

INSIDE:

Stories of Hope
Images of Dedication
Opportunities to Make a Difference

HARVEST HANDS
...★...
CHRONICLES

STORIES OF HOPE & HARVEST

TODAY'S FORECAST:

• 325 volunteers & counting.

• 400+ organizations served.

• \$18 million rescued YTD.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

FOOD PRICES SOAR. More Canadians face food insecurity. Harvest Hands responds.



A note from Amy...This is what community looks like.

Just a short time ago, we invited you to help us **Fuel the Fleet**. We hoped our community would respond. You did far more than that.

Because of your incredible generosity, together we raised more than **\$44,000** to help keep Harvest Hands on the road. We are deeply grateful for every donation, and every person who chose to stand behind our mission. **Thank you.**

Your gift is much more than fuel in a truck. It represents meals on a family's table, fresh produce reaching a food bank, groceries arriving at a shelter, and hope delivered to communities across Southern Ontario.

Every day, Harvest Hands rescues surplus food from farmers, manufacturers, retailers, and distributors that would otherwise go to waste. Our fleet travels thousands of kilometres each month, collecting and delivering food to more than 400 community organizations that serve children, seniors, families, shelters, meal programs, and people facing food insecurity.

Your support keeps those wheels turning.

As we prepare for the months ahead, we are entering one of the busiest and most important seasons of the year. The start of school means many families will be stretching already-tight budgets. Community meal programs begin serving more people. At the same time, Ontario's harvest season provides an incredible opportunity to rescue millions of pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables before they are lost.

The need is growing. So is the opportunity.

With your help, we can rescue more food, reach more communities, and ensure that nutritious food gets to those who need it most instead of ending up in a landfill. Would you consider helping us once again as we launch into the fall season?

Whether your gift is \$25, \$50, \$100, or whatever you are able to give... every contribution makes a difference.

At Harvest Hands, every \$1 donated helps provide 3 meals.

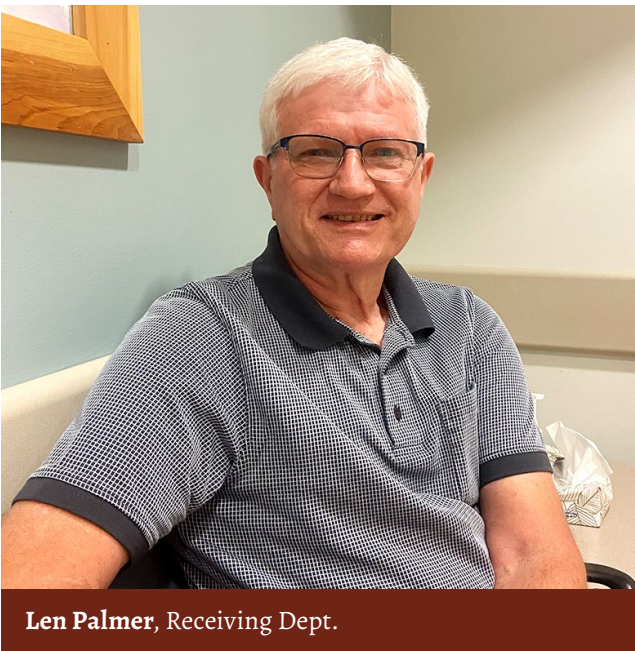
Thank you for believing in our mission. Thank you for helping us transform surplus into sustenance, waste into opportunity, and compassion into action.

We couldn't do this without you, and we are honoured to have you as part of the Harvest Hands family. Together, we can make this our strongest harvest season yet.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Amy Collins
Chief Operating Officer
Harvest Hands

P.S. The harvest season only comes once a year. With your continued support, we can rescue more fresh Ontario produce, keep our fleet moving and help ensure that thousands of families have access to healthy food this fall. Every gift, no matter the size, helps keep hope on the move.



Len Palmer, Receiving Dept.

Every Day is like Christmas at Harvest Hands!

Christmas in July...August...September. Every time the Receiving Dept at Harvest Hands hears the beep, beep, beep of a truck backing up to the dock, there is an anticipation of donated gifts coming our way. It could be 12 to 14 skids from a food distributor like The Hub in Leamington, Huron County in Centralia or Second Harvest in Toronto. Maybe one of our 15 trucks is returning with goods from Costco, Sobey's, No Frills, Foodland, Shopper's Drug Mart, Superstore, COBS or other greenhouses, markets, farmers, retailers, and food processors too numerous to mention. The possibility of a couple transport trailers of product a month is not out of the question. The local market farming season is upon us and we look forward to receiving fresh produce from the fields and greenhouse operations when there is supply available. **Never the same items... week after week... it is just like unwrapping a present behind every truck door.**

We have a great group of volunteers that record and sort all the items that are donated. A retail price is calculated for every shipment received and we are diligent on checking dates and the quality of the goods. The goods are then distributed around our warehouse to the respective departments to be stored, displayed or further processed. No day is the same. **You could say we are busier than elves some days.** Having said that, like elves, we find time for practical jokes, conversation and friendly jabs with our co-workers. All work and no play makes for a dull day!

