



*Christmas  
Bureau*  
of Edmonton

ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

2015



Since 1940, the Christmas Bureau's mandate has remained the same — *to provide a festive meal and coordination of Christmas giving to Edmontonians in need.* We're proud of our 75-year tradition of supporting the Edmonton community and are pleased to share with you highlights from our 2015 campaign year.



Photo: Malin Samuelsson



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2.7%

Increase in demand

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12.4%

Increase in individual donations

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66,400

Edmontonians received assistance

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*It is greater than one meal.  
One act of kindness can impact someone  
for a lifetime.*

# Christmas Bureau of Edmonton

The Christmas Bureau is a community effort to serve the less fortunate in Edmonton at Christmastime by providing them with not only a festive meal, but also hope and dignity at a time when they may otherwise not have the resources.

The Christmas Bureau provides Edmontonians in need a single application process to receive a festive food hamper or food gift cards, toys for children age 0 to 12 years and a teen gift card for youth age 13 to 17 years. For many of our clients, the stresses of being able to provide a festive celebration are lessened by the gift they receive. The opportunity to celebrate the simplest of traditions—*sharing a meal*—is made possible through the Christmas Bureau.

## Mission

Promotion of the spirit of Christmas caring and sharing in the City of Edmonton

## Mandate

To provide a festive meal and coordination of Christmas giving to Edmontonians in need

## Core Values

- 1) Share the spirit of giving and collective caring
- 2) A spirit of compassion, generosity and support
- 3) A spirit which offers hope
- 4) Culturally inclusive
- 5) Non-judgemental

## Principles

- 1) All persons in need are treated with utmost dignity, respect, courtesy and confidentiality.
- 2) Providing assistance to a person in need to be charitable—not disparaging, disconsolate or punitive.
- 3) Provide assistance according to good stewardship principles.
- 4) Pursue and develop partnerships in the community.

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**“Organizations like the Christmas Bureau give people like my mother, my son and I  
the gifts of hope, love and the true meaning of Christmas.”**

*- Shawna, Former Christmas Bureau Client*

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# Board of Directors

## Tom Sides, Chair



It will come as no surprise that 2015 was a year of challenges in our city. With dozens of deserving local charities vying for donations, we're fortunate that so many donors continue to make us their charity of choice year after year. Know that with every dollar you donate, you're directly impacting a family in your community. Thousands of Edmontonians enjoyed a festive meal this Christmas, because of you!

This year the Christmas Bureau celebrated a big milestone: our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. That's 75 years of dedicated service and support to Edmonton families in need. Few organizations can boast of such a strong, well-established presence in their community. We're grateful that our donors have made this possible through their support—we're looking forward to the next 75 years in Edmonton.

Time and time again we hear the same thing from our clients: what you're providing goes far beyond a single meal. You're providing memories of a holiday filled with comforting food enjoyed in the company of family. In the words of one of our clients, "the gift from the Christmas Bureau meant that my children didn't grow up thinking that macaroni and cheese was Christmas dinner."

I would personally like to thank the Board of Directors and Committee members for their continued commitment to such an important cause. Your hard work and dedication is essential in ensuring that we can meet the needs of so many families and individuals in our community.

As we look forward to 2016, we will continue to find ways to strengthen our community partnerships and engage Edmonton in our mission and mandate.



Photo: David Comer

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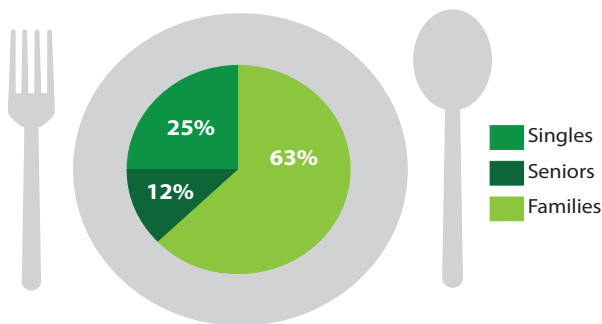
***"The Christmas Bureau is about more than providing festive meals for families. With each delivery comes so much more—comfort, hope and happy holiday memories."***

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# Who we helped in 2015

We're pleased to report that we were able to meet a 2.7% increase in the number of Edmontonians coming to us for assistance in 2015 (66,400 people), thanks to the generosity of our fundraisers and donors.

