

Abundance Program - Families Helping Families

We are so excited to be participating in the Abundance Program for the tenth year at McMurrich! The program is a community response to poverty in Toronto.

Through the Abundance Program, we will help others who could use some extra kindness as winter sets in. It was started in 2000 by a social worker for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to help inner-city families in need. TDSB social workers meet with the families to get an idea of their needs and create “wish lists”. The generosity of families from sponsoring schools helps to ensure each family receives a selection of gift cards that will allow them to buy presents for the holidays. **This year, again, the Abundance Program is collecting only gift cards as contributions.** We will not be accepting donations of items (we are streamlining the process to reach more families).

Thanks to the generosity of previous years and because of the overwhelming number of families in need, we have decided to continue supporting two families per grade this year. Each grade will be matched with two families. Each family will be introduced with information the family has chosen to share, along with their “gift card wish list” (please see reverse). This will allow you to consider how to support them. **We invite our whole school community to participate.** The fact that strangers care, can be life altering.

The families are always extremely appreciative of any help that you may give. Please remember that all donations are welcome, no matter how small. If it is not possible to donate financially, a card from your child would be incredibly valued by the family.

In the past social workers involved with the families have found the following to be helpful and much appreciated:

- Gift cards to grocery stores (this is the most needed)
- Gift cards to Amazon, Walmart and ToysRUs
- Gift cards for restaurants to provide a rare treat (Tim Hortons, Pizza Pizza, etc.)
- PRESTO cards
- Movie passes

Please feel free to include a tag/card indicating the initials of the recipient. Please place the gift card in an envelope with **your child's name and grade** written on it. **Please bring all donations to room 301 by Tuesday, December 16th.**

If you have any questions, contact Zeen Boegel at zeenat.boegel@tdsb.on.ca.

Please remember, this initiative is entirely voluntary. Thank you for any support that you are able to give!

Kindergarten Families

<p>Family #1</p> <p>Profile #1 Shannon Lineha 416-735-8572</p>	<p>YE Family</p> <p>Family Background: This is a resilient family of two: a mother and Y, her 11 year-old son. They fled the conflict in Ukraine but have continued to struggle since arriving in Canada three years ago. The mother has been unable to find suitable employment and without a stable source of income they have been forced to move repeatedly. They continue to rely on inadequate and temporary housing options. Y has special needs but he is not eligible for all of the government funded support and services due to their immigration status. Your support via gift cards would help this family cover basic necessities, alleviate food insecurity, and provide much-needed stability as they work toward self-sufficiency.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family shops at Walmart, No Frills, Metro and Dollarmama; they would be grateful for gift cards to any of these stores. They also desperately need winter clothing and boots so gift cards for any clothing store such as Old Navy would be especially helpful. Mum hopes to purchase some bed sheets and warm blankets. Visa gift cards would support the family in buying a microwave and other essential household items. Lastly, the son is very creative and would love a lego set so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be much appreciated.</p> <p>This family thanks you sincerely for your generosity and wishes you a peaceful holiday season.</p>
<p>Family #2</p> <p>Profile #2 Sabrina Gonsalves 416 570-3304</p>	<p>JJ Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family consists of J, a high-school student, and her devoted uncle. J is a resilient young woman who has overcome significant early trauma and instability related to her mother's struggles. Her mother is unable to care for her so her uncle stepped up selflessly to provide her with a stable home, which was critical in keeping her out of CAS care. Since then, J has flourished, making friends and achieving post-secondary goals. Unfortunately, they are facing a challenging and costly move as their landlord is taking back their current rental. This unexpected financial burden has made it difficult for her uncle to afford some essentials like a new winter coat. Your support via gift cards would offer essential stability and relief as they navigate this transition.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The uncle would really benefit from gift cards from No-Frills and Walmart. The only thing he requested for himself was blankets and towels. J needs a winter coat so she would be extremely grateful for a gift card from Winners. She would also love to get some clothes from Garage Clothing Store. They would also appreciate a gift certificate for any restaurant (somewhere like McDonalds or Tim Hortons) so they can go out for a meal together.</p> <p>This family was so grateful to be chosen for support over this holiday season. Thank you McMurrich for all that you do. Have a wonderful Holiday season!</p>

