

# FEEDING HOPE

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# 84,831

## Meals of Hope

In 2025, The Compass Kitchen was busy in the best possible way. Across 289 service days, our team prepared 273 unique meal varieties and served an incredible 84,831 meals to our community.

These meals nourished connection as much as they nourished hunger, supporting our Women's Group, Men's Group, Film & Fellowship, Refresh, and our Summer BBQ.

Behind every plate was a volunteer. In total, 195 dedicated individuals gave 12,376 hours of their time.

Every meal. Every hour. Every helping hand. Together, they tell a powerful story of service, generosity, and community.

**None of this would have been possible  
without our amazing volunteers.**



### **SPECIAL - Inside this issue:**

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## GREETINGS FROM THE WAREHOUSE - A DECEMBER TO BE PROUD OF -

December was truly something special. Because of our volunteers, it became one of the smoothest holiday seasons we've ever experienced. So many of you stepped into extra shifts, tried new roles, and simply showed up with generosity and holiday spirit. It did not go unnoticed.

**Together, we processed nearly 38,000 pounds of food in December, far more than an average month.**



**Behind every pound is a neighbour in need, a senior, a parent, a child who had food on their table because of your commitment.**

As we move into the new year, there is encouraging news. Through Second Harvest and Food Banks Mississauga, we will be receiving additional “rescue” protein to distribute through our new freezer.

Protein is one of the most requested and most appreciated items in our Market, and this will ease some of the pressure we felt in January. February and March will also bring skids of essential goods including vegetable oil, pancake syrup, pasta sauce, fruit spread, pasta, tuna, and canned tomatoes. With these deliveries, along with ongoing support from Food Banks Mississauga, our warehouse shelves will soon be full again ready to welcome everyone who walks through our doors.

And thanks to a deep cleaning over the Family Day weekend, both the Warehouse and Market are sparkling once more, a fresh start for the months ahead.



### The Compass Food Bank

427 Lakeshore Road 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

## TOGETHER WE SPREAD THE JOY

Each holiday season, our Spread The Joy campaign brings hope, dignity, and celebration to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity in our community. Instead of pre-packed hampers or toys, we provide Walmart gift cards so parents and individuals can choose the food and gifts that matter most to them, preserving dignity and restoring the joy of the season.

In 2025, thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we raised **\$143,275** and supported **1075** families, ensuring tables were filled and children woke up to something special under the tree. We are deeply grateful to every donor, volunteer, and community partner who made this possible. Because of you, the holidays were not defined by hardship, but by choice, warmth, and dignity.



**In 2025, we were able to provide 1075 households with gift cards through our Spread The Joy Campaign.**

**Thank you for showing up and for your support.  
Thank you for making a difference. ❤️**

## EVENTS

### Dancing for The Compass

Little Peter and The Elegants hosted their 19th Annual Dancing for The Compass on Saturday, January 31, at the Port Credit Legion, delivering another fantastic night of music and community spirit. With over 200 tickets pre-sold, **the event raised \$3,440 in support of The Compass Food Bank & Outreach Centre.**

Guests enjoyed a light dinner prepared by the Culinary Program at Options Mississauga, followed by an evening of dancing, music, and raffle prizes.

A beloved local favourite, Little Peter and The Elegants earned First Place for “Best Local Musician or Band” and “Best Local Entertainment” for four consecutive years (2022-2025) in the Mississauga News Readers’ Choice Awards.



**Next year marks the 20th Anniversary of Dancing for The Compass**, and we can’t wait to see what’s planned. If you’ve never attended, you’re missing a truly fun community event.

**Stay tuned for next January’s date!**

## Meet our new Accounting Manager

Volunteer Dwight Bryan recently caught up with Mahin, our new Accounting Manager, to reflect on her professional journey and her first impressions of The Compass.

**Q: Mahin, tell us a bit about your background.**

A: I have over 20 years of experience managing finances for both for-profit and non-profit organizations. I am so excited to be joining The Compass and bring that expertise to help this organization grow.

**Q: How does the non-profit sector differ from your previous experience?**

A: It's a shift from profit to purpose. We are still fiscally disciplined, but we lead with heart. You can feel it in the building - people are here because they truly want to be part of the mission.

**Q: Did you have any preconceptions about working for a food bank before you started?**

A: Originally, I thought food banks only distributed dry goods. Once I started, I realized The Compass does so much more. We provide hot meals from our kitchen and essential services that help people thrive, rather than just get by.

**Q: What was your very first impression of The Compass facility?**

A: The moment you step inside, you feel kindness and warmth from both the volunteers and the staff. The level of respect everyone receives is very impressive.



**Q: How are funds allocated at The Compass?**

A: We balance specific grants with general donations. Grants are typically earmarked for designated programs, while donations provide the vital flexibility to address our community's areas of greatest need as they arise.

**Q: How do you see the impact of The Compass growing?**

A: The scale of local need— especially regarding homelessness – was eye-opening to me. However, I quickly realized that The Compass is unique. We don't just provide food; we offer the wrap-around services our neighbors need to truly change their lives and thrive.

**Q: What would you say to someone thinking about volunteering here?**

A: If you want to be part of a huge, positive impact in your community's life, then join us at The Compass!