## Households Served (of 23,976 households)



## Client Demographics (of 66,400 clients)



Through our single-application process, the Christmas Bureau is able to share family demographics with 630 CHED Santas Anonymous and the Adopt-A-Teen program to ensure that children and teens aren't forgotten at Christmas. This streamlined application process reduces administrative costs and, most importantly, makes the process as easy as possible for families experiencing financial strain during a stressful time of the year.

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**"I would like to take this chance to thank you for all you do for families like mine every year. I especially thank you for putting a smile on my daughter's face at Christmas."**

*- Christmas Bureau Client*

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# Honorary Campaign Co-Chairs Kevin Lowe & the Oilers Ladies

Imagine having an empty table during the holiday season—the absence of a festive meal is a reality for many families in our community. For 75 years, the Christmas Bureau has been ensuring that no family goes hungry at Christmas—with the help of thousands of donors, partners, fundraisers and volunteers, 66,400 Edmontonians received a festive meal this year alone.

We're pleased to have partnered with the Christmas Bureau once again for their 2015 Campaign. Our relationship is a special one that began with the involvement of a very young Edmonton Oilers defenceman, Kevin Lowe, in 1984. He and the Christmas Bureau were synonymous, with Kevin appearing in many of the organization's posters in the early years of the partnership.

Thirteen years ago, the Oilers Ladies became Honorary Campaign Co-Chairs with Kevin Lowe. We are honoured to support the Christmas Bureau and the families they serve.





Photo: David Comer



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*"We're proud to be a partner of the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton since 1984. Thanks to the generosity of donors, volunteers and fundraisers, together we were able to ensure 66,400 Edmontonians were able to enjoy a festive meal this holiday season!"*

*- Kevin Lowe and the Oilers Ladies*

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# Human Resources

## Stuart McKellar, QC, Chair



2015 was a special year marking our 75th anniversary of providing festive meals to Edmontonians in need. The Human Resources Committee extends a thank you to all the seasonal employees who have made it possible year over year for the Bureau to deliver our programs.

This year a new full time position, Marketing and Communications Officer, was created to increase communications with donors across all age spectrums throughout the year and to develop and implement marketing strategies to increase our fundraising capabilities. We are pleased to welcome Corinne Mercier to our team.

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*"I am appreciative of the dedication of our seasonal employees who work to ensure our clients receive all their services in time for Christmas."*

*- Wendy Batty, Executive Director*

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# Communications

## Sharon Bell, Chair



The Christmas Bureau's Communications Committee was hard at work in 2015 planning and implementing a number of communications tactics to support the year's campaign.

First on the list of priorities was the design and development of a new website that better suited the needs of the organization, including facilitating online donations through a refined donor process. After months of planning and review, the website launched in November. The results speak for themselves: online donations increased by 50%.

Secondly, the committee was tasked with developing a creative campaign that would resonate with our donors. With the guidance of a creative brief, developed by the committee, and the assistance of 2015's creative sponsors, ImagineThat! Photographics and RingMaster Creative, a new campaign was introduced this year. Overall response to the creative was positive and the committee will determine next steps for the creative in 2016.

Once again, our message was bolstered with the help of many generous media partners without whom we simply could not meet our fundraising goal. Their support, by bringing about awareness, is invaluable and we look toward further enriching these relationships in 2016 and seeking new potential partnership opportunities.