Grade 1 Families

<p>Family #1</p> <p>Profile #3 Erika MacNeill 416-735-8464</p>	<p>SM Family</p> <p>Family Background: S is a dedicated Grade 12 student facing significant hardship. S's family recently lost their home to a devastating fire, leading her parents to leave the city to stay with extended family. S is unable to join them due to complicating factors (including safety). She is currently living in a youth shelter. Despite coping with immense financial and emotional stress while caring for herself independently, S attends school regularly and is working diligently toward graduation. Your donation will provide meaningful comfort and essential support to S during the holiday season.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: S typically does her grocery shopping at Walmart and No Frills. She desperately needs blankets, cold weather gear and toiletries. She also needs clothing and under garments. S would be so grateful for gift cards from Urban Planet and Dufferin Mall to purchase these. S loves arts and would love to be able to purchase acrylic paint markers and some rainbow scratch paper from amazon or Indigo. S would also love a gift certificate for something fun to do over the holidays or a meal at a restaurant so she does not have to cook one night.</p> <p>Your kindness and generosity is much welcomed and appreciated. Thank you and Happy Holidays!</p>
<p>Family #2</p> <p>Profile #5 Feven Habtom LC1 S Phone #: 647-525-9779</p>	<p>RSH Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family consists of a dedicated single mother, her 8 years old daughter, R, and the mother is expecting a new baby next month. The mother is working hard to provide for R, but faces significant challenges. She has limited income because she does not have a stable job and with the baby approaching, her income will decrease even further at a time when her expenses are rising, putting additional pressure on an already difficult situation. The family often experiences food insecurity, and essential, high-cost items like warm winter coats and boots for R are currently out of reach. R is a bright, energetic child who loves science and is extremely creative. Your donation will directly help provide essential groceries, warm winter clothing, and basic necessities for R and the new baby, ensuring this growing family can celebrate the holidays with warmth and security.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: Mum typically does her grocery shopping at Walmart or Fresh-Co. R desperately needs winter boots and a snowsuit. They also purchase essentials for themselves and the baby from Shoppers Drug Mart and Dollarama. Mum shared that she doesn't want anything for herself but the daughter doesn't have many toys so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be greatly appreciated. She would also love to take R out for a special activity, like going to the movies, before the baby arrives</p> <p>The family is deeply appreciative of any help and support they can receive. The family thanks you so much for your generosity!</p>

Grade 2 Families

<p>Family #1</p> <p>Profile #4 Feven Habtom 647-525-9779</p>	<p>LT Family</p> <p>Family Background: L is a resilient and thoughtful 19-year-old who is currently estranged from their family and is navigating a challenging transitional phase. Despite many obstacles, L is determined to graduate this year from their alternative school. They have faced significant family trauma and ongoing mental-health struggles, which have required periods of hospitalization. L is currently navigating a highly unstable living situation, often relying on couch-surfing for shelter. With limited family and social supports, L is relying on the school community as a vital source of connection and support. They are working hard to stabilize their life while focusing on school at the same time. Thank you for your generosity in supporting this remarkable young person during the holiday season.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: L shops for groceries at Walmart, No Frills and Dollarama. They currently do not have a winter coat, hat or gloves but are hoping to purchase warm, winter gear from Winners or Marshalls. Gift cards for Walmart or Shoppers Drugmart would be greatly appreciated as they would help them buy some much needed essentials. L would be grateful for support in purchasing basic household items, such as kitchen utensils, a pot and pan, a kettle, and a small blender, for when they are able to secure stable housing.</p> <p>L is truly appreciative of any support that they will get. Thank you so much!</p>
<p>Family #2</p> <p>Profile #7 Alison Cope 416-998-5880</p>	<p>MA Family</p> <p>Family Background: This mother and her two sons (Grades 10 and 12) have faced tremendous and unexpected loss in a short period of time, including the sudden passing of the boys' father and their beloved grandfather. These devastating losses continue to affect the family deeply, creating significant emotional and financial hardship. The father was the primary earner so this has left them in a very precarious situation and they are struggling to pay their housing and food bills. The mother is trying to cope with the stress of caring for her family alone while she grieves. To create a moment of peace and normalcy this holiday season, the mother is hoping for support for a special holiday meal. Your kindness will help to alleviate the pressure of her current circumstances.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: Mum is struggling to keep up with how much the boys eat, so gift cards for No Frills to help with groceries would be immensely helpful. The family is also in need of winter clothing for everyone, and gift cards to clothing stores such as Walmart, Winners, or Amazon would be much appreciated. The boys would be particularly grateful for a Value Village gift card. The boys would love a 7-Eleven gift card so they can enjoy an after-school snack with friends. In addition, movie passes would be a wonderful treat, giving the family an opportunity to enjoy an outing together over the holidays.</p> <p>This mother is deeply appreciative of any support they receive. The family thanks you so much for your generosity!</p>