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Everyday is like Christmas at Harvest Hands - cont'd

A favourite quip is “Do a good job and limit the mistakes... employee bonuses are coming at the end of the month... maybe a **DOUBLE** bonus!” Obviously no pay or bonus is needed when Harvest Hands does so much good in the community. I do believe the Receiving Dept. does receive more bonuses than some other departments (don't let

that get around), especially if an early shift is worked. We see skids and skids of mixed produce, hard goods, frozen product and bakery goods ushered by us to the dock to be delivered to food banks and organizations that help out with food insecurity. **All those items were received by our department, and to see them heading back out the**

door is bonus enough! We're happy to play a small part in the Harvest Hands operation.

Len
Volunteer - Harvest Hands Receiving Department

A Morning in the Life of Food Rescue...

Most people are still asleep when our day begins.

At 5:30 AM, while the streets are quiet and the sun is just beginning to rise, our drivers are already on the road. Their destination isn't a retail store to shop—it's a retail store to rescue.

Every day, retailers are faced with products that are approaching their best-before dates, have cosmetic imperfections, or can no longer remain on store shelves because of seasonal change. While perfectly safe and nutritious, much of this food risks ending up in the waste stream.

That's where Harvest Hands steps in.

Our trucks arrive at participating retailers and carefully collect these products before they are discarded. Crates of fresh vegetables, fruit, mushrooms, peppers, and countless other items are loaded onto our vehicles and brought back to our warehouse.

But the story doesn't end there.

When the food arrives, another incredible group gets to work: **our volunteers**.

Hundreds of pounds of food move across sorting tables each day. Volunteers inspect every item, removing anything unsuitable, cleaning produce, sorting products by type, and repackaging them into portions that are easier for our partner organizations to distribute. What may have looked like a bin of mixed vegetables becomes carefully prepared food ready for families, seniors,

shelters, meal programs, and community kitchens.

It takes time. It takes care. And it takes people who believe that good food should never go to waste while others are going without.

By the end of the process, that rescued food begins another journey—one that reaches more than 400 partner organizations across Southern Ontario. Food banks, shelters, community meal programs, churches, schools, seniors' programs, and outreach organizations all receive

food that otherwise may have been lost.

What started as surplus becomes support. What was once considered waste becomes nourishment. And what begins with a 5:30 AM pickup becomes hope on someone's table.

Every day, this work is made possible by retailers who choose to donate, volunteers who generously give their time, drivers who start before dawn, and supporters who believe that together we can rescue food, end hunger, and nourish hope.



BECAUSE FOOD BELONGS ON PLATES, NOT IN LANDFILLS.



A CRATE THAT CARRIED MORE THAN FOOD

It was a simple crate — fresh produce, bread, and a few essentials.
But when it reached a local senior living alone, it became something more.
It meant one less impossible choice between groceries and medication.
It meant relief. It meant someone cared.
At Harvest Hands, every crate tells a story — and every story begins with people like you.

FACS Letter of Support

On behalf of Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin, we are pleased to offer our support for Harvest Hands, a cornerstone of our community and a transformative force across Southwestern Ontario.

Our organization works directly with families across a wide range of circumstances, and we understand firsthand how critical a strong support network is to this work. Among the families we serve, many face challenges related to food and income security, and it is in supporting those families that we have come to rely on Harvest Hands as a key community partner.

Harvest Hands occupies a unique and vital role within that network: rather than serving individuals directly, they strengthen the organizations that do, making their reach far greater than any single program could achieve. Across Southwestern Ontario, countless agencies depend on Harvest Hands to do what they do. The families those agencies serve, many of them among our regions most vulnerable, are the ultimate beneficiaries of that support.

For Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin, Harvest Hands has been an indispensable partner. They reliably supply our food security cupboard with school-safe snacks and hygiene products and through their generosity, we are also able to provide families with essential household items including beds, clothing and cleaning supplies that make a meaningful difference in daily life.



What distinguishes Harvest Hands is not only the consistency of their support, but their responsiveness and genuine spirit of collaboration. They welcome targeted requests tied to specific needs and community initiatives, and they adapt readily to emerging priorities. This kind of flexible, mission-aligned partnership is rare and deeply valued.

The impact of Harvest Hands is best understood not by looking at one organization, but by considering the entire ecosystem they sustain. Remove their support, and the ripple effects would be felt across the region. They are, in the truest sense, a pillar of this community and there is no organization more deserving of your support.

Sincerely,
Brian Flint
Executive Director
Myles Proulx
Manager, Resources and Community Partnerships
Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin

Thank you for believing in our mission and helping us to end hunger and nourish hope.
We couldn't do this without you!