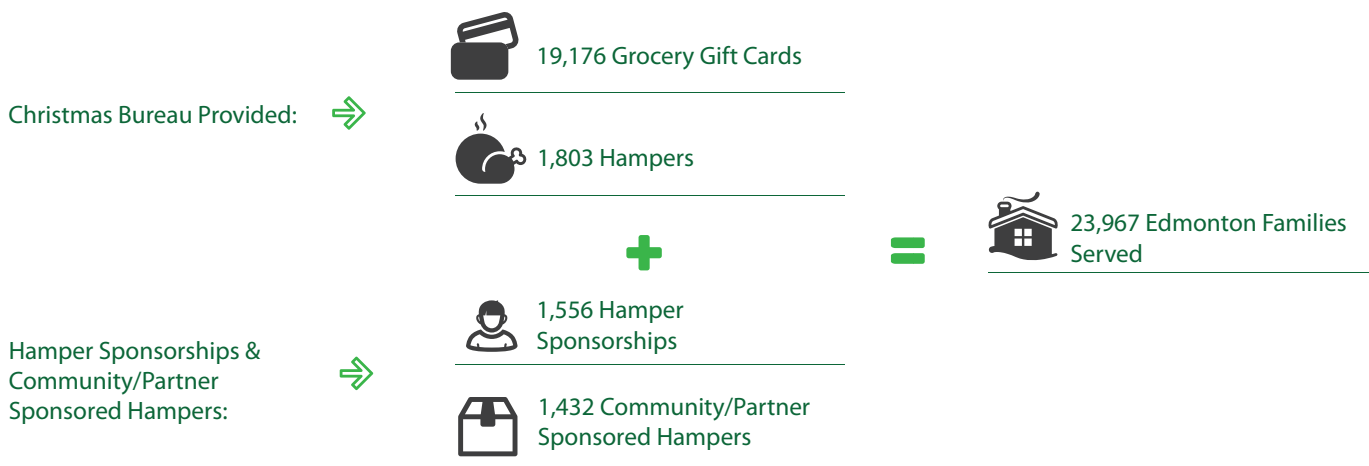
2016 will be a year of challenges, not only for the Christmas Bureau, but for Edmonton as a whole. We will continue to focus on developing a strong communications strategy that positions us for long-term success.



## How we help families

The Christmas Bureau helps families, seniors and individuals in one of three ways: providing a food hamper, matching a client with a hamper sponsorship or providing our clients with a food gift card. The Christmas Bureau also works with community partners who provide festive hampers. Because of the diversity of our community, many families opt for a food gift card so they can assemble a meal that suits their dietary and/or cultural needs.

### What was delivered in 2015?



## Social Services Gilbert Drapeau, Chair

The role of this committee includes the oversight of client programming ensuring we met the needs of our clients and coordination of various entities in order to provide a festive meal to Edmontonians in need. Each spring the committee reviews a number of factors impacting those who may need the help of the Bureau; this exercise helps the Bureau to forecast the needs our clients may express. Given the economic climate of 2015, the committee did forecast an increase in the number of applications – many of these coming from Edmontonians who experienced recent job loss. Through ongoing conversations with community partners, involved in the Social Services Committee, the Bureau is able to understand developing needs in real time as committee members have first-hand frontline experience with most of the Bureau's clientele.

We are pleased to report we were able to meet the demand and provide for 66,400 individuals this past Christmas. We are grateful to our donors, fundraisers and volunteers whose generosity ensures that no Edmontonian goes without a festive meal during the Christmas season.

# Fund Development

## Willie Lee, Chair



Every year, the Christmas Bureau is reminded how generous our community really is. 2015 was no exception. Despite the economic challenges faced by so many Edmontonians, our donors still came out in droves to support local families in need.

The Christmas Bureau receives few government grants and therefore relies on the generosity of our community to ensure that we can meet the needs of our clients. This year, the committee looked at new and refreshed ways to engage donors, fundraisers, and corporate partners. This entailed, in part, a new website which streamlined online donation processes, as well as a redesigned Chairman's Letter (thanks to the creative sponsorship of Danielle Iglesias Design) to better capture the attention of our donors.

