



GRAVENHURST AGAINST POVERTY GAP



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

When G.A.P. began, just over 5 years ago, we were providing a sit-down dinner to approximately 60 people per week. We now provide 100 hot lunches every Tuesday and 640 delivered dinners, along with extra vegetables, fruit, bread and eggs, every Thursday. We provide free transportation via taxi cards, gas cards, and volunteer drivers. In response to the need for Wellness initiatives, we run a weekly coffee social, art drop-in, men's luncheon, young adult program, and a 'learn to cook on a budget' class.

G.A.P. is entirely volunteer run, with over 300 volunteers, and relies heavily on the support of the community to run so many weekly programs. Local grocery stores and restaurants provide food rescue daily. Almost 50 businesses stepped forward this year as sponsors for our major fundraising event, the Coldest Night of the Year. Local businesses and manufacturers have supplied fresh flowers to brighten our neighbours' tables, bathroom essentials, dog food, cleaning products and, in some instances, provided free services for our neighbours; a local hair salon has cut our neighbours' hair, and a lawyer has provided legal powers of attorney. It certainly takes a community!

While the community support and volunteers are essential cogs in our services, we would not be able to sustain the quantities of food, and other necessities that we deliver, without additional financial support. We receive generous donations from individuals, grants from foundations, as well as municipal, provincial and federal funding.

We are indebted to all of our supporters!

Beth Houston

Beth Houston,
G.A.P. Chair





OVERVIEW



Gravenhurst Against Poverty, or “G.A.P.”, is an inclusive and transparent charitable organization, with the goal of reducing poverty within Gravenhurst and the surrounding area. G.A.P. is focused on the pursuit of community wholeness through three pillars of service: **Food, Wellness and Transportation.**

This booklet will provide an overview of G.A.P.’s programming while sharing relevant statistics and quotes from volunteers and neighbours.



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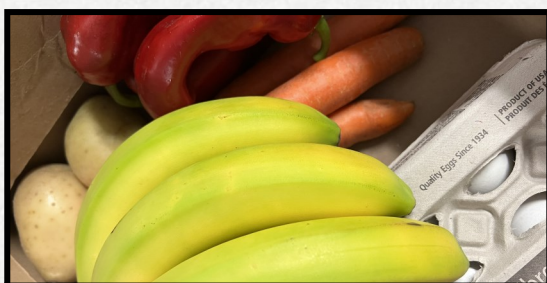


PILLAR 1: FOOD

FOOD DAY



One of G.A.P.'s core programs is the Food Day that sees meals and food hampers distributed throughout the community. Currently 650+ meals and hampers are given out each week. This represents a significant undertaking as there are several food rescue organizations and collaborators who help donate food to G.A.P.. The food is organized, sorted, packaged and distributed to neighbours in Gravenhurst and the surrounding area. The number of neighbours facing food insecurity in the community has grown substantially over the last few years and G.A.P. continues to make strides to meet that need.



“The food is especially helpful when you are not working. If you don’t have anything, it is great to have something you can feed your kids. There are always extra things on Tuesday that you can use like laundry soap and shampoo. Look at how many people G.A.P. has helped.”
-- Sharon

PILLAR 1: FOOD

MEAL PICK UP DAY

G.A.P. is committed to supporting the community and addressing the issue of food insecurity head-on. The goal for the Meal Pick-Up Day is to supplement the original Thursday Food Day program by providing a second weekly offering for our neighbours in need.



MEALS PROVIDED

2020: 5,963
2021: 21,890
2022: 29,952



FAMILIES FED

2020: 73
2021: 236
2022: 259





PILLAR 1: FOOD

G.A.P. GARDENS

The Garden Program launched in 2019 in response to feedback from our neighbours for more fresh produce. Several schools, churches, businesses and home gardeners in Gravenhurst and the surrounding area have rallied to the cause and have helped the program grow year-after-year.

“Supporting those in need combined with my love of gardening all came together for me to become a G.A.P. volunteer. I like to live in a community that cares like this about others.”
 -- Sylvia



PILLAR 1: FOOD FOOD RESCUE



VALUE OF FOOD RESCUED

2021: \$121,086
2022: \$189,674

G.A.P. is fortunate to have the support of several generous, thoughtful, organizations who contribute to G.A.P.'s Food Rescue Program. These organizations include: Sobey's, Your Independent Grocer, Shoppers Drug Mart, Giant Tiger, Starbucks, Fernando Cabading, Swiss Chalet, Don's Bakery, Willowtree Farm, Field of Greens, Feed It Forward and the FoodRight Network.



“I’m happy to put aside a few hours a week to help our neighbours who need our help. Helping to put food on their tables brings a great deal of satisfaction and a sense of community to me. It’s sad that we have so many neighbours that need the kind of help that G.A.P. is trying to provide, but I’m glad to be a small part of the solution in Gravenhurst.” -- Al





PILLAR 2: WELLNESS

YAC HANGOUTS



G.A.P. currently runs a youth hangouts program that provides local youth ages 12-18 with free, fun programs out of the YAC Room at G.A.P.. YAC activities have included paint nights, escape rooms, cookie decorating, trivia & bingo nights, an instrument petting zoo and more.



