



## **Overwhelming generosity**

### **Miracle Food Drive collects enough food to feed thousands**

**MONTREAL, September 15, 2020** — Montrealers whole-heartedly answered the call to participate in the first-ever Miracle du 13 Septembre food drive last weekend across the Island of Montreal, Laval and the South Shore. By donating non-perishable food items and other supplies, they went a long way toward helping their neighbours on the island and beyond deal with the challenges presented by the pandemic, especially when it comes to securing food.

The Miracle food drive on Sunday, September 13 saw more than 2,000 volunteers pick up shopping bags and boxes from over 10,000 doorways, porches, lobbies, steps and driveways. Some 25,000 kilos of donations were collected and re-distributed to the 200 families who had registered a need and to nearly 100 food banks, social service organizations and other partners, such as places of worship and community centres.

What started as a germ of an idea by organizing committee member Gillian Aitken when she saw similar initiatives spring up in Ontario and thought why not Montreal, turned into a massive community effort.

“The outpouring of support for the cause has been overwhelming,” Aitken said. “The level of generosity and Montrealer’s willingness to help others have really been the hallmarks of the Miracle food drive. The pandemic has made many feel helpless in the face of it, and with this drive, people felt like they were doing something to help. Even a small gesture could make a difference.”

The food drive was so successful that many food banks and other organizations were said to be full after their deliveries, unable to accept any more donations for lack of storage space. Some said that with the donations they received on Sunday alone, they could serve their communities for a month. Many of them opened specially on a Sunday to receive the donations.

Entire families set off to collect and deliver items. Some brought their young children along to witness and participate in the event to show them the value of neighbours helping neighbours in a time of need. Some volunteers rented vehicles, used car-sharing services or supplied trucks and vans to make the operation run more smoothly. For some donors, this was their first time donating food to a food bank.

Even torrential rains for most of the afternoon across the region could not dampen spirits. A gallery of photos and personal stories from volunteers, donors and recipients have been added to the website at <http://www.miracle13septembre.org>.

If there were any regrets, it was that not every donation was collected, so great was the participation. Those who did not have their packages picked up are encouraged to locate a food bank or organization near them to deposit their donations. A map of organizations is available on the dedicated Miracle website at <http://www.miracle13septembre.org/en/list-of-organizations/>.

Everyone who participated was part of the miracle, and not surprisingly, there are calls to repeat the event to continue supporting our communities. The idea has caught on in other large cities like Toronto and Vancouver to hold massive food drives of their own.