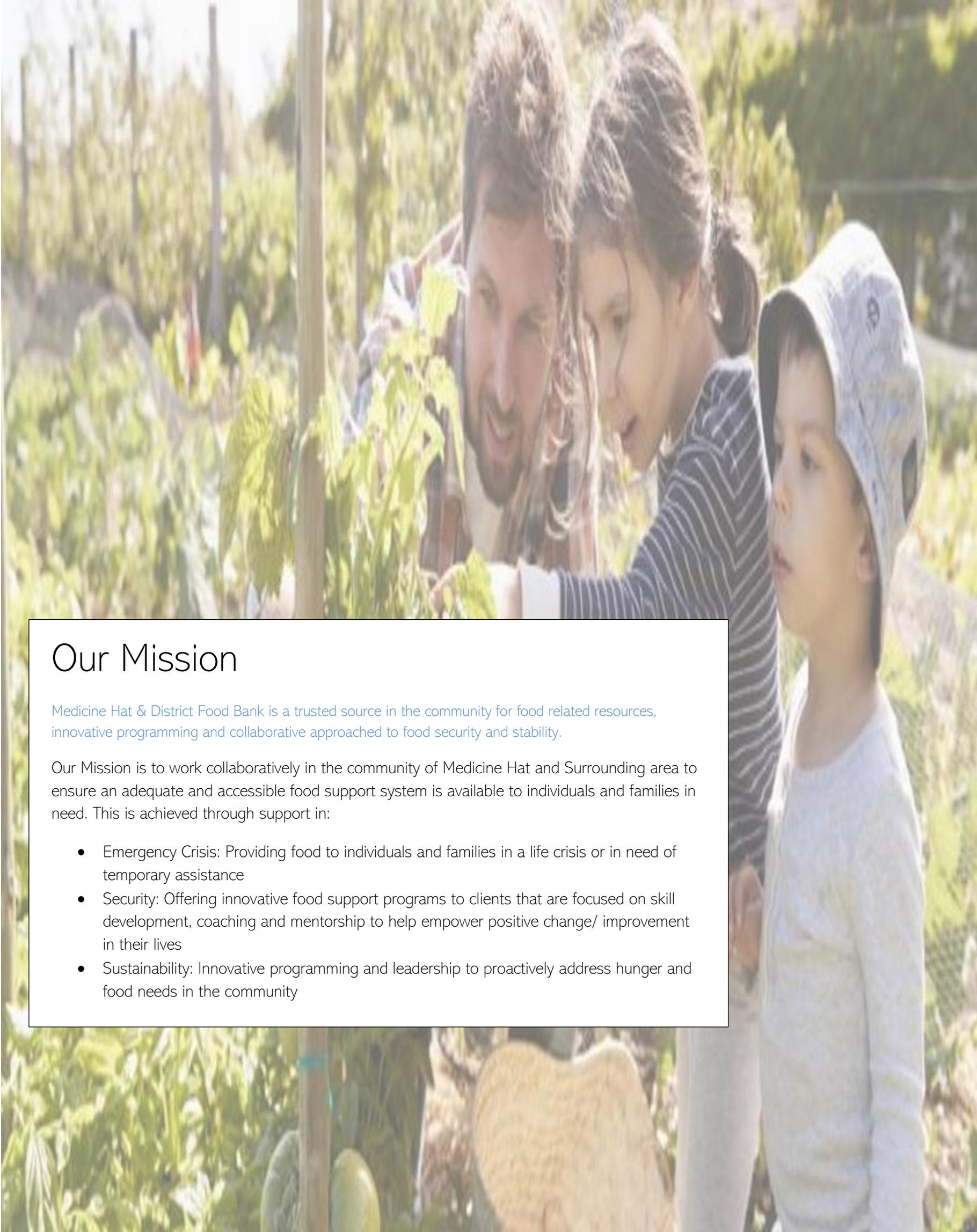




A trusted source in the community for food related resources, innovative programs and collaborative approaches to food security and stability



# Annual Report 2018 - 19



## Our Mission

Medicine Hat & District Food Bank is a trusted source in the community for food related resources, innovative programming and collaborative approaches to food security and stability.

