



# Newsletter

Winter 2025/2026

## Where would we be without our Volunteers!



We have just passed the 4-month mark at our new location at 379 Jane St., and we are so happy with how the space has worked for us and most importantly for our clients. The brutal winter weather we had (and continue to have) has really made us appreciate the new space. Being able to serve clients inside has been wonderful for everyone.

In the early days of our move, we served a consistent number of households. Thanks to the statistical analysis of our intake team (shout out to Mimi) we determined we lost about 25% of our clients who came to our old location (although some of them are finding their way back to us) but we gained almost an equal number of new clients. However, in recent weeks we have experienced a spike in client visits. Thankfully the new space allows us to easily accommodate them, but it has been challenging to keep the shelves stocked.

With the support of our wonderful community and the efforts of our Fundraising Committee, we had a very successful Holiday Fundraiser, hosted a fabulous "Empty Bowls" Fundraiser (shout out to Sheena Hughes for her tireless work on that event) and will be hosting an upcoming screening of Paddington 3 at the Revue Cinema. We are also appreciative of the regular food and financial donations from the community. All these efforts help us to keep our doors open, the lights on and the shelves stocked. (Shout out to all our supporters.)

Finally thank you to our dedicated team of volunteers. We cannot do what we do every week without their efforts. Go team!

Wishing you a wonderful spring (should it ever get here).

Warmly,

Karen, Maggie and Mary Anne  
Coordinators, Bloor West Food Bank



In February we hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Night at the Mad Mexican for our dedicated group of volunteers.

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**Community Support - it takes a Village!**

- 🐾 **Ruffin's on Bloor West** generously donated pet food to support clients with furry family members.
- 🏠 **St. Pius X Catholic Elementary School** hosted a food drive and had students volunteer their time sorting donations at the food bank and **Mountview Alternative School** gathered food donations throughout February
- 🎃 **Swansea School of Dance** brought the spirit of giving with a holiday food drive, while the **68th Toronto Scouts** collected food and created beautifully decorated bags for our clients. 🍂
- 🏒 The **U13 Toronto Eagles AA hockey team** raised an incredible **\$1,500** through a hot chocolate stand at Lambton Arena — a fantastic effort led by young community champions. 🍫
- 🦃 **Paramount Foods** donated **100 turkeys** to help make holiday meals possible for families in our community.
- 🍞 **Sanagan's Meat Locker** continued their generous support, including bread donations ahead of the holidays.
- 🎒 **Runnymede Public School's Student Parliament** delivered two carloads of donations, including food and warm clothing to help carry us through the winter weeks. 🧣
- 🏠 We also extend our thanks to residents at **80 & 100 Quebec Avenue** and **1 & 2 Old Mill**, along with **Wandermere Kids**, **Green Apple Kids** (with special appreciation to organizers Jennifer, Heather, Linda, and Nikki), and **King George Junior School** for their generous holiday food drives.
- 🍽️ Our first-ever **Empty Bowls Dinner & Silent Auction** welcomed **125 guests** and raised **\$21,000**, surpassing our fundraising goal.



Raptors won in OT!

**Our 2025 Holiday Fundraiser was a great success, raising over \$41,000!**

This incredible financial support of our community allowed us to purchase grocery gift cards, toiletries and festive chocolates for all of our client families, with remaining funds allocated to support our operating expenses for this year. Barb Grabowski, a long time BWFB volunteer and supporter, was the winner of the lucky draw for courtside seats to see the Raptors take on the Philadelphia 76ers at Scotiabank Arena.



**Pictured Left to Right: Maria Solis, Mary Anne, Karen, Maggie, Alexa Gilmour and Neil Hetherington**

In early December 2025, we had the pleasure of welcoming **Neil Hetherington, CEO of Daily Bread Food Bank**, for a visit to our new food bank location.

We were also excited to have **MPP Alexa Gilmour** join us - not only as our local Member of Provincial Parliament, but as the catalyst behind the creation of the Bloor West Food Bank in 2020.

## Empty Bowls Dinner & Silent Auction - What a night!



On Feb 28th, the Bloor West Food Bank hosted our first-ever **Empty Bowls Dinner & Silent Auction**, and thanks to the incredible support of our community, the evening was a tremendous success.

With **125 guests in attendance** and many more participating through our silent auction and donations, the event was completely sold out. Together, we raised **over \$21,000 to help fight hunger in our community**.

Empty Bowls is built around a simple but powerful idea: sharing a modest meal of soup and bread while remembering that many of our neighbours face empty bowls every day. Each guest took home a handmade bowl at the end of the evening - a lasting reminder of the compassion and generosity that made the night possible.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the chefs and local businesses who generously donated soup, bread, and desserts:

Alibaba's, Apulia Gastronomia, COBS Bread Bloor Street West, Craig's Cookies Bloor West, David Mintz Catering, Eatly Toronto, Hot Oven Bakery & Café, Mad Batter Bakers, Occhiolino Pastificio, Queen's Pasta Café, Rudolph's Bakeries, Shakey's Toronto, Tim Hortons, and Chérie Inksetter.

A special thank you as well to the talented potters and studios who created the beautiful handmade bowls that guests took home:

Parkdale Pottery, Pot Pot Studio, Sheena Hughes Pottery, Aries Earth Pottery, Taylor Goldsbrough Ceramics, Bruce Cochrane, Katie Yuen, Margaret Meagher, Michael Lewis, Pam Wilkins, Zdenka Jasura, and Zsuzsa Monostory.

We are also incredibly grateful to the 90+ community partners who donated items to our silent auction, helping make this event possible and contributing to its success.

Finally, thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, donated, bid in the auction, and helped bring this event to life. Your support made this inaugural Empty Bowls evening such a meaningful and impactful night for the Bloor West Food Bank.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Jen C

Jen C, has been a dedicated volunteer who has been supporting the Bloor West Food Bank for nearly three years. A long-time Bloor West/High Park resident, Jen brings a strong sense of community and a family tradition of volunteering to everything she does.

Her favourite part of volunteering? The people. Jen loves working alongside fellow volunteers who share the same commitment to helping clients and their families - and the smiles that make every shift feel meaningful.

Head to our [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) to read her full interview.

Thank you, Jen, for your generosity and continued dedication to BWFB - we're so grateful for you!



## Don't Miss our Upcoming Events!

WEDNESDAY  
MARCH 18<sup>TH</sup>  
1:00PM

REVUE CINEMA  
400 RONCESVALLES AVE

PWYC  
\$5  
SUGGESTED  
DONATION

THE BLOOR WEST FOOD BANK INVITES YOU TO A  
MARCH BREAK COMMUNITY SCREENING OF  
**PADDINGTON  
IN PERU**

BABIAK  
TEAM REAL ESTATE

REVUE  
CINEMA

A special thank you to [Babiak Team Real Estate](#) for sponsoring this event; ensuring all proceeds go directly to the BWFB.

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**Registration is Open!**

**TCS Toronto Waterfront  
Marathon, Half Marathon and  
5K Run/Walk - October 17/18  
2026**

Once again, Bloor West Food Bank is an official Charity Partner for the TCS Toronto Marathon. Register to **Join our Team** and help us reach our fundraising goal!

The Full Marathon and Half Marathon will sell out quickly, so reserve your spot now. More details to come!

[Click here to join our team!](#)

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Thank you to our Supporters!



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