“I really appreciate seeing the growth in each of the individual youth participants as well as the bonds of friendship that have formed within the group.”
-- Hannah



PILLAR 2: WELLNESS

COFFEE TIME SOCIAL

In 2022, G.A.P. launched Coffee Time Socials, a program that seeks to provide a safe space for conversation, laughter and building a sense of community. Complimentary refreshments are made available and visitors often break out into groups to play card and board games.

“It gives me a reason to get out and socialize with other people and a reason to not stay home. I get to be with other people who I wouldn’t normally be with – I thoroughly enjoy it!” -- Terry-Jo



PILLAR 2: WELLNESS

PILOT PROGRAMS



G.A.P. strives to develop and offer a wide range of programs to address the needs that are communicated to us by the community. In 2023, G.A.P. launched a variety of pilot programs that included:

Community Kitchen Program >>

The G.A.P. Community Kitchen Program provides an opportunity for neighbours to come together to learn how to cook healthy, low-cost meals.

Men's Lunch Drop-In >>

Stemming from feedback that there was a lack of opportunities specifically for local men, G.A.P. offered a Men's Lunch Drop-In through the summer months.

Art Drop-In >>

Building on the sense that art and togetherness builds wholeness, G.A.P. offers an Art Drop-In Program that provides a safe space along with art supplies for neighbours to explore their inner artists and socialize.



"I got to make something I had never made before and was able to take it home to share with my dad and my friend. I really appreciate learning to cook new things that don't cost a lot."
-- Mike





PILLAR 3: TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION

G.A.P. is committed to supporting the community and addressing the issue of transportation barriers head-on. The vision is to further enhance the offerings available to our neighbours in need. Currently, G.A.P. offers a No-Cost Taxi Program in collaboration with Bala Taxi. When funds are available, G.A.P. provides gas cards to our neighbours with cars.

“Walking a distance with a cart of groceries or heavy, wet laundry can be a struggle. It can be a real mental thing when you feel isolated. G.A.P. makes you feel special in knowing that people care. There are not enough thank-you’s to express my gratitude.”
-- Nina





EVENTS

COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

The Coldest Night of the Year, an annual fundraising event coordinated by the Blue Sea Foundation and affectionally known as 'CNOY', is G.A.P.'s largest annual fundraiser. The event involves walking in the cold in support of neighbours who are facing hurt, hunger or homelessness.



“When I think of CNOY, it reminds me of a quote ‘No voice is too soft when that voice speaks for others.’ Together, CNOY in Gravenhurst is a BIG voice in our community. My introduction to G.A.P. was through participating in CNOY. It is a great opportunity to meet an exciting group of people with a passion for the things that matter. It had a profound impact on me, a now proud G.A.P. volunteer.” -- Marie





EVENTS

FARMERS' MARKET



G.A.P. has a booth at the entrance to the Gravenhurst Farmers' Market and offers friendly greetings and complimentary coffee to Market visitors all season long. It serves as a perfect opportunity to share about G.A.P. initiatives as well as collect donations to support G.A.P.'s vital programming.



“At the G.A.P. information table, we are able to have conversations with visitors and offer them complimentary coffee and tea. Interacting with people at the Farmers' Market is a unique opportunity to educate our summer residents about the poverty faced by many of our year-round residents. Muskoka is known for being a playground of the rich and famous. When we have a chance to tell people about G.A.P.'s programs, and what makes them necessary, many people are surprised. Although it's not the main reason for being there, it's nice to see the donation jar fill up during the day. We are also so grateful for the generosity of some of the vendors who donate a great deal of fresh produce to G.A.P. at the end of the day.” – Rhonda



G.A.P. VOLUNTEERS

NEIGHBOURS HELPING NEIGHBOURS

G.A.P. is a volunteer-run, grassroots organization made up of neighbours supporting neighbours. Volunteers fill positions such as: Food Delivery Drivers, Gardeners, Youth Leaders, Phone Check-Ins, Organizers, Program Leads and more.



- 2020:** 12,598 hours (Equivalent to 6.9 Full-Time Volunteer Staff)
- 2021:** 13,852 hours (Equivalent to 7.6 Full-Time Volunteer Staff)
- 2022:** 19,656 hours (Equivalent to 10.8 Full-Time Volunteer Staff)
- 2023:** 20,869 hours (Equivalent to 11.5 Full-Time Volunteer Staff)



SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

G.A.P.'s vital offering of programs is made possible through the generosity shown from a growing list of community champions, foundations, businesses, granting bodies and service groups. These are individuals and organizations who believe in G.A.P.'s vision of community wholeness and are directly involved in its pursuit.



“A sad truth is there are people in our community who are struggling... missing meals, missing rent payments, unable to pay the hydro bills. G.A.P. is making a real difference by helping people in this dire situation and it’s a great feeling for me to know that I am helping neighbours be able to enjoy a good meal today.” -- Kevin, Action Media Billboards





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