Our Mission is to work collaboratively in the community of Medicine Hat and Surrounding area to ensure an adequate and accessible food support system is available to individuals and families in need. This is achieved through support in:

- Emergency Crisis: Providing food to individuals and families in a life crisis or in need of temporary assistance
- Security: Offering innovative food support programs to clients that are focused on skill development, coaching and mentorship to help empower positive change/ improvement in their lives
- Sustainability: Innovative programming and leadership to proactively address hunger and food needs in the community



The truth is Food Banks, in the current form, don't work.....do I have your attention now?

Food Banks came into existence during the economic recession of the 1980's. They were designed to be a temporary relief and met the urgent needs of workers and their families who were affected by the crisis. The first Food Bank in Canada was set up in Edmonton in 1982. They thought their work would be completed within 10 years. But fast forward to 2019 and there are almost 300 food banks in Canada.

There is a better way.....

That is where we come in. The Medicine Hat and District Food Bank has a vision of building an inclusive space that uses food as an opportunity to bring people together and build a thriving community. The Community Food & Wellness Centre will become that neighbourhood hub that is open to the public and will provide various programs and activities for all ages. We believe that this approach will be the start, to end the chronic cycle that one family in 10 have with food security.

Your local Food Bank took a big step forward in making this vision a reality with last fall's "And All That Jazz" event. This event has become Medicine Hat's largest fundraiser to date. All funds are all earmarked for our new Community Food & Wellness Hub. We still have a way to go before the shovel hits the ground on construction of our new facility but, through the commitment from our staff, our donors and our volunteers.....we know that this dream will become a reality.

In closing, I would like to say how honoured I am to serve as the Chair of The Board of Directors at The Medicine Hat and District Food Bank. The opportunity to work with such a talented and diverse group of people is the opportunity of a lifetime for myself. The work effort and the passion I see day in and day out from our Executive Director, our staff, fellow board members, our valued community donors and our amazing volunteers is very heart warming and inspiring. It is with that collective effort that the Medicine Hat and District Food Bank will forge ahead to make our community stronger while making food insecurity a thing of the past.

Cam Jacques  
Chair, Board of Directors



“  
The special courage it takes to experience true belonging is not just about braving the wilderness, it's about becoming the wilderness. It's about breaking down the walls, abandoning our ideological bunkers and living from our wild heart rather than our weary hurt. We're going to need to intentionally be with people who are different from us. We're going to have to sign up, join and take a seat at the table. We're going to have to learn how to listen, have hard conversations, look for joy, share pain and be more curious than defensive, all while seeking moments of togetherness. - Brené Brown, *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*

Celina Symmonds  
Executive Director



This year has just flown by and the work we have been doing seems to be becoming more and more outside the box every day. We have had the distinct opportunity to really see how our work can impact others and we have learned it is not in the big grand things that we do to help others but it is truly in the compassion that our staff and volunteers show to other human beings. When writing this report to the community I was having trouble coming up with how to capture our year in a few words (which if you know me, a few words is hard anyway 😊). Then I found the quote above and it came to me... our work this year has been a journey to understand the importance of belonging.

