

THE COMPASS VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2025
VOLUME 3

FEEDING HOPE



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



February 13th, 2025

In recent days, both Food Banks Mississauga and the Ottawa Food Bank have made heartbreaking announcements about layoffs and program cuts due to financial shortfalls. These decisions come at a time when food bank usage across Ontario is at an all-time high, driven by rising food costs, a lack of affordable housing, and wages that simply don't keep up with the cost of living.

At The Compass Food Bank & Outreach Centre, we know firsthand the struggles our clients face. Every week, we provide groceries to over 2,000 individuals, including 725 children, and serve 70,000 hot meals annually to people experiencing food insecurity and homelessness. Like other food banks, we rely on generous donors and volunteers to keep our doors open, but the reality is clear: charity alone cannot solve this crisis.

Food banks were never meant to be a permanent solution to food insecurity. Yet here we are, seeing record demand while struggling to secure enough resources to serve our community.

We don't want The Compass to be the next food bank forced to make devastating choices in order to keep our doors open moving forward.

This is why we need the support of our broader community—now and in the long term. One of the most powerful ways you can make a difference is by getting out there and making your vote count. Feed Ontario has created an [Election Tracker](#) to help you compare each candidate's platform on food insecurity and affordable housing. Before heading to the polls, take a moment to review where the parties stand and choose a candidate whose plan makes sense for the future of our communities.

Your voice matters. Your vote matters. Let's ensure that the next government takes meaningful steps toward addressing food insecurity and housing affordability—because no one in Ontario should have to rely on a food bank just to get by. And for those looking to make a lasting impact, ongoing support helps ensure we can continue being here for those who need us.

Learn more and track candidate positions here:

www.feedontario.ca/advocacy-change/research/2025-election

With sincere gratitude,
John W. Nyholt, Board Chair, The Compass

The Compass Food Bank

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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

INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

Hi! I'm Kathy Kenzora, and I've been volunteering at The Compass for eight years. You'll usually find me in the warehouse three days a week, stocking shelves and managing inventory.

I started as a Shopper, helping clients choose food for their families, and quickly realized the huge impact The Compass has on the community. It truly takes a village to run an operation like this! Soon after, Karen Sears (Inventory Manager) recruited me to the warehouse team – a physically demanding but rewarding role.

Since COVID, client shopping has moved online or by phone, allowing us to serve more people. Clients select pantry staples like tuna, rice, and eggs, along with special items like baking supplies, juice, and even LED lightbulbs. Keeping the list fresh makes every order unique!

Even though I work behind the scenes, I never forget why I'm here – helping our neighbours in need. Volunteering at The Compass is an honour, and I'm proud to be part of this incredible community.

“I am honoured to be a part of what The Compass offers to our community.”

**FOOD
RECEIVED
(DEC 2024)**

89,214 LBS

**FOOD
DISTRIBUTED
(DEC 2024)**

102,121 LBS



A RECIPE FROM OUR COMPASS KITCHEN

Thai Coconut Carrot Peanut Soup

Yield: 4 Servings * Prep Time: 10 Minutes * Cook Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

1 Tbsp coconut oil
1 medium onion, chopped (~ 1 cup)
3 cloves of garlic, minced
1 Tbsp garam masala
1 Tbsp turmeric powder
1/2 Tsp black pepper
1 Tsp salt
1/2 Tsp ginger powder
1 Tbsp cumin
1 Tsp red pepper paste or Sriracha
1 lb sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
3 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
4 cups Veggie Stock (with sodium)
1/2 cup peanut butter
1 can coconut milk, whole fat



Directions:

1. In a large pot, melt the coconut oil on medium heat. When oil is hot, add onion. Sauté for about 5 minutes to soften. Add garlic, garam masala, turmeric, pepper, salt, ginger, cumin, and red pepper paste (or sriracha). Sauté for another minute until garlic is fragrant.
2. Add chopped sweet potato and carrots. Stir ingredients together to coat. Add stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer. Cover and cook until potatoes and carrots are fork-tender. Stir in peanut butter and coconut milk.
3. Remove from heat. Use an immersion blender to process until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. You can blend the soup in batches using a blender. Be careful when removing the blender lid; open it away from the body.

Optional Toppings: Chopped peanuts, fresh basil, cilantro, a squeeze of lime, and red chilli flakes.

ENJOY! Michelle B

MEET OUR PLACEMENT STUDENTS



Calin is enrolled in the Culinary Management program at George Brown College so his role as Kitchen Assistant at The Compass was a perfect fit to practice and learn new skills. Already, he's observed how much the volunteers care for each other AND the clients they serve, and that makes coming in a joy even when he's tired. He is grateful that the role allows him to develop relationships with the clients and learn their stories, and feeding them becomes even more meaningful.

Katie is enrolled in a social work degree at Humber College and is doing her placement with our Client Services team. She worked at The Compass last summer, and returned due to the great sense of community among clients, staff and volunteers. She knows that The Compass is a great environment in which to grow, and feels that the team truly cares about helping each other succeed and meet their individual goals. Listening to the clients' stories provides her with perspective, and an ability to better serve their needs.



