



News Release  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Nova Scotians make the holidays brighter for thousands of families in need**

(Halifax, NS – December 30, 2010) Backed by the East Coast spirit of giving, FEED NOVA SCOTIA and a host of other community organizations helped make the holidays brighter for thousands of families this year. Turkeys, Christmas hampers, grocery vouchers and gifts were distributed – all thanks to the tremendous support from the community.

Across Nova Scotia, community organizations rose to the occasion, responding to the needs of their communities. Within the Halifax Regional Municipality, 6,537 households were supported through the annual Christmas Registry, a database administered by FEED NOVA SCOTIA with the purpose of matching families looking for assistance with organizations providing support. Ninety-four per cent of those who applied for help through the Christmas Registry were successfully matched with support.

“The willingness of Nova Scotians to help their neighbours at this special time of year is truly heartwarming,” said Dianne Swinemar, executive director of FEED NOVA SCOTIA. “We simply couldn’t provide this volume of assistance without the generous support of the community.”

Swinemar wishes every contributor could experience first hand the sigh of relief at the other end of the phone when a client is advised they’ve been matched with support. “It’s not just about the tangible food items or gifts,” she said. “It’s about taking away the worry a parent feels when they fear their children will be disappointed. It’s about helping families create special memories together. It’s about restoring hope.”

FEED NOVA SCOTIA went into the Christmas season this year without the backing of a major donor that has traditionally been part of the Christmas Registry. A local foundation that supported 2,355 households at Christmas in 2009 disbanded earlier this year, leaving a significant gap. To make up for the loss, FEED NOVA SCOTIA purchased more turkeys and increased efforts to acquire produce. As well, a number of community organizations and churches took on the responsibility of supporting additional families.

“As much as I wish every household was able to be supported, I would urge supporters and everyone involved with the Christmas Registry to feel proud of what they accomplished together,” said Swinemar. “To have endured such a significant loss and still manage to support 94 per cent of those requesting assistance is a tremendous accomplishment.”

Applications for Christmas support were mailed to income assistance recipients in October, with a submission deadline of November 1. Knowing that only 51 per cent of households supported by food banks receive income assistance (source: HungerCount

2010), FEED NOVA SCOTIA also encouraged their member agencies, schools, healthcare professionals, youth services workers and other agencies to refer families in need of support.

Managing the Christmas Registry and supplying member agencies and other groups with Christmas hampers are among the ways FEED NOVA SCOTIA helps support families and individuals in need. Throughout the year, the non-profit organization acts as a central food collection and distribution centre for approximately 150 member agency food banks, shelters and meal programs across the province, and at the same time strives to eliminate chronic hunger and poverty through research, awareness and client support programs.

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