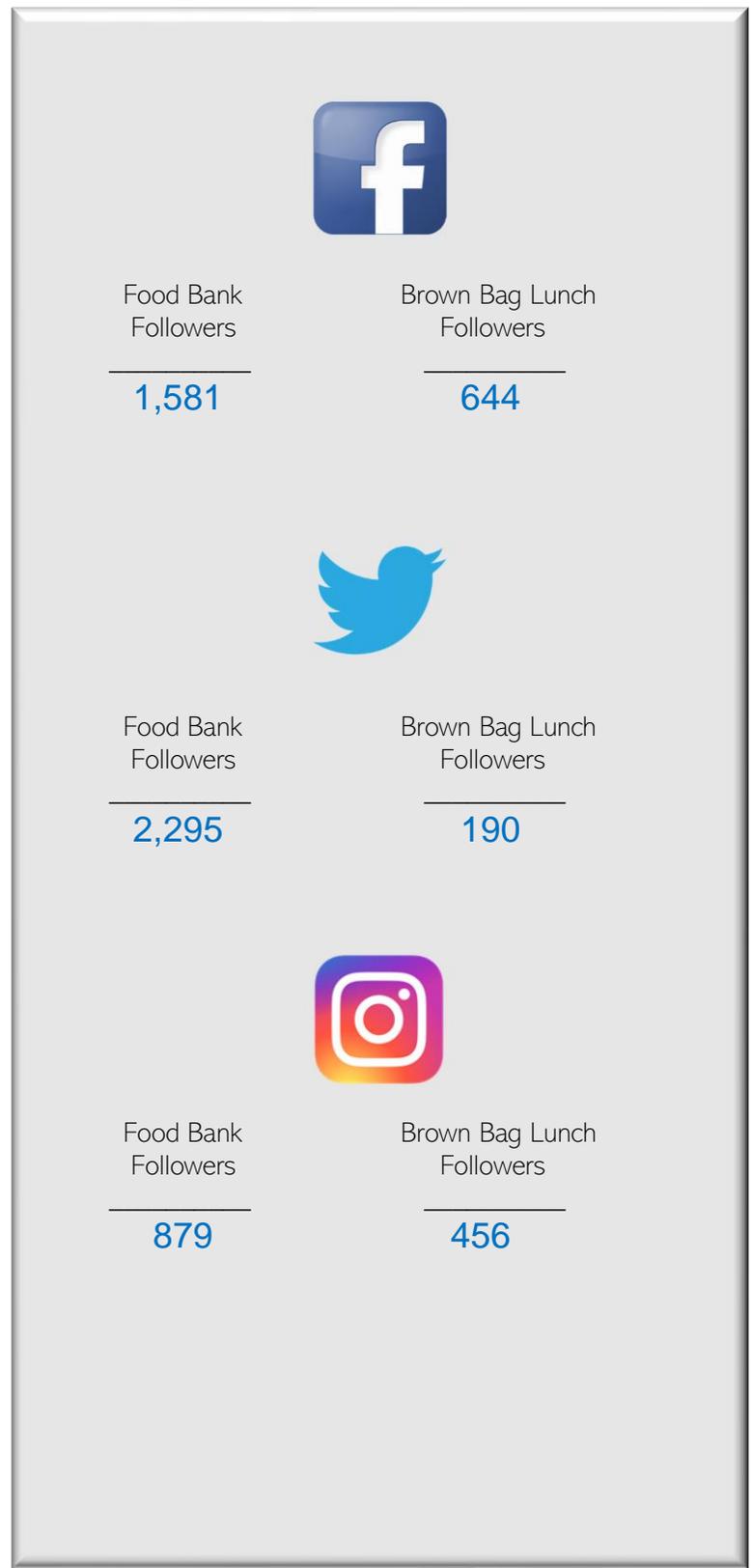
Our world seems to be becoming more “us versus them” every single day. Whether it is the extreme divisiveness in politics or the belief of “not in my backyard” that becomes more and more present in communities and neighborhoods. We just seem more and more divided. While it seems that a sense of belonging is becoming a fairy tale rather than a reality, I am so very proud of our team at the food bank. Volunteers and staff have learned through hard times the importance of team, the importance of we and the value of simply giving people a place to belong. Through our coffee club we have seen over 400 unique individuals come through our doors early in the morning to join us for a cup of brew and some idle conversations about everything from politics to the types of pastries we have available. These folks brought some challenges regarding space and behavior but the main thing they reminded us was that we are all just human beings trying to get by everyday. We formed trust with people we would have never met, and we created bonds with amazing human beings who were looking for dignity and you guessed it a sense of belonging. This year has taught us that hard things are happening in our community. We are facing a major drug crisis that has taught us about death and overdose, giving us a firsthand look at the sadness and pain inside the eyes of those who are directly impacted. Through this though we have also seen unbelievable strength in some of the individuals we have the pleasure of working with. We've seen them get housing, get clean and get employment. We have heard their joys, their pains and their struggles and we have come to care for them and truly value their views about our work. These folks have also come to value our space. We often come in early in the morning to find people sweeping our parking lot or cleaning up behind the building. We overhear folks talking to others saying things like “this is a sacred space don't disrespect it”. We know that what we fear we create and folks who are without a home, folks who have mental health issues and folks who have drug addictions are feared in our society. The stigma that follows them is unforgiving. We are grateful this year to have been able to break through some of that stigma and really see what can happen when you look someone in the eyes and just say good morning, instead of just walking by.