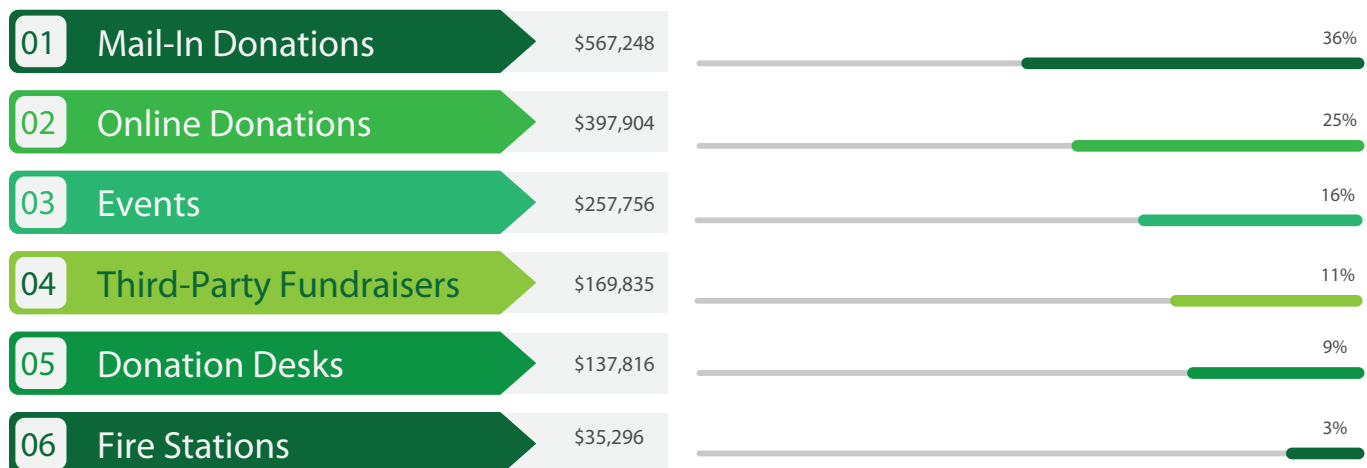
We're pleased to say that the Ambassador Program was also launched this year. Christmas Bureau Ambassadors visited many local businesses to generate awareness about who we are and what we do. We're hopeful that, with the continued support of our Ambassadors, the program will flourish and generate increased support from corporate partners.

With so many charities seeking donations during the winter months, standing out continues to be a challenge. In 2016, we will continue to focus on finding new and innovative ways to engage our donor community. Doing so will ensure long-term success for the Christmas Bureau so that we can serve Edmonton families in need for many more years to come.

## Fundraising Numbers

Whether by donating individually, organizing a fundraiser at work or attending one of our major fundraising events, Edmontonians ensure our neighbours have a festive meal.

### Donation Sources (2015)



# Adopt-A-Teen Program

## Dick Frenz, Chair



We're proud to report another successful campaign for the Adopt-A-Teen program, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year. Despite the economic challenges faced by our community in 2015, our donors came through for us by raising a total of \$481,000 for the program. Thanks to their generosity, 7,941 teens (in 5,372 families) received a \$50 Walmart gift card this year.

As always, the Edmonton Sun has been an invaluable partner by backing our program with a considerable media sponsorship. With their help, and the help of a number of columnists with the Sun, our message reached all corners of the community. We would also like to extend a special thanks to Graham Hicks, who started the Adopt-A-Teen program in 1999, and returned after several years of "retirement" to chair the 2015 fundraising campaign. Graham's support and passion for the program is the driving force behind its success.

We were also pleased to introduce our first Honorary Campaign Chair, Dan 'The Can Man' Johnston. Dan is a well-known community figure who has spent the past several years collecting non-perishable food donations. Dan joined Adopt-A-Teen to help raise awareness and we were happy to have him on board.

In the coming year we will continue to nurture our valuable partnerships and work with the Edmonton Sun to ensure continued success.