MEET OUR PLACEMENT STUDENTS



Tessa is currently enrolled in a social work program at Sheridan College. Her role at The Compass gives her the chance to learn and develop skills helping those in need. While she recognizes that she can't single-handedly solve world hunger, she knows that helping at The Compass is one giant step forward in that goal. Tessa enjoys interacting with clients on a deeper level, and learning about the journey that each client has taken. The support and dedication that the staff and volunteers demonstrate is amazing, and she feels very welcomed by all.

Zach is a social work student at Humber College and is currently completing a placement in Food Bank Operations, rotating through many client-facing roles. In accepting this placement, Zach indicated his desire to give back to his local community. Zach feels lucky to be able to assist in any way, whether it is in the office, working on projects or helping in the community room directly with clients. More than anything, Zach is impressed with how The Compass goes above and beyond to serve their clients.



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS



The Volunteer Application is live again on The Compass website.

If you know someone who's interested in volunteering, please send them our way, and email volunteer@thecompass.ca so we know to watch for them!

www.thecompass.ca/volunteer

Did you know that in 2024, Compass volunteers logged 49,543 volunteer hours?

Amazing!!!



IN THE COMMUNITY

The Compass operates in a building owned by Indwell. We're sharing a guest article from them here, as we know so many are curious to learn more about this organization.

Indwell: Celebrating Hope and Homes in Mississauga! by Trish DeSimone

Indwell, a Christian charity, has been creating affordable housing communities for 50 years, transforming lives and addressing homelessness.

On September 12th, we celebrated the grand opening of Cornerstone Suites building in Streetsville, the second Indwell supportive housing development in Peel Region.

What Makes Cornerstone Suites Special?

- 40 deeply affordable units, including 10 fully accessible homes.
- Restored 19th-century heritage homes, preserving community character.
- Built to Passive House standards, reducing emissions and tenants' utility bills.

New tenants are embracing their homes with gratitude. One shared, "This is kind of healing, you know? This place is totally different, but it's my home."

"Every door we open together becomes a solution to homelessness."

Meet Dennis

Dennis, once homeless, nearly lost his life to frostbite. After months of rehabilitation, he still had nowhere to go, until he moved into Cornerstone Suites.

Now Dennis is so proud of his new apartment, he calls it "his palace", and is making connections with his neighbours and enjoying the community meals provided!

Thanks to our amazing volunteers, church community, and supporters, we're helping people find safety, stability, and belonging.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Karen Sears

From Volunteer to Inventory Manager

Karen Sears began her journey at The Compass over a decade ago, initially sorting food on a Volunteer Day with her son's school. Seeing the overwhelming need for organization, she returned the next day to help. Her role evolved from volunteer to permanent staff in 2020. Karen credits Trish, the Operations Manager at The Compass, for inspiring her with compassion, leadership, and a non-judgemental approach to helping others.

Leading The Compass Warehouse

As Inventory Manager, Karen helped design the new warehouse and implement an efficient two-step shopping system. She is grateful for the dedicated volunteers who make it all possible.

Meeting Growing Demand

With food bank use at an all-time high, Karen stresses the need for government action on food security and housing. Monetary donations are also essential, allowing The Compass to purchase high-need items when inventory is low.

Advice for Volunteers

Karen encourages new volunteers to embrace change and learn from experienced leaders like Sheryl and Suesie. While it's not for everyone, those who stay find it incredibly rewarding.

Looking Ahead

The biggest challenge? Future growth - but Karen is confident The Compass team will continue to adapt to meet the community's needs.



“I am so grateful for the dedicated volunteers who make this all possible.”

JOIN THE NOURISHING CIRCLE

Help Fight Food Insecurity!

Food insecurity in Mississauga is at an all-time high, with the city declaring it an emergency.

More than one million Ontarians relied on food banks last year, many for the first time. Rising rent and food costs are forcing families to choose between housing and groceries. The Compass serves 2,200 individuals weekly, including 725 children, but demand is growing.

Our monthly donors ensure we can provide fresh food and essential outreach programs. By joining Nourishing Circle, you provide consistent, life-changing support to those in need.



Every dollar helps fight hunger and bring hope.

[Donate monthly today.](#)

FOOD DRIVES



Food drives bring the community together to fight hunger, but registration is essential!

Registering a food drive helps our warehouse plan for space needed and enough volunteers to process donations. Unregistered drives result in the risk of donors arriving when we can't accept food.

[Register here](#) to schedule your drop-off.

Let's maximize impact together!

HOW YOU CAN HELP?



“We have a voice.”

What does advocacy mean to you?

It’s a big word with a simple meaning. If you believe strongly in someone or something, and feel the world at large pays too little attention, it may be up to YOU to change the conversation.

Advocacy to *me* means supporting a project or a cause that is important to *you*. Support can be volunteering your time, working on a policy to make a change at the government level, fundraising, or simply having conversations regarding food insecurity, homelessness, lack of affordable housing, etc.

Imagine being at a dinner with friends and letting them know that 1 in 13 families in Mississauga use food banks. They may ask how they can help and hopefully, they will take action and start their own conversations. You know this because you are an important volunteer in the Compass Community.

There are over 450 of us. We have a voice.

CHARITY INTELLIGENCE 2024

**TOP 5 IMPACT:
TORONTO CHARITIES**



CHARITY INTELLIGENCE 2024

**TOP 10 IMPACT:
CANADIAN FOOD BANKS**

