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|  | **OPERATING POLICY** |
| **Oshawa Community and Family Services** |  |
| **CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** | Effective | **February 2012** |
| Reviewed | **May 2017** |
| Revised | **May 2017** |

**Christmas Assistance**

***Program Description:***

The Salvation Army Oshawa Family Services provides assistance to families who are experiencing financial hardship during the Christmas season.

There is no income threshold for receiving this assistance. Clients may be unemployed, receiving social assistance/disability support, employed full-time—we recognize that there are many circumstances that could lead a person to require assistance to have a Christmas dinner and be able to provide gifts for their children and thus do not turn people away based on how much income they receive.

##### Procedure:

Registration

Registration takes place, the last two weeks of November, Monday to Friday during office hours and we have 1 evening available for working and in school clients that need Christmas assistance. We continue register 1 hour a day through December 15 and we will also do some emergency registration after all other pickups are done.

Criteria for registration:

Family and couples registration only (single registrations are done at Simcoe Hall Settlement House, Oshawa)

2 pieces of ID for each adult in household (18+)-one must be photo ID 1 piece of ID for each child (e.g., birth certificate, health card)

Canada Child Tax Benefit Notice of Assessment

Proof of income, rent, and address (must be resident of Oshawa or Port Perry)

Christmas registration and services provided are recorded in Access Database designed for Christmas Registration.

Prevention of Duplication of Services with other Service Organizations

The Salvation Army Oshawa receives Christmas registration information from all of the larger organizations in the community that offer a similar service. The policy is that each family can register for food and toy assistance at only *one* location. As the keeper of the central database of registrations, other organizations can contact us to inquire about possible duplication of service, and we alert the other organizations when registration duplications are found. It is then decided mutually which location is to provide the assistance to these families.

The Salvation Army Oshawa specifically asks that other service organizations provide us with the names and dates of birth of all registrants, as these are the simplest pieces of information to check for duplication of service. Where an organization fails to provide this particular information (e.g., provides address information instead of date of birth), we unfortunately do not have the time during the busy pre-Christmas season to check for duplication of service. Most of the larger service organizations provide us with the appropriate information; however, there are several smaller organizations in

Oshawa that either do not provide the required information or fail to provide us with any registration information. In these cases, duplication of service may occur.

Sponsored Families

We have 2 service agencies that are involved in our Christmas program. Optimist club provide approx 100 hampers and Kinsmen Club provide approx. 30, both these service clubs provide the food hampers and deliver as well. We pack and provide the toys to be delivered to our clients. We provide lists of clients previously registered to both these service clubs with address information. Prior to delivery, clients have been told the date and approximate time of delivery.

We also accept applications for corporate and personal family sponsorship. These applications have to be submitted by December 1st. Prior to client information being released the client is contacted and is told who will be contacting them. The clients sign a release of information at registration.

Sponsored clients are chosen from Christmas Coordinator and Registration worker. The first priority is given to people with a disability that would have difficulty picking up the hampers from the corps. We try to avoid repeating sponsored clients the following year unless there is a disability.

Toy Warehouse

The gym of the corps is used for our Toy Warehouse starting on December 1 of each year. Toys are received and sorted at this location. Some toy bags are packed for sponsored families.

Food Hampers

Food hampers are packed at the corps the day before distribution days. Involvement of corps youth has made this an easy process. All food items are taken to the corps for this day (usually a Monday). The Food hampers changes year to year, but we use this list as a guideline for non-perishable items:

* Juice ● Dry Pasta
* Coffee or Tea ● Pasta sauce
* Cereal ● Cranberries
* Soup (can or box) ● Gravy
* Canned vegetables ● Cookies
* Canned Tomatoes ● Cake mix or Jell-O
* Stuffing

We also provide a gift card for perishable items from Sobey’s (can be used at Freshco as well) these are ordered from head office and delivered to the store at Wilson/King for us to pickup. A bank draft needs to be provided for payment. Gift cards need to be ordered a week ahead of time. In 2010 the contact at Sobey’s Head Office is Edyta Brusikiewicz, Edyta.Brusikiewicz@sobeys.com, telephone: 905-671-5236

Gift cards are ordered in two denominations $25 (small family) $40 (Large Family 4+) Sobey’s also provided the reusable shopping bags that we pack our food hamper in.

Toy and Food Hamper pick up

Two distribution days are required for pickup of Hampers. Pick up days are booked a few days before Christmas, to allow time for clients to go shopping for perishable items.

The pickup takes place at the corps. Clients must bring their pick up slip and come at the time and dated stated on that slip. They must also present photo ID and if they are sending someone else, a permission letter to authorize pick up.

Starting last year, clients picked out their own toys at pick up time and we will continue to do it this way in the future. Clients walk around our Toy warehouse with a volunteer and receive 1 large, 1 medium and 1 small for each child, along with some stocking stuffers.