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**"It felt so terrific, when I was a teenager, to know somebody out there cared about me at Christmas."**

*- Dan 'The Can Man' Johnston, Past Adopt-A-Teen Recipient and 2015 Honorary Campaign Chair*

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# Finance

## Andrea Peyton, Chair



This year, with due diligence, the Christmas Bureau was able to minimize the forecasted budget deficit by 50%. The Finance Committee was able to meet the budgetary requirements of all committees — many of which had developed strategies to respond to challenges in client services, fundraising and communications.

The Christmas Bureau's financial statements and a link to Canada Revenue Charity Page can be found on our website at [christmasbureau.ca](http://christmasbureau.ca).

Our Canada Revenue Charity Number is 11922 2925 RR0001.



# Volunteer

## Linda Kennedy-Romaniuk, Chair



The Christmas Bureau is fortunate to have a strong, engaged volunteer base that donates an astounding amount of time to our organization each year. This past year was no exception, with 701 volunteers donating 6,880 hours to a wide range of Christmas Bureau events and activities.

After over 35 years of logistic administration by Catholic Social Services, the Christmas Bureau took on the logistic role for the Hamper Program. This added to the number of volunteers engaged with us in 2015. Additionally, the experience and guidance provided by long-term volunteers from the Knights of Columbus was essential in making the transition as smooth as possible.

Our campaign year ended with the traditional, and much-anticipated, Volunteer Appreciation Celebration. This year, several volunteers were recognized for their contributions to the Christmas Bureau:

- First Year Volunteer Award: Demetria Neguzanai and Sandy DeMaria (office volunteers)
- Outstanding Volunteers: Hitomi Suzata (Donation Desk Team Leader), Chase Jackson (Donation Desk Ambassador and Hamper Program volunteer), Bill Yin (Donation Desk Ambassador and Walk-In Days volunteer) and David Comer (Donation Desk Ambassador and Photographer)
- Chairman's Award: Bryan Sarabin (Donation Desk Team Leader and Hamper Delivery)
- Kevin Lowe Award: Pat Thompson (Donation Desk Team Leader/Mentor)

Each and every one of these volunteers embodies the mission and spirit of the Christmas Bureau. On behalf of the Volunteer Committee, I would like to thank all of our volunteers for donating their time during this busy season and continuing to make the Christmas Bureau their charity of choice.

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**"The feeling we get and the people we meet through volunteering with the Christmas Bureau, to us, is what Christmas is all about. It's a very special gift and we look forward to each and every year we are involved."**

*- Bonnie and Doug, Christmas Bureau Volunteers*

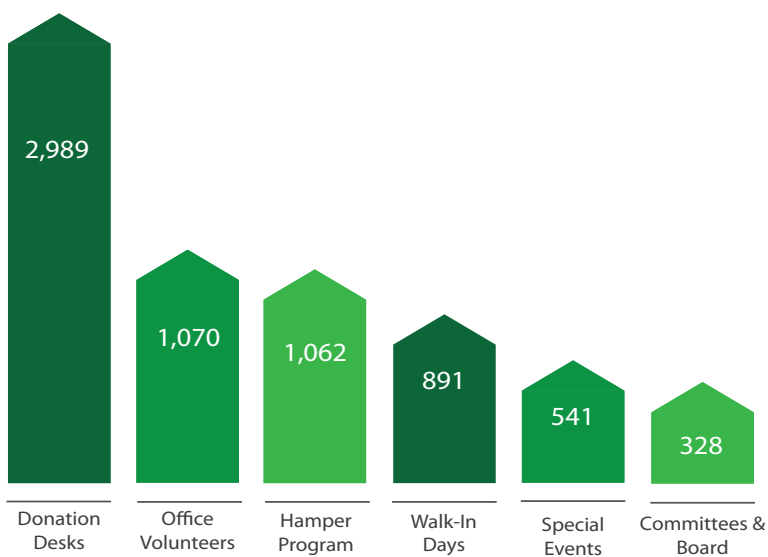
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## Volunteers by Numbers

We're fortunate to have a strong network of volunteers that donate thousands of hours (6,881 hours, to be exact) of time to our cause every year. From donation desks to special events, our volunteers play a key role in generating much needed funds and awareness for us during our campaign period.

