volunteers go through this training.

**Recognition:** As a regular market volunteer, I know that our volunteers don’t do what they do at The Compass for recognition. All the same, we want to do a better job of saying thank you to all of our volunteers. We recently conducted a survey to hear from you on how we can best do that – stay tuned! Our recent survey will be an annual event, and through this survey, we hope to identify more ways we can elevate the volunteer experience at The Compass. So once again, welcome to our volunteer newsletter!

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I want to thank YOU for all that you do at The Compass. Volunteers are the secret sauce of what makes our organization run so well, even when the volume of clients has more than tripled in the last five years. Thank you!

**John W. Nyholt**  
Chair, Board of Directors

## The Compass Food Bank

427 Lakeshore Rd East,  
Mississauga ON L5G 1H8  
905-274-9309  
info@thecompass.ca

## Food Bank Hours

Monday 9:30 am – 7 pm  
Wednesday 9:30 am – 5 pm  
Friday 9:30 am – 5 pm



## Meet the *Feeding Hope* Editorial Team!

We are thrilled to be part of this important newsletter to educate, celebrate, and elevate all the volunteers who contribute to The Compass.

**Wendy Vujacic** is an experienced graphic designer whose work you have seen in the two cookbooks published by The Compass: *All Roads Lead to Good Food* and *Sweet Treats*. Wendy is an entrepreneur and is deeply involved in the community.

**Linda Blakely** is well-known at The Compass - she volunteers in the kitchen and was one of the recipe testers and writers in the two cookbooks. She is also an active community volunteer and has great ideas to inspire engagement, which you will read about in future issues.

**Jo-Ann McQuillan** met Wendy and Linda through editing and project management for the two cookbooks and has collaborated with them on other community publications. Jo-Ann is a local Librarian and is involved with several foodbanks and refugee support initiatives.

**Sheryl Darlington** is our team liaison - she provides the important connection between the editorial team and all of The Compass stakeholders.

If you have any ideas or suggestions or would like to write an article for *Feeding Hope*, please reach out to Sheryl. We want to hear from you!

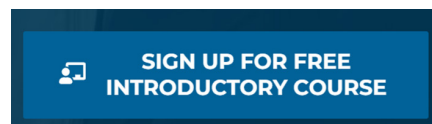
And we would be remiss if we didn't insert a shout-out for The Compass cookbooks - copies are still available and make a great gift for a foodie in your life!

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## Understanding our Clients

As volunteers at The Compass, we work with all of our clients to ensure that we can provide the services and support they need, regardless of their situation. Since some of our clients are faced with homelessness, it is important we understand what their needs are, and The Compass now offers training to the many volunteers who interact with individuals experiencing homelessness. This training covers customer service and de-escalation training for staff, but it also applies to anyone who has experienced trauma, and we encourage all volunteers to leverage this training course.

The first step is to sign up for the free introductory course online by going to [www.homelesstraining.com](http://www.homelesstraining.com), and look for this button:



Once you have completed the intro course, send an email to [volunteer@thecompass.ca](mailto:volunteer@thecompass.ca) for access to the full training package, which is a self-led video training series with online workbooks, and covers many different topics. To augment this training course, we host a monthly online Zoom session where we discuss the videos watched in the previous month and how to apply the learnings to our roles at The Compass. It's a great chance to connect with other volunteers and share/brainstorm how to handle difficult situations. These sessions can be found in the Volunteer System under Opportunities / Training / Volunteer Education Series.

This training is top notch, and both the Board and Staff highly encourage all of you to participate in these sessions in order to better serve The Compass clients to the best of our ability.



## Employee Spotlight - Suesie Love

The Compass is pleased to officially welcome Suesie Love as the Administrative Assistant, supporting volunteer management, communications, and fundraising. You might be wondering to yourself, “But Suesie isn’t new here!” and you would be right! The newly carved-out and funded role is part of what Suesie describes as her dream job.

She has been an active part of The Compass team for eight years! In 2016, Suesie was approached to lead the now-popular Women’s Group which meets weekly and is a vital forum for providing community, friendship, food, and connection to women who are seeking safe and welcoming social opportunities that they can’t easily find elsewhere. Up to 25 people regularly show up for the Women’s Group where they eat as a family (such a precious thing!), make new friends, express gratitude, and engage in activities like games, dancing, and hearing from interesting guest speakers, like fire safety officials, a physiotherapist or a faith-based speaker. Sometimes there are movement activities to build strength and balance; sometimes the group does crafts; sometimes they watch something on Netflix.

It is a circle of caring, allowing women to be together and share.

