

Abundance Program - Families Helping Families

We are so excited to be participating in the Abundance Program for the ninth 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 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 Monday, 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

Family #1	<p>LS Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family consists of a single father and his 15 year old son. The son was diagnosed with a developmental disability when he was in elementary school and more recently diagnosed with Autism. The son is unable to speak but he's always smiling and loves connecting with people in his life. Last year the boy's grandmother passed away leaving the father as the sole caregiver. The grandmother was his main caregiver while he was not in school, and his father worked multiple jobs to support the family. Due to grandma's passing, the father left his jobs to support his son before and after school, as well as throughout the night. This has left them in a very precarious situation and they are struggling to pay their housing and food bills. The father is trying to cope with the stress of caring for his son by himself.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family shops at Walmart and No Frills and would be grateful for gift cards to these stores. They also desperately need winter clothing and boots so gift cards for any clothing store such as Old Navy would be wonderful. Dad would also love to be able to purchase some bed sheets and warm blankets. Lastly, the son doesn't have many toys so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be so appreciated.</p> <p>They can't thank you enough for your generosity and wish you all a very lovely holiday season!</p>
Family #2	<p>MD Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family is led by a single mother with two teenagers. The mother has had chronic health challenges impacting her ability to work and maintain stable housing. The daughter is in grade 11 and she is behind in her studies because the family keeps having to move. She does well in school when she has had some stability, and her goal is to become a psychologist to help children and youth when she graduates. Her younger brother started grade 9 this year and he is having challenges adjusting, but his older sister tries to keep them both on track.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: Mum would really benefit from gift cards from No-Frills and Walmart. They also require sweaters and socks from any clothing store. As the family has no disposable income, any gift cards from ToysRUS and Indigo for the teens (for art supplies and books) would be much appreciated.</p> <p>This family was so happy 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

Family #1	<p>JG Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family consists of a single mother and her 11 year old daughter. Life is hard for the two and they have struggled to pay bills for housing and food over the last several years. The daughter has also had issues with low self-esteem that has impacted her ability to connect with people and to make friends. She often feels like she does not fit in because she doesn't have "good enough clothes and shoes" compared to her classmates. She has also had trouble managing intense emotions that have affected her interactions at school.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family typically grocery shop at Walmart, No Frills and Freshco. They desperately need cold weather gear and toiletries. Mum is overwhelmed with requests from the daughter when she asks for clothes or shoes. She would appreciate anything for her daughter and does not want anything for herself. They would also love a gift certificate for something fun to do over the holidays or a meal at a restaurant so that they would not have to cook one night.</p> <p>Your kindness and generosity is much welcomed and appreciated. Thank you and Happy Holidays!</p>
Family #2	<p>B Family</p> <p>Family Background: This is a family led by mom with two children that fled the conflict in the Ukraine. The father is no longer with them and they have no family support here in Toronto. The teenage son is finishing up high school, but eager to find a part-time job so he can help out financially. The 9-year-old daughter wants to take a babysitting course when she turns eleven so she can help as well.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family is so appreciative of any help and support they can receive. Mum does her grocery shopping at No-Frills and Walmart. They also purchase necessities at 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 so appreciated. She would also love to take both children out for a fun activity like going to the movies.</p> <p>They will be truly grateful for anything. The family thanks you so much for your generosity!</p>

Grade 2 Families

Family #1	<p>SG Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family of three includes a mother, father and their daughter. The family has experienced a challenging time while their daughter has faced complex health issues. She is recovering well from a recent surgery and the parents are working hard to ensure their daughter gets all the necessary support however they have just discovered additional concerns about the daughter's health. Unfortunately, the father recently lost his job unexpectedly, adding more stress to an already difficult time.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family shops for groceries at No Frills and Walmart. Mom buys their clothes at Winners and H&M. Gift cards for Walmart or Shoppers Drug mart would be appreciated so they could purchase some much needed necessities. The daughter would love a toy from ToyRUs and maybe a pair of shoes from Footlocker. 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>
Family #2	<p>IA Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family of three is made up of two elderly parents with a 17 year son that has a significant developmental disability and complex needs. The family has very limited income from the father's modest pension and the mother is unable to work as she is their son's primary caregiver. The son needs to wear pullups and this has become a significant expense for the family that has left them with almost no money for clothes. Their son has entered another growth spurt and his clothes are all too small for him. The family is overwhelmed by the huge needs of their son with his developmental disability combined with their limited income.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: Primarily the family requires winter clothing for all. Gift certificates for any clothing stores (Walmart, Winners, Old Navy) would be much appreciated. Also, gift certificates to help with purchasing groceries and other necessities are also very helpful (Walmart, No Frills, Shoppers Drug Mart). The family doesn't have enough to provide toys for the son (he really wants a toy piano) so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be wonderful.</p> <p>This mother is so appreciative of any support that they receive. The family thanks you so much for your generosity!</p>