Grade 3 Families

<p>Family #1</p> <p>Profile #6 Emily Collette 416-735-8605</p>	<p>MA Family</p> <p>Family Background: M is a bright and determined 17-year-old student who is committed to building her future in Canada. She moved to Canada from Egypt at age 5 years. Her parents divorced a few years later, and she soon lost contact with her father after he moved away from Toronto. She recently faced a profound loss of stability when her mother chose to return to Egypt, leaving M isolated from any family support. M. is now living in a youth shelter while actively working to secure stable housing. Despite feeling worried about the stress of daily living, M is an excellent student focused on graduation and her dream of becoming a psychotherapist. She continues to receive positive support from her school and her friends. Thank you so much for helping M through this extremely difficult time in their life.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: M shops for groceries at Walmart, No Frills, Fresh Co and Dollarama. She is in need of underwear, clothing and outerwear, so gift cards for H&M, Hot Topic, Ardene or any other clothing shops would be greatly appreciated. M also requires toiletries and feminine hygiene products. She would be thrilled to enjoy a movie with her friends and would appreciate gift cards for Tim Hortons or Subway so she can go out for lunch. Lastly, M loves cookies and would be delighted to treat herself to some.</p> <p>Many thanks to the McMurrich students and parents for their generosity and kindness. Winging you all a very lovely holiday season!</p>
<p>Family #2</p> <p>Profile #8 Alison Cope 416-998-5880</p>	<p>JM Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family of three includes a mother, father, and their 17-year-old daughter who have endured immense challenges this past year. The father was diagnosed with cancer a year ago, requiring extensive chemotherapy, surgery, and frequent hospital visits. The father had to stop working, and the mother had to significantly reduce her hours to care for her husband and help him with his many appointments, leading to severe financial hardship and further unexpected losses. Despite these difficulties, the family remains hopeful. Their wish is for a holiday season filled with peace and happiness. Your kindness will help to alleviate the pressure of this family's current circumstances.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: This family does their grocery shopping at No Frills and Walmart. Gift cards for Walmart or Shoppers Drugmart would be greatly appreciated, as they would help them buy some much needed essentials. J would love to buy some puzzles or games from Winners or Indigo to enjoy with dad when he is resting. Craft supplies from Michaels, such as crochet materials, art supplies, or young adult colouring books, would also bring her joy. As a special treat for the holidays, the family would be thrilled to go to the movies and maybe out to dinner together.</p> <p>The family is deeply grateful for any support they receive over the holidays. They thank you for your generosity!</p>

Grade 4 Families

<p>Family #1</p> <p>Profile #9 Michelle Adams 647-229-1697</p>	<p>LS Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family consists of L, a 13-year-old boy, his 16-year-old sister and their father. Their mother lives abroad and comes to Toronto yearly. She is leaving again at the end of the month, and this transition is understandably hard on everyone. This family is currently at significant risk of becoming unhoused in the new year. The father is working tirelessly to secure reliable employment and housing in the west end to maintain stability for the kid's schooling. The stress of this situation is taking a significant toll, especially on L. He is underweight, shy and struggles with school attendance. Your donation will provide critical financial relief to help reduce the immense stress on the family and allow L to focus on his well-being and his studies.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: What would be especially helpful to this family are No Frills and Walmart gift cards to support groceries and basic needs. L's clothing is passed down from his father, often they look worn and are two sizes too large. He would be thrilled to receive Old Navy and Winners gift cards to buy clothes that fit him properly. He also requires a winter coat and a pair of boots. L's sister attends an art school so gift cards for art supplies and film-related accessories would be special gifts. Also, it would be lovely to go to the movies and spend some time together as a family before mum leaves again.</p> <p>The family is so appreciative of any support that they receive. The family thanks you so much for your generosity and thoughtfulness. Wishing you a wonderful holiday season!</p>
<p>Family #2</p> <p>Profile #10 Tracey Horwitz 647-229-2661</p>	<p>AL Family</p> <p>Family Background: This multi-generational family unit is anchored by S, a new mother who is unable to work while caring for her 6-month-old baby, her ill mother and her teenage daughter, A. This family experienced the loss of S's father (the grandfather) earlier this year, leading to considerable financial strain and emotional hardship. A is a remarkable teenager who excels in school and has high hopes for post-secondary education. Despite taking on significant responsibilities at home, A remains positive. With finances so tight, Mum feels overwhelmed trying to support the family. Your donation will help ease the burden on mum and recognize A's efforts during this difficult time.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family mostly shops at Freshco, No Frills and Walmart. They are all in need of winter clothing, so Old Navy and Giant Tiger gift cards would be greatly appreciated. Mom also shared that she does not have enough to provide toys or books for the baby, so gift cards for Toys“R”Us or Indigo would be wonderful. The family could really use toiletries so gift cards for Shoppers Drug Mart would be a tremendous help. As a special treat over the holidays, they would be so appreciative to go out for dinner together. Lastly, A would be delighted to receive scrapbooking or art supplies from Michaels or Amazon.</p> <p>We can't thank you enough for your generosity. We wish you all a lovely holiday season!</p>