Suesie has held previous roles in her other careers - she worked as a technical trainer in a marketing firm, as a documentation specialist for several large corporations, and then worked supporting an executive coach with technology management. She did this until the pandemic changed everything and provided an opportunity to make a big life change. Suesie realized that she had a deep passion for volunteering (she was even a Sunday School teacher) and needed to do something that made a meaningful contribution which was visibly helping those in need. Her work at The Compass has allowed her to leverage her skill in organizing info, observing, and creating processes, and allowed her to finally work in the non-profit sector (the best sector in my opinion!).

Suesie has cultivated this passion for giving in her daughters, one of whom did a summer placement at The Compass; Suesie is convinced that the summer job caused her daughter to make an academic and career pivot into work with a social justice impact.

Suesie is a woman of warmth, talent, enthusiasm, knowledge, and that special ability to bring people together. After her years at The Compass, Suesie is still learning new things - since as you well know, the Compass does an awful lot!

Please consider joining the Women’s Group and seeing firsthand how it has flourished under Suesie’s watch. And please be sure to introduce yourself - remember: a stranger is just a friend you haven’t met yet!

***“I find Compass is a great organization and I am so proud to be part of this group. And thank the team giving me this opportunity. It gives me great pleasure to serve the community. I do enjoy preparing the meals and serving the clients. Many thanks.”***

***~ Dave***



## Volunteer Spotlight - Brian Robertson

**You're a trained Chef with over 40 years of experience in GTA restaurants. Tell us how you first got involved with The Compass and what inspired you to join the team.**

I worked as a Chef for 40 years and was nearing the end of my career. I heard about a volunteer opportunity from one of the parents from my soccer coaching role: The Compass was looking for a Cooking Lead to run the new industrial kitchen. I started with the Community Lunch working with many volunteers to put nutritious lunches together for the clients. Although Covid changed how we served, we also prepared for the move to the new location and I enjoyed getting actively involved in the design of the industrial kitchen, and developing a solid meal program that could accommodate our rapidly growing client demand. My inspiration to join was fueled by my need to provide service and give back to the community; it was important to demonstrate how grateful and lucky we are to have food on our own table every day.



**What do you most love about your role as Lead Chef in a volunteer kitchen?**

- seeing the smiles on the clients' faces when they receive food
- being part of a positive and forward-thinking group of volunteers and staff
- being able to create a balanced and nutritious meal within our budget

**The new commercial kitchen is amazing, but how do you plan your meals for the week? How does The Compass get the right ingredients for the many meals you make daily?**

For weekly planning, it's important to keep some daily standards (soups), review protein options and pricing, and leverage all large volume deals that can be used in many recipes. We have great suppliers who work with us to get the right ingredients for the right price. We pride ourselves on offering various cuisines that appeal to many tastes. The cooking team works well together and get involved in the planning; they love to learn and understand the nuances of cooking to scale.

**There are lots of volunteer cooks: what can you teach them, given your experience in the kitchen? And what are they most eager to learn about? What would you like non-kitchen volunteers to know about working in the kitchen?**

I help them to refine and streamline their cooking techniques, and to make them more efficient with their time. This is critical given that we have doubled our volumes in the past few years. The volunteers are eager to learn new techniques, hacks, tips and tricks. They have expanded their repertoire and food tastes, and cooking at The Compass has ignited their curiosity about food. There are no egos in the kitchen – that is paramount. And we like to have fun as we cook.

**Volunteering is a selfless act, and cooking at The Compass has been affected because of the huge growth in clients. What challenges do you foresee and what can we, the community, help to make our Community Kitchen a better place?**

Donations, donations, donations! More than anything, we need funding to buy the food. Monetary donations go much further than food donations, although both are always welcomed. More than ever, we need more volunteers to cook, and younger people who can offer a few hours even once a week. We are open to anyone helping us: make sure you're willing to learn and leave your ego at the door.



## Role Highlight - Serving Program Meals

There are many roles in the kitchen, but one role in particular that has a critical need of additional volunteers is serving meals for the many Compass meal programs. If you aren't available during the day, but would still like to help out in a critical role, these roles are a great opportunity for you! Most shifts begin at 5 pm or later (or occur on the weekends), and offer you a rich and rewarding opportunity to assist people in need. Many of The Compass meal programs often have a regular client group who attend, so if you choose to volunteer for one of these programs you will have the opportunity to really connect with clients, and this will also add depth to your volunteer experience.

It's important to know that you don't have to cook to be part of these meals - you simply need to learn kitchen processes, follow safe food handling, and be kind and welcoming to our clients. And needless to say, you need to be willing to roll up your sleeves and wash dishes. The kitchen is such an important way we help clients feel cared for and appreciated. It's a wonderful part of what we do.