*Most of us are either making the choice to protect ourselves from conflict, discomfort, and vulnerability by staying quiet, or picking sides and in the process slowly and paradoxically adopting the behavior of the people we're fighting. Either way, the choices we're making to protect our beliefs and ourselves are leaving us disconnected, afraid, and lonely. – Brené Brown*

### Board of Directors 2018-2019

Chair	Cameron Jacques
Vice Chair	Carla Carrier
Past Chair	Steven St Peter
Treasurer	Scott Milroy
Secretary	Brooke Burden
Director	Theresa Hardiker
Director	Brenda Lea MacPhail
Director	Kevin Henderson
Director	Cyndy Lutz
Director	Rob Robbenhaar
Director	Chris Hellman
Director	John Digman





Melissa Mullis  
Programs Coordinator

## Programs

The Medicine Hat and District Food Bank runs numerous programs for our community. Each of these programs allows us to see the best parts of people and witness lives being touched and changed on a daily basis.

**Brown Bag Lunch** has transformed over the last year as a very well-oiled machine in which volunteers and corporate groups love to come spend their time giving back to the community. We are feeding between 700-900 children daily and we have 10-12 regular volunteers that come each day to make these lunches. The corporate challenge and heavy social media presence have opened the doors to new people who care about the program and talk about in our community as well as inspiring new donors to give. We encourage schools to bring in groups of children to help make lunches as well and it has given them a new appreciation for the box of sandwiches that just shows up to their school each day.

**Food First** has been full of so many stories of positive changes. The spring session brought about a few positive additions to the program. We recognized that we were not able to accomplish all the lessons we wanted to teach plus the speakers we wanted to bring in all in one day. So, we added a second day each week to the program and it brought about a totally different level of connection with our families. We were able to run our teaching kitchens on one day and our life skills lessons on another. This allowed for many important group discussions that happened organically because of the safe space to share that was created in their programming. This program is ever evolving, and all the changes have had very favorable results.

**Healthy Bundles** helps mothers and babies in our community. We continue to see these families twice a week in the morning at the food bank. We have partnered with the McMann Parent Link Centre, since they already had a great program in place and register our mothers into their program. This partnership has created a way to broaden our reach to help those mothers in need in a loving and supportive environment.

**Gardens** is always a highlight of our summer. It is such a tranquil and safe space for our community. The garden has been a wonderful teaching space for our children this year, with the addition of the Kids Garden Club and many school and daycare tours. We were able to make mud pies with children who were waiting for their parents to finish their shopping inside, and everyone always left with a face stained from eating raspberries. We love having this available in the summer as it is our opportunity to teach families where their food comes from.

**The Hunters Sharing Harvest** has been a very exciting addition this year. The hunting community has really been excited for this program to get off the ground. We are working with local fish and wildlife authorities, as well as non-profit hunting groups to make this happen. We are in the final planning stages of this program and we hope to have it up and running for this hunting season. This program has the potential to bring in hundreds of pounds of free, high protein meat to our families and we are very excited about what is to come.

# Community

We have one of the best communities. From pancake breakfasts to outdoor movies to BBQs, our community always steps up to help. One of our favorite ways they do this is by letting us be a part of one of the many events that are hosted on our behalf.

