

Family Sponsorship Information and Guidelines

Below is information regarding the Richmond Christmas Fund Family Sponsorship Program. Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 604-279-7035.

What is the sponsorship program?

Rather than make a straight cash or gift donation to the Richmond Christmas Fund, some people prefer greater personal involvement in their charitable giving. The sponsorship program offers that personal investment by matching sponsors directly with low income families in Richmond. Once matched, sponsors are given a general list of items that include gifts and food for a family. Sponsors are responsible for purchasing the list of items, placing it in a 'hamper' and delivering it directly to their matched family.

How are the families selected?

Beginning mid-late November, the Richmond Christmas Fund receives applications for assistance from people wishing to receive grocery certificates and new toys for their children 15 years old and under. The families we match with sponsors are selected from this pool of applicants. Once matched with a sponsor, these families are no longer eligible for assistance through the general Christmas Fund. Christmas Fund applicants are often Food Bank clients or those requiring Income Assistance from the Ministry of Human Resources. Applications are also received from clients involved with community organizations such as Richmond Youth Service Agency and Richmond Health Services.

When will I receive the name of a family?

Once Christmas Fund registration has begun mid-late November and we know the size of family you wish to sponsor, we will match the appropriate family for you in a few days. Once a match has been made volunteers will contact you and provide you with details about the family. Sponsors will know family details that will assist them in Please be assured that we do not release information on sponsors to hamper recipients.

After you've been matched...

Sponsors are encouraged to speak with our volunteers regarding questions about their families, and will begin to assemble the hamper, based on the list of items provided to the sponsors. We will make every effort to be as detailed as we can when it comes to food preferences and allergies, as well as when it comes to gift items. All gifts must be new. Be creative with your food and gift purchases.

What should we give the family?

As sponsored families will no longer be receiving direct assistance from the general Christmas Fund, we ask that each sponsor be responsible for providing their family with a hamper of food and gifts that is at least of equal value to what they would have received through the regular distribution process. **This equates to approximately \$100 for each person in the family, including the parents.** The budget should be split between food and gifts. With family sponsorship, we also recommend that gifts be purchased for mom and dad. Please ensure that any clothing items given to the family include the receipts. They must be returnable in case they do not fit.

We suggest that, as a minimum, hampers contain food sufficient for three meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner. We will indicate on the form of any allergies or food preferences. Be sure to keep frozen or refrigerated foods in appropriate storage until delivery or purchase just prior to delivery. Some sponsors prefer to give grocery vouchers, and this is perfectly acceptable, however you need to deliver them early enough for the family to go shopping before Christmas.

Who can we sponsor?

You may sponsor a single person, a senior, or a family of more than one person. If your budget cannot handle this level of support, we recommend you make a cash donation to the Richmond Christmas Fund instead so that needy families may receive the maximum benefit through the Christmas Fund.

If you should collect many more funds or items than expected, please call us and we can arrange sponsorship for an additional family, or the excess may be directed to the general distribution.

If you would like us to provide further assistance in the preparation and delivery of your food and gifts, please let us know.

What about delivery?

We will arrange the delivery time that is suitable for the families and sponsors, please ensure that once a time has been set to deliver on the set time. To protect the privacy and dignity of the family we suggest that a maximum of two people deliver the food and gift hamper, as more may make the family uncomfortable and/or embarrassed.

The holiday season can be a very difficult and emotional time for many people. While they may feel grateful at having the opportunity to enjoy a more festive season, they may be apprehensive about their privacy, or may be concerned about what sponsors may be thinking of them. Excitement, happiness, anxiety, and embarrassment are feelings we all may experience over holiday season. To the family being sponsored, these feelings are often much more intense. The sponsor's kindness and understanding will go a long way in helping make the family's celebration a wonderful one.

Can I get a charitable tax receipt for the value of the hamper?

Revenue Canada has stated that a charity may not issue an official receipt for income tax purposes where the donation is going directly to a specific person or family as opposed to a program. In reality, such gifts are made to specific persons and not to the charity. Charitable tax receipts are issued only to donors making a cash donation directly to the Richmond Christmas Fund. There are rare exceptions – please call our office for further details.

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