**“ I love working at the Compass because of the shared sense of purpose that flows through every department. It's rare to find a workplace where everyone - from volunteers to staff - is so united in the goal of helping others, and I am thrilled to contribute my skills and support to such a meaningful mission. ”**

## Program Changes - Friday is Now Income Day

At The Compass Food Bank & Outreach Centre, our **Client Services team is committed to meeting 100% of our clients' needs, 100% of the time.** To better support this goal, we've made thoughtful updates to our monthly service calendar.

**We now intentionally schedule like-minded agencies on the same days or with overlapping hours, creating a stronger circle of care.** If a guest arrives to meet with one provider but needs a different service, our team can immediately connect them onsite – no extra appointments, no unnecessary delays.

**Fridays now focus on income-related supports.** Representatives from Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program, alongside our Income Support Specialist, are available together. **This coordinated approach allows questions about payments and benefits to be addressed quickly and ensures guests receive guidance to access the full support available to them.**



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The phrase “Nothing about us, without us, is for us” is a reminder that you can’t make decisions about people without including them in the conversation. If something directly affects a group, they should be part of shaping what happens. **Advocacy isn’t just about speaking for someone, it’s about making sure they have a real voice in the process.**

Advocacy means listening to clients, understanding what they actually need, and keeping those needs front and center when collaborating with other organizations or decision-makers. It’s about sound policies and plans that reflect real-life experiences, not assumptions. When something impacts a person or community, their perspective should guide the solution.



**“ Nothing about us, without us, is for us. ”**

**Feedback is a gift that allows for the correct policy/procedures and solutions to be driven by the clients.** One way we have implemented this mindset is hosting roundtable discussions with clients who are unhoused. These conversations give people the chance to share their experiences and explain what support would actually help them.

Instead of guessing what services they might need, we hear it directly from them. It also allows them to be part of the larger conversation about the systems that affect their daily lives.

At the end of the day, advocacy is about inclusion and shared decision-making. When people are left out of conversations that affect them, the solutions often miss the mark. Real advocacy is built on partnership, respect, and making sure everyone has a seat at the table.

# NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK



**April 19-25, 2026**



Save the date: this is a special week of gratitude for the hands and hearts that power The Compass. Their commitment ensures that no neighbour has to face hunger alone, creating a culture of welcome and dignity.

As we celebrate the power of service on National Volunteer Week, please help us thank our volunteers for the lasting change they create in our neighbourhood every single day.

## 2025 VOLUNTEER STATS

# of Volunteers in 2025:

**454 volunteers**

Hours Volunteered in 2025:

**46,000+ hours**



“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

– Leo Buscaglia

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## Growing Our Community of Support in 2026

Ready to give back to the Mississauga community? **Head over to [thecompass.ca](https://thecompass.ca) to join the team!** Whether you're interested in stocking shelves, helping out in the kitchen, or sorting donations in the warehouse, **the application process is super easy via our online portal.** Our volunteer opportunities are flexible and you can manage your own schedule once you're volunteering.

If you know someone with a heart for service, please share this with them and let us know you referred them!

**The Compass is always looking for friendly faces to help provide "Help for Today and Hope for Tomorrow."**



## GRANT WRITERS NEEDED

**Help Us Feed the Need:** The Compass is seeking dedicated volunteers—both new and current—to join our team as Grant Writers. If you have experience navigating the world of grant applications and want to use your expertise to combat food insecurity in our community, we would love to hear from you.

Your ability to identify funding opportunities and craft compelling proposals will play a vital role in ensuring our shelves stay stocked and our essential programs continue to thrive.

If interested, please reach out to [volunteer@thecompass.ca](mailto:volunteer@thecompass.ca)

“ So many people ask for our salad dressing recipe that we thought we'd share it with you here. ”



## FROM THE KITCHEN

### The Compass Famous Salad Dressing Recipe

- 1/4 -1/3 cup Balsamic vinegar (according to the quality and your taste preference)
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 3/4 cup oil

**Whisk together vinegar, mustard, honey, water, salt, and pepper until well mixed.** (Start with 1/4 cup Balsamic vinegar. Add more vinegar at the end if needed.) **While whisking, add the oil. Whisk together until the salad dressing is completely emulsified.**

The salad dressing should thicken when it is well mixed.



**TIP:** The key to this recipe is using a good quality Balsamic vinegar.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP?

### The Heartbeat of Hope: Why Monthly Giving Matters Most

At The Compass Food Bank & Outreach Centre, monthly giving is what carries us through the natural highs and lows of charitable support. December is traditionally our strongest month, as many generous donors choose to give during the holidays. But in January, February and March, donations slow while the need in our community does not.

Our Nourishing Circle (monthly donors) provides steady, reliable funding during these leaner months and all other months, allowing us to keep shelves stocked, purchase essential food and hygiene items, and continue serving every neighbour who walks through our doors.

It's easy to set-up online – a simple “set it and forget it” gift that creates lasting impact.



**Don't wait. Become a monthly donor today:**  
[www.thecompass.ca/donate-funds-monthly](http://www.thecompass.ca/donate-funds-monthly)

Thank you for helping us sustain hope all year long.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE



**Making a Donation? Please make the cheque out to:**

- ✓ The Compass **OR**
- ✓ Lakeshore Community Outreach Centre Inc.

**We appreciate your help and support!**