### Volunteer Hours (2015 total: 6,881 hours)



*"I like that I get to meet a lot of interesting people when I volunteer with the Christmas Bureau. You also have an opportunity to meet people who have been helped by the Christmas Bureau in the past and are now able to give back themselves—they're so joyful and thankful to be in the position to help others."*

- Marilyn, Christmas Bureau Volunteer



## Imagine Canada

The Christmas Bureau is proud to say that in 2015 we received official Imagine Canada accreditation.

The Imagine Canada Standards Program awards accreditation to charities and non-profits that demonstrate excellence in five areas of operations:

- Board Governance
- Financial Accountability and Transparency
- Fundraising
- Staff Management
- Volunteer Involvement



The Christmas Bureau was required to meet 73 standards in each of these five areas in order to obtain accreditation.

Overall, there were many benefits that guided our decision to seek Imagine Canada accreditation. Among them were:

- To demonstrate our commitment to accountability and transparency in five areas of operations
- To create an opportunity for discussion on new processes and best practices from other organizations
- To provide us with an opportunity to review our processes and increase our best practices in fundraising and financial accountability
- To provide us with an opportunity to identify and reduce organizational risks
- To engage our Board and Committee Chairs in the process of governance of the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton

Imagine Canada accreditation will increase organizational credibility, trust and confidence among donors, partners, fundraisers and volunteers. We would like to thank all the Board and Committee Members who donated an incredible amount of time in helping us to prepare for our accreditation submission. We couldn't have done it without you!

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***“Donors are demanding accountability and transparency from charitable organizations. The Imagine Canada Standards Accreditation helps build confidence among donors, partners, volunteers and prospects. The Christmas Bureau is proud to have met these standards of excellence and to be able to showcase the Trustmark to our supporters.”***

*- Stuart McKellar, QC Governance and Strategic Planning Chair*

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# Christmas Bureau Leadership 2015/2016 Board of Directors

NAME	BOARD ROLE	AFFILIATION
<b>Board Executive</b>		
Tom Sides	Chair	Dentons Canada LLP
Peter Ratcliff	Vice Chair	Alberta Health Services
Willie Lee	Past Chair, Secretary	University of Alberta
Andrea Peyton	Treasurer	Calder Bateman Communications
<b>Committee Chairpersons</b>		
Andrea Peyton	Chair, Finance	Calder Bateman Communications
Sharon Bell	Chair, Communications	Sharon Bell Marketing Inc.
Willie Lee	Chair, Fund Development	University of Alberta
Stuart McKellar, QC	Chair, Human Resources & Planning	ATB Financial
Gilbert Drapeau	Chair, Governance & Strategic Planning	
	Chair, Social Services	Alberta Human Services, Child & Family Services Authority
Linda Kennedy-Romaniuk	Chair, Volunteers	Bee Clean Building Maintenance
Dick Frenz	Chair, Adopt-A-Teen	omni Management Consulting Alliance
<b>Board Members</b>		
Kim Armstrong	Board Member	Alberta Human Services, Status of Women
Harry Fuccaro	Board Member	Metis Child & Family Services Society
Major Carol Hale	Board Member	Salvation Army
Dorothy Jacques	Board Member	Norquest College
David Kovacs	Board Member	Servus Credit Union
Wendy Massey	Board Member	Alberta Human Services, Alberta Works, AISH
Hugh Murphy	Board Member	Total Valve Solutions
Lana Nordlund	Board Member	630 CHED Santas Anonymous
Ivan Sawchuk	Board Member	Community Member
John Stevens	Board Member	Entrec Corporation
Kim Watamaniuk	Board Member	NAIT
<b>Organization Executive</b>		
Wendy Batty	Executive Director	Christmas Bureau of Edmonton
Darlene Kowalchuk	Campaign Director	Christmas Bureau of Edmonton
Corinne Mercier	Marketing and Communications Officer	Christmas Bureau of Edmonton



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