Some of these events include

## The Difference Makers Golf Tournament

Dan Frost hosts his annual business appreciation golf tournament, but in doing so he wanted to raise money and bring awareness to some of the programs that we run out of our food bank. This is now an annual event that we look forward to attending.



## Basics for Babies

Chris Hellman wanted to bring awareness to our littlest members. He decided to raise money for formula, diapers and wipes for parents in need. These items are one of the most expensive items to purchase and by allowing parents access to this it allows parents to be able to better afford other household costs. The dual purpose of this event is that it makes sure that our littlest members are getting that healthy start they need.

## Overflow the Shelves

Tara Williams works with young female adults who sometimes have no extra money for the basic female supplies of tampons or pads. She took it upon herself to make sure that every female should be able to access these items by starting her annual event. She even managed to turn it into a community business challenge that makes buying those pesky items a fun experience.



## CHAT Food Drive

This is a community event that has been running since 1999. This event runs for two full days, on a Traxx bus, where we travel around our fine city to participating businesses and pick up all the donations that each business has collected. At each stop we manage to take group photos and have a lot of fun along the way. It is the ultimate community involvement experience that has grown into a time-honored community tradition.

# Our Community Donors

The Medicine Hat and District Food Bank relies on its donor base to continue to drive forward our aim to transform lives by providing access to food and innovative programming and leadership. Without the ongoing support of our community we would not be able to continue to do this.

Together, our donors now help provide an accessible food support system to individuals and families, as well as help to provide innovative programming to proactively address hunger.

The food bank relies solely on local community donations and does not receive Federal or Provincial funding.

Our list of donors this year includes:

## The Leadership Circle

\$50,000 +/year

CHAT 94.5  
Costco  
Anonymous Donor  
Gerald & Elaine Freedman  
Lorne & Laurie Swalm  
Methanex Corporation  
Real Canadian Superstore  
RedHat Co-operative Ltd  
Safeway  
Sobeys Cornerstone  
South Country Co-op  
Walmart

## Food Sustainability Champion

\$25,000 - \$49,999 /year

1770177 Alberta Ltd  
Albert & Debra Stark  
Anonymous Donor  
Auto-Star Compusystems Inc.  
Big M Ford Lincoln Ltd.  
Cypress County  
Deerview Meats  
Elizabeth Daniels  
IGA Foodland  
Jim Pattison Broadcast Group  
Ken & Brenda Lea MacPhail  
Kenneth & Cindi Holland  
Kinsmen Club of Medicine Hat  
Medicine Hat Public Schools  
Medicine Hat Wholesale  
Rick Porter  
Spider Electric Ltd.  
Spring Creek Colony  
Starks Plumbing & Heating Ltd.  
United Way of South Eastern Alberta

## Garden of Health Advocate

\$10,000 - \$24,999 /year

Alfred Craig Elder  
Ashuary Colony  
ATB Financial  
Badlands Harley Davidson  
Canadian Pacific Railway Company  
Chris & Tracey Hellman  
Chris Baba Professional  
Community Foundation of Southeastern Alberta  
Culligan Water  
Cypress Bingo  
Cypress County  
Davis GMC Buick (Medicine Hat) Ltd.  
Elkwater Colony  
Ernie Lehman  
Food Banks Canada  
Giant Tiger  
Government of Canada  
Hitman Holdings  
Holy Family Parish  
Hydraco Industries Ltd.  
Jenner Colony  
Jim Sodero  
Kevin & Patty Henderson  
King Family Holdings Ltd.  
London Drugs  
Medicine Hat Catholic Schools  
Medicine Hat Community Housing  
Medicine Hat Motor Dealers Association  
MNP LLP  
Mr. Lube  
Pembina Pipeline Corporation  
Raymond James Canada Foundation  
RBC Foundation  
Rosenau Transport Ltd.  
Short Grass Ranches Ltd.  
Sun City Dental  
Sun City Ford  
The Link Church  
Waste Connections of Canada

Please note that our community fundraising numbers are exceptionally high this year due to the fundraising event held for our new community wellness centre that is in its final stages of planning.

