January 15, 2010

Mayor Eisenberger and Members of Council  
Office of the Mayor  
Hamilton City Centre  
77 James Street North, Suite 230  
Hamilton, ON L8R 2K3

To: Mayor Fred Eisenberger & Members of Council;

Local hunger relief agencies experienced one of the most challenging years to date. The community of Hamilton embraced the call to action to help people in need this holiday season. While the challenge was great so was the resolve of City Council, our agencies and that of our local community. Local Christmas hamper programs assisted 30,720 people this holiday season, an increase of 21% over last year. Agencies reported distributing 12,146 Christmas hampers across the City of Hamilton meeting their estimated Hamper targets and representing a 17% increase over the year prior.

In a climate of shrinking resources and increased need, retaining the same level of support in the form of a $100,000.00 grant from the City of Hamilton was vital to the success of these local programs. We know the grant level was a challenge for the City as well and we thank you for your continued commitment to the food banks and the people who would otherwise go hungry. The grant for the Christmas hamper programs injected our campaign with the needed support to carry us through one of the hardest hitting seasons we have ever experienced. The funds represented approximately 27% of the cost of food that needed to be purchased by local food banks for the holiday season. (This percentage does not reflect the value of donated food, gifts and sundry items needed for the hampers.)

We were also grateful for the immense support of our local media sponsors throughout the Christmas campaign by CHNews, The Hamilton Spectator, 102.9 K-Lite FM and 820 Talk Radio. Their commitment kept the message of people in need in the forefront of the news every day of the campaign. They informed, inspired and challenged this community to come to the aid of our neighbours in need. Our food drive campaign surpassed our targets this year and raised 340,000 pounds of food surpassing our target of 300,000 pounds of donated food. It was inspiring to see our community rally their efforts large and small to make the holidays brighter for our poorest citizens. As in the terms of funding to these programs Hamilton Food Share has submitted a detailed report on the Christmas hamper programs.

As we enter into the year 2010 we know there are challenges ahead. We are prepared to meet those challenges and we are grateful to have the City Of Hamilton as a valued partner at the table throughout the process. On behalf of Hamilton Food Share, its member agencies and especially the people who received help this Christmas season, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your support during the critical time of the Holiday season. We wish you all the best in the New Year.

Yours truly,

Joanne Santucci  
Executive Director

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