



2025 Christmas Program



Making Space at the Table

Sofia never thought she would end up at the food bank. She had a good full-time job with the government, two young children, and was doing her best to provide a stable home.

But behind the scenes, life was far from easy. After years of partner abuse, Sofia made the courageous and difficult decision to leave, taking her children with her. Starting over meant covering all the household expenses on her own: rent, utilities, childcare, groceries. At first, she managed. She cut back where she could and often skipped meals so her kids would not have to.

But as the cost of living continued to rise, the stress became overwhelming. Eventually, Sofia realized she had run out of options. She did not want her children to go without during the holidays. And although coming to the food bank was hard, she was met with kindness and compassion from the moment she walked through the door.

She received support for herself and her two children through the OCCRC's Christmas Program. It meant her kids would have food for the holidays, and she could prepare the meals they knew and loved. That bit of comfort and stability made a world of difference. It gave Sofia the space she needed, even if just for a moment.

Her story is not unique. Every month, more than 1,300 people turn to us for help. For many, this is the first time they have ever had to ask for assistance.

Sofia's story is a composite, based on real experiences shared by families we support. While names and details have been changed to protect privacy, her situation reflects what many households in our community are facing. Everyone who comes through our doors is met with care and dignity. Through a thoughtful intake and assessment process, we take time to understand each person's needs so we can respond with the right support.

We are doing everything we can to meet the rising demand. Sadly, the need has never been greater, and sometimes, it is more than our resources can handle.

That is where you come in.

Your support helps fill the gap. It ensures that families like Sofia's do not have to face the holidays alone. Your generosity helps every table feel the spirit of the season.

Across Ottawa, food bank visits have reached record highs—a 90 % increase from 2019.

In Ontario this year, there were almost 800K visits per month of which nearly 1 in 5 are employed.