### How to get started:

To serve meals, you will need to complete the "Kitchen Training" which is located on the Volunteer portal under Opportunities/Training with Lynn Beaton, who is our Kitchen Coordinator. You will also need to complete one of the Hospitality Hands-On training courses in the Kitchen (Serving) category. They're quick and easy, and you'll be a pro in no time! And best of all, you're feeding people who thoroughly love our meal programs!

### Opportunities:

- Men's Group** - Tuesday evenings
- Women's Group** - Wednesday evenings
- Summer BBQs** - Thursday evenings (summer months)
- Refresh** - Saturday mornings
- Films & Fellowship** - Saturday evenings

*"Food is such a vital part of our existence; it stirs all sorts of emotions in us. I have had the privilege to be a small part in helping to supply a meal, a coffee, a snack to so many wonderful appreciative people. It gives me great joy and comfort. Love my role at The Compass! Come join us for a great opportunity to serve others."  
~ Yvonne*



## Dealing with an Overdose – What do I do?

Opioids are drugs with pain relieving properties that are used primarily to treat pain. Opioids can also induce euphoria (feeling high), which gives them the potential to be used improperly. Opioids slow the body down, especially our breathing. They include fentanyl, carfentanyl, heroin, oxycodone, codeine, morphine, methadone, hydromorphone and others.

The drug supply of these drugs is unpredictable and always changing, and not all opioid overdoses look the same (for example, some may experience a delayed onset of typical symptoms, muscle rigidity or other symptoms).

### How to recognize an overdose in someone:

- Not moving and can't be woken
- Breath is slow or person is not breathing
  - Choking, gurgling sounds or snoring
    - Tiny or pinpoint pupils
- Blue or grey/ashen lips and nails
  - Cold or clammy skin

When in doubt, **use naloxone**.

It will cause no harm if an opioid is not present (BCCDC Harm Reduction Services, 2020).

One of the lesser-known but significant risks associated with opioid use is the transmission of hepatitis C virus (HCV). Hepatitis C is a bloodborne virus that can cause chronic liver disease, liver cirrhosis, and liver cancer if left untreated. Harm reduction strategies, such as needle exchange programs and education initiatives, have proven effective in reducing the spread of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs. The relationship between opioid dependency and hepatitis C is complex and multifaceted. Injection drug use, particularly the sharing of contaminated needles and other drug paraphernalia, is a primary mode of HCV transmission.

The Bloom Clinic team offers outreach and onsite distribution of various harm reduction supplies for safe drug use. Community members can get any of the following supplies and services from our program:

- Hepatitis C and HIV testing, treatment and support
- Safer inhalation and injection supplies
- Collection and disposal of used equipment
- Peer support in a welcoming environment
- Harm reduction health education and support, including informal case management according to the needs of each client in collaboration with existing supports

Needle exchange and harm reduction services are open to anyone living in Peel Region wanting access to these services.

To make an appointment, please contact:  
Intake Worker at 647.531.8552  
or email [ana.kovacevic@wellfort.ca](mailto:ana.kovacevic@wellfort.ca).

Interpretation services available in multiple languages.



## Did You Know?

The Compass meets the needs of Southwest Mississauga in a multitude of ways. See some of the stats below from 2023 – all of this amazing work thanks to you, our Volunteers!

Households Served:	3,064
New Households:	1,883
Individuals Served:	6,567
Shopping Trips:	41,237
Food Distributed (lbs):	1,025,613
School backpacks/supplies:	430
Meals served:	69,650
Yogurt containers:	7,623
Milk (litres):	34,528
Eggs (dozens):	19,693
Frozen Protein (lbs):	86,320
Total Volunteer Hours:	45,533
Number of Volunteers:	399



## Upcoming Events at The Compass

- The summer BBQs will start in June, held every Thursday evening; we often have up to 80 clients attending, and are lots of fun. You can volunteer in the community room of the kitchen, or even take a turn on the BBQ.
- Our summer staff will start work in May so please extend a hearty welcome to them! This year, we will have five Summer Students, focusing on Warehouse, Client Services, Kitchen, Communications / Food Bank Operations, and Volunteer Management / Food Bank Operations.
- Volunteer Education Series is a monthly Zoom call that focuses on learning skills and techniques to improve our communications and customer service. It's a great opportunity to connect with other volunteers and learn more about Volunteering at The Compass. You can sign up under Opportunities / Training / Volunteer Education Series in the volunteer system. For access to our "Homeless Training Institute" training package, please email:

[volunteer@thecompass.ca](mailto:volunteer@thecompass.ca)

***Early morning clients are often cold and hungry. When just a simple smile can turn a frown upside down you know you're making a difference (which is our purpose when we are serving).***

***~ Elizabeth***

