

Food programs mean no one should go hungry

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By Chris Drost

After last year, so joyfully taking over the coordination of the annual Christmas Eve Community Dinner held at the Legion in Bancroft, North Hastings Community Trust has announced that the dinner will not be taking place this year because of COVID-19.

"We are very sad about this but there is no way we can do it. We were super excited to have it passed over to us last year from Marie Tenthorey. We would prefer to call it "postponed" this year, but in fact it is cancelled," says Jane Kali of NHCT. They hope to be back into full swing for next year.

The North Hastings Community Cupboard, which has been offering meals at Club 580 for the past several months, has plans to offer takeaway meals leading up to Christmas, including turkey dinners, similar to what they did leading up to Thanksgiving. They will be open every day over the holidays and all you have to do is show up.

NHCC is also busy putting together hampers that may in fact look more like gift cards this year because of COVID-19 restrictions. Those interested in getting a hamper/gift cards, must get on the list and provide a phone number by the cut-off date, Dec. 4, by dropping into the Community Cupboard in person during the hours they are open. Supplies are limited. The hampers may also include the gift cards recently donated by the Thrift Warehouse but, according to the Community Cupboard coordinator, Wes Hawley, "those will go to those who need it most first." The Community Cupboard will be calling people during the two weeks prior to Christmas week to arrange a time for hamper pick-up.

North Hastings Children's Services is offering a "Create Your Own Festive Feast Program" over Zoom. It is only for youth and families with children. Only the first 20 youth and 20 families with children to register will be able to participate. There will be a weekly Zoom meeting on Thursdays from 5 to 6 p.m. from Nov. 19 to Dec. 10 where participants will learn how to prepare all the food they will need for a festive dinner. Those taking part will freeze their food until the holidays. The program is free and the food kits can be either delivered or picked up at NHCS. "As always, any family that is struggling can contact NHCS to receive food support provided through the United Way and Hastings County," says NHCS executive director Jessica Anderson.

"We connect families with other community resources as well. We do have community members/businesses that sponsor families so if there was a community or business who would like to sponsor a family at Christmas, we are happy to facilitate that. Whether it be grocery cards or gifts, we have clients that could use some extra cheer this holiday season," explains Anderson.