Grade 5 Families

<p>Family #1</p> <p>Profile #11 Feven Habtom 647-525-9779</p>	<p>DA Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family consists of a single mother and her three young sons; an older child with developmental needs and active 4-year-old twins. The twins love their new school and routine. However, the mother faces unique challenges daily, as she is deaf and manages her mental well-being while navigating family trauma and a hearing world. Due to difficulties finding employment, the family relies on limited financial assistance. While she strives to meet basic needs like rent and food, the family often experiences food insecurity, and the mother struggles to afford crucial items like winter clothing for her growing children. Your generous support will ease the pressure this family is facing and provide essential relief and comfort this holiday season.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: This family does their grocery shopping at No Frills and Walmart. They would be so grateful for a gift card for Winners or Amazon to purchase blankets, towels and other household necessities. Mum shared that she doesn't want anything for herself but the boys don't have many toys or books so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be so appreciated. As the family has no disposable income, they would also love a gift certificate for pizza or any restaurant so that they don't have to cook one night.</p> <p>Mom was overcome with appreciation that her family had been chosen for holiday support. She wanted to pass on her heartfelt gratitude to the McMurrich community. She hopes you have a wonderful Holiday season!</p>
<p>Family #2</p> <p>Profile #12 Kate Papsin Phone #: 647 229-1284</p>	<p>C Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family consists of a mom, dad, and three children (ages 10, 6, and 3). The mother is currently caring for the children on her own, as the father had to take a leave from work to travel and care for his aging parents. This necessary absence has caused severe financial strain for the family, especially since the mother is not working while caring for the three year old at home. The mother feels overwhelmed as she juggles home demands, three young children (one with medical needs requiring frequent appointments) with limited community support. She hopes to set aside money for a special holiday meal. Your generous support will bring much-needed financial relief to the family during the father's absence.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family shops at No Frills and Walmart for groceries. The whole family desperately needs winter clothing and boots so gift cards for any clothing store such as Old Navy would be especially helpful. They also purchase essentials from Shoppers Drug Mart, Dollarama and Amazon. The parents don't have enough to provide for toys, games or books so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be wonderful. Lastly, the kids have never been to Skyzone so mum is hoping to be able to take them over the holidays.</p> <p>We can't thank you enough for your kindness. We wish you all a very lovely holiday!</p>

Grade 6 Families

<p>Family #1</p> <p>Profile #13 Kate Papsin</p> <p>Phone #: 647 229-1284</p>	<p>K Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family of six includes the mother, father, and four young children (ages 2, 5, 7, and 9) who arrived in Canada just a few months ago after fleeing significant conflict in their home country. They arrived with only the clothing on their backs and a small bag of items, leaving all family and friends behind. The father is hardworking and determined to create a better life for his children, but the rapid transition and lack of local support have left them struggling. The new language has presented a significant challenge for the parents and a barrier to finding work. The family is overwhelmed by the welcoming spirit of Canada but is in desperate need of basic necessities. Your donation will provide critical immediate support for this resilient family, helping them feel more settled and hopeful as they build their new lives here.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family shops at Metro, Walmart and No Frills and would be grateful for gift cards to these stores. As we approach the winter months they are worried they will not be prepared for the cold and wet weather. They desperately need winter clothing and boots so gift cards for any clothing store such as Old Navy would be wonderful. They would also love to be able to purchase some bed sheets and warm blankets and other household necessities from Amazon, Shoppers Drug Mart and Dollarama. Lastly, the kids don't have any toys, books or games so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be so appreciated.</p> <p>The family is so grateful to receive any support over the holidays. Thank you so much for helping this wonderful family! Wishing you a joyful holiday season!</p>
<p>Family #2</p> <p>Profile #14 Kate Papsin 647 229-1284</p>	<p>M Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family consists of a single mother, daughter K in Grade 7, and son T in Grade 4. The father's presence in their lives has been inconsistent. K was born a paraplegic and uses a wheelchair. She has many medical appointments that mum must take her to. Because of the children's needs, Mom has been unable to work, as she must be available to support them in the mornings and after school. She is feeling overwhelmed as the demands of meeting the children's basic needs have increased. K is smart, enthusiastic, and loves to participate in everything she can at school. Your support will provide them with essential help when they need it most.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family shops for groceries at No Frills, Metro and Walmart. The whole family needs appropriate winter clothing and boots Mom buys their clothes at Winners and H&M. Gift cards for Dollarama, Amazon or Shoppers Drug mart would be appreciated so they could purchase some much needed necessities. They would also love a gift certificate for something fun or for dinner to use over the holidays.</p> <p>The family is truly appreciative of any support that they will get. Thank you so much!</p>