

Successful Municipal Practices: Responding to New Challenges



Tools for Change

WORKING REGIONALLY WITH PARTNERS: North Red Christmas Hamper Drive City of Selkirk, R.M. of St. Andrews & R.M. of St. Clements

The City of Selkirk, the R.M. of St. Andrews and the R.M. of St. Clements, neighbouring municipalities located approximately 25 kilometers north of Winnipeg, have a combined population of over 30,000 people. The spirit of volunteerism is strong in these communities and in 2007 the municipal councils brought volunteers and staff together to work on a valuable volunteer community service, the annual North Red Christmas Hamper Drive.

Prior to 2007, volunteers from each municipality held Christmas hamper drives to provide needy families in their respective communities with food and toys for the festive season. The Councils understood the importance of the programs and the months of planning and fundraising that went into them. They believed that it may be feasible to streamline the three programs into one and agreed to call a meeting of the volunteers and administrative staff to discuss the idea. Everyone in attendance agreed that having one central location and one group of volunteers and staff would be a more efficient way to deliver the program.

The North Red Christmas Hamper Drive was established in 2007, serving Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements. The program is managed by the City of Selkirk's Special Events and Marketing Coordinator whose office is centrally located in Selkirk. Items collected for the drive are stored and packaged in the City's community services building garage. Volunteers are integral to the ongoing success of this program. They participate in all aspects of the community program, including fundraising events, registration of families who should receive a Christmas hamper and shopping, packaging and delivery of the hampers. The three Councils provide additional help to the community volunteers by providing the services of municipal employees to assist with packaging and delivering the hampers door to door.

The program is funded through donations from the business community and the public. Two local businesses champion a toy fundraising event each year. This ensures that each child receives a gift. These events are extremely successful and gifts donated are for the overall program, not earmarked for one particular municipality. New in 2009 was a community garage sale to raise contributions for the Christmas Hamper Drive. The sale was a huge success, and will continue to be an ongoing part of the fundraising program each year.

The Councils recognized that greater efficiencies could be achieved by working together to deliver an important community service.

Municipalities, businesses and citizen volunteers all contribute to the success of the North Red Christmas Hamper Drive.

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Council members take time out of their busy schedules each year to support 'The Jail and Bail Fundraiser'. This is the most successful fundraiser for the program, raising more than half of the funds required. Donations bins are also set up in various business and arena locations throughout the three municipalities where toys and canned goods are collected for the Drive.

The regional concept of this valuable community service has streamlined the program that now operates out of one central location, resulting in a more efficient program for everyone involved. Donations and the number of recipients have increased and, in 2009 the program raised \$25,000 in donations and provided hampers to 527 families.

The councils and citizens of the City of Selkirk and the RMs of Andrews and St. Clements are pleased with the success of the North Red Christmas Hamper Drive. Working together lightens the load for all volunteers and the municipal contribution of employee time and office space as well as council member participation in the fundraising events helps to ensure the ongoing success of the program. The North Red Christmas Hamper Drive is a refreshing example of councils and volunteers working regionally together to deliver a valuable community service.

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For more information contact:

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For more information on better municipal business practices, Successful Municipal Practices, and the Tools for Change program, see the Association of Manitoba Municipalities' website, at www.amm.mb.ca.