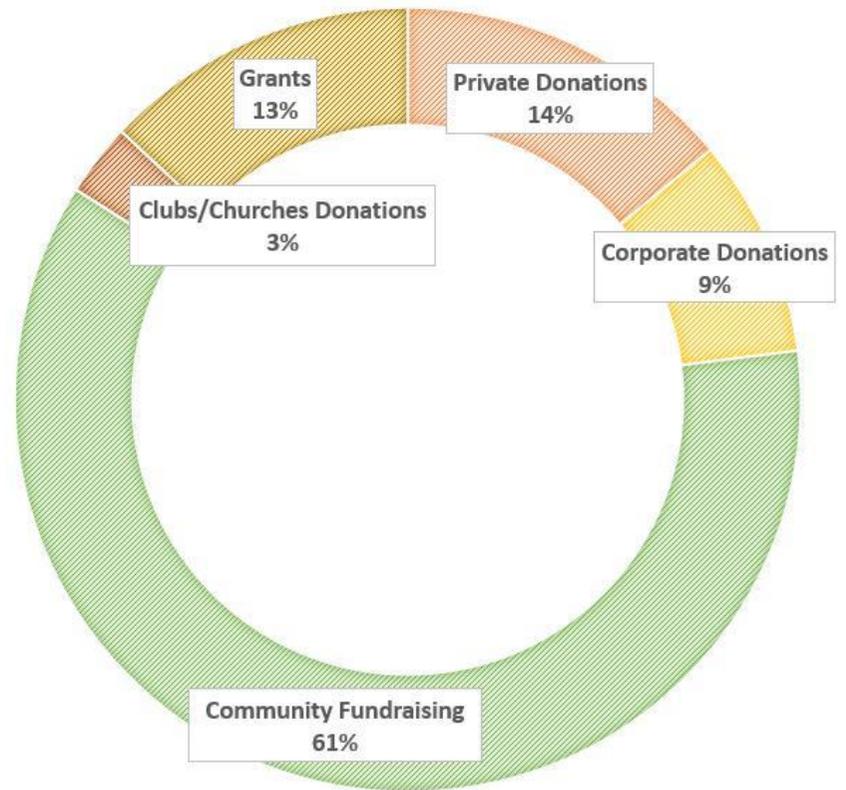
## School of Knowledge Sponsor

\$5,000 - \$9,999 /year

Boychuk Holdings Inc.  
Brent & Kristie Fisher  
Cenovus Energy Inc.  
Daas Developers  
Dave & Amy Janecke  
Food Banks Alberta Association  
Glen & Sue Motz  
Harvey & Cheryl Neigum  
Hat News & tobacco (1983) Ltd.  
Kent & Joanne Smith  
Kent & Patsy Walker  
Kirk & Bonnie Ewasechko  
Korrie Miller  
MAW Charitable  
Medicine Hat College  
Mike Bullin  
Pad-Car Mechanical Ltd.  
Park Meadows Estates  
Rafter H Creations  
Rick & Pat Doward  
Roy & Diane Hanson  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Tracy Noullett  
Transit Paving Inc.  
Winifred Colony  
Wrights Jewellers

# Financial Highlights

Donations and community grants are the only source of funding for Medicine Hat and District Food Bank. Every year we raise money to ensure an adequate and accessible food support system is available to individuals and families in need. We top this up by applying for grants. Without the help of our community donors we would not be able to provide the programming and support that we do.



# Member Services

Through the help of our donors, we are able to support our members through some of the most difficult times in their lives. It is not easy for anyone to ask for help but we are here for them. Offering a safe, non-judgemental space where they feel acceptance. It is because of this established connection, that we are able to build relationships with our members. This connection also allows us the opportunity to work with our members individually, providing mentorship and coaching that restore their sense of belonging back in our community.

Individuals	Households	Children
12,225	1,472	5,167

# Community Partnerships

Every year we partner with other organizations in our community, supplying them with food. This helps us to create food security within our community while creating a support system of accessible food

Some of our current partnerships include:

- Addictions & Mental Health
- Alberta Job Core
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Be Youth Center
- Bridges Community Kitchen
- Champion Center
- Medicine Hat Public Schools
- Community Housing
- Community Kitchens
- CORE Association
- Community Churches
- Dream Centre
- Food Connections Kitchen
- Heart & Stroke Foundation
- HIV Outreach
- Public Library
- Loop
- Medicine Hat Care Centre
- Medicine Hat College
- Medicine Hat Regional Hospital
- Mussasa House
- Mustard Seed
- Parent Link
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Phoenix Safe House
- Project Connect
- Medicine Hat Catholic Schools
- Pregnancy Support
- Redcliff Youth Centre
- REDI
- Salvation Army
- Saamis
- Santa Clause Fund
- SARC
- Silver Sage
- Teen Mom Centre
- Women's Shelter
- YMCA
- Young Moms

*“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in”.*



*Volunisia (noun) - “The moment where you forget that your volunteering to help change lives, because it’s changing yours”*

It’s safe to say that this year has been a year of struggle in our community. Medicine Hat has been in a state of turmoil. Many have very strong views and emotions about how society needs to be changed. There are citizens, in our community, at opposite ends of the belief spectrum on the issues that are affecting our day to day lives. Despite differences, the one thing that our community can agree on is that we need change.

It’s said that when people are under crisis, you see who they really are. This rings true with our volunteers. At times of change in our society, our volunteers actively educated themselves on the issues at hand. Daily the staff and volunteers took an honest approach and collaborated with one another on how we felt, and how we could make a positive impact on our food bank members so that we could help them make positive changes.

*“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is a progress, working together is a success”*

One of the many lessons and gifts that was learned by our collaborative approach is that even though life paths may be different, the need to feel valued is the same, no matter what your status is. This realization has been a gift that not only filled our food bank members hearts, but many of our volunteers as well. With this gift, inspiration for change, grew. Donors in the community stepped forward and not only gave us monetary donations, but volunteered their time as well. They also hosted events and fundraisers that created platforms for our organization to carry our message and vision. It is safe to say that the passion for our organization and for positive change can be felt when you are here. Our staff, volunteers, board of directors, and donors have united and helped to create a place of acceptance.

Our organization has become a place of hope. Through collaboration and passion for change, our dreams of a wellness centre became stronger and more apparent. Our dreams of teaching “those to fish” became realities when our food programs were successful in helping many in this community to reach food security. The inspiration from the successes showed all of us that going that extra mile for one another really does work! Volunteers are a vital piece in showing our members that human kindness is still strong, and change is possible. The volunteers were no longer just making conversation, they were making friendships - regardless of social statures. Members felt included and realized that there are people here that know that they matter. These people want to see them do well. These people truly care. These people are our volunteers.

*“Sometimes the greatest gift you can give another person is to simply include them”*

The Medicine Hat and District Food Bank is incredibly blessed to have 280 dedicated active volunteers. These amazing people are business owners, employers, employees, retirees, avid travelers, athletic teams, parents, students, work experience program participants, partners from various organizations, fundraiser event hosts and donors.

Diversity within our volunteer base has been the gifts to our members. Our volunteers are the change that is needed in the world today. These people are the people that are giving their ongoing support and dedication to helping our cause be carried out to those in need.

*We had 14,986 hours of volunteer service dedicated to creating positive change for those in our community*



Krista Sanders  
Volunteer/Events Coordinator



 [www.mhfoodbank.com](http://www.mhfoodbank.com)

 [@mhfoodbank](https://www.facebook.com/mhfoodbank)

 [@mhfoodbank](https://twitter.com/mhfoodbank)

 [info@mhfoodbank.com](mailto:info@mhfoodbank.com)

The Medicine Hat and District Food Bank is a registered charity. Our Charity number is 886574599.

532 South Railway St SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 2V6