Grade 3 Families

Family #1	<p>BD Family</p> <p>Family Background: The family consists of a mother and her three children. She has a daughter, aged 6, and two sons aged 11 and 14. After an abusive relationship, mom has been separated from the children's father for approximately 11 years and he is not involved in the children's lives. The family of four shares a very small one-bedroom basement apartment. The family currently receives government assistance and the rent is not subsidized so there is almost nothing left for basic needs such as food and clothing.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: Mom shops at Walmart, Superstore, Metro, Canadian Tire and No Frills. They all need underwear, clothing and outerwear so gift cards for any clothing shops would be greatly appreciated. Also, mom doesn't have enough to provide for toys, games or books for the children so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be wonderful. Mom loves spending time with her kids so they would love receiving gift certificates to the movies for anything else for them to enjoy time together as a family.</p> <p>Many thanks to the McMurrich students and parents for their generosity and kindness. On behalf of the family, sincere thanks.</p>
Family #2	<p>KK Family</p> <p>Family Background: This is a small and complicated family that is in need during most of the year, but things are especially tough over the holiday season. The son, in grade 6, is living with his maternal grandmother. His father died a couple of years ago and his mom has struggled with mental health and addiction problems. Visits with the mom must be supervised and this has resulted in a great deal of trauma for the boy.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: Gift cards to No Frills, Walmart and Canadian Tire would be greatly appreciated. The grandmother is unable to provide toys and books for the grandson so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be wonderful. She would also love a gift certificate for any restaurant (somewhere like McDonalds) so they can go out for a meal together; it would be such a lovely treat.</p> <p>The grandmother 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!</p>

Grade 4 Families

Family #1	<p>RM Family</p> <p>Family Background: This indigenous family of four, with one son and one daughter, is living on a single insecure source of income and they have been struggling to make ends meet. One of the children has learning and developmental needs that have added an additional strain on the family's limited means. The family is already accessing community based resources to assist them but they would welcome any additional support that is available to help make this a bright holiday season.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family mostly shops at No Frills for food. The family also shops at Walmart, Shoppers Drug Mart and Dollarama. Also any gift certificate from any of the malls would be much 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>The family is so very grateful to receive some support over the holidays. Thank-you for your generosity!</p>
Family #2	<p>C Family</p> <p>Family Background: This single mother, with a 9-year-old boy, lost her job and is struggling without any support from the estranged father. The son has developed severe anxiety and has had significant challenges regulating his emotions. Support through a community-based special needs program introduced him to art making. Painting has helped him to start working through some difficult issues and the mom would love to support this creative and therapeutic outlet.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: Gift cards to Walmart, No Frills, Ardene and The Gap would be greatly appreciated. Mom says that they could really use toiletries and bathroom supplies so they would also be so grateful for gift cards from Shoppers Drug Mart. For a special treat over the holidays, they would be so appreciative if they could go out for dinner or to a movie together. Lastly, the son would be delighted to have some painting supplies from Michaels or Amazon.</p> <p>We can't thank you enough for your generosity. We wish you all a very lovely Holiday Season!</p>

Grade 5 Families

Family #1	<p>K Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family of three includes two girls, ages 10 and 12 and their mother. Fleeing conflict in their home country, they recently immigrated to Canada arriving in Toronto without any savings and without personal possessions beyond the clothes in their suitcase. Since arriving, mom and the girls have worked hard to build a new life. The mom has been going to school to learn English and she has already found a few different jobs. Unfortunately, the work is unskilled and the pay is very low so they are struggling to make ends meet.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: This family does their grocery shopping at No Frills, Walmart and Metro. They would be so grateful for a gift card for Dollarama or Amazon to purchase blankets, towels and other household necessities. A movie pass for mom to do a fun activity with her children would be much appreciated. The girls wear second hand donated clothes so they would love to be able to choose an outfit for themselves at H&M.</p> <p>Mom was overcome with appreciation that her family had been chosen for holiday support. Without your generosity, she would not be able to provide the children with any gifts over the holiday. She wanted to pass on her heartfelt gratitude to the McMurrich community. She hopes you have a wonderful Holiday season!</p>
Family #2	<p>TW Family</p> <p>Family Background: This six year old girl lives with her parents who both have chronic health and mobility issues. This combination of issues has not only made it very difficult to find work but it has also made it hard to access some of the community support the family desperately needs. The parents have also struggled to cope with the impact this has had on their daughter and the opportunities they would like, but are unable to provide. Without a source of employment income, they have endured significant financial hardship and would be very grateful for any support.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family shops at No Frills, Walmart, Shoppers and Dollarama. The parents don't have enough to provide for arts and crafts, games or books for the daughter so gift cards for ToysRUs or Indigo would be wonderful. They would also love to go to a movie as a family.</p> <p>We can't thank you enough for your kindness. Your generosity will be a wonderful gift for the family and really help them through a stressful and financially difficult time. We wish you all a very lovely Holiday Season!</p>

Grade 6 Families

Family #1	<p>F Family</p> <p>Family Background: This family of five had to flee their home country and were able to escape but they had to abandon their property and material possessions. Having arrived in Canada, the entire family is working hard to learn a new language. The two daughters, 11 and 13 and their 12 year-old brother have made good progress but this has presented a significant challenge for the parents and a barrier to finding work. The mother has remained at home and worked very hard to stretch their limited resources. She has also tried to establish routines and some predictability at home to help the children as they adjust to the reality of their new lives here in Toronto.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family shops at 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 supporting this wonderful family! Wishing you a wonderful Holiday!!</p>
Family #2	<p>BN Family</p> <p>Family Background: This widower is the sole caregiver for his two daughters aged 10 and 12. Their mother died quite suddenly two years ago and the father was left as the sole breadwinner for the family. With financial assistance as their primary source of income, they have had to regularly rely on resources in the community such as the food bank. Despite the grief and the financial stresses, he is a dedicated parent that still walks both his daughters to and from school every day. The girls miss their mum terribly, but the children enjoy spending time with their dad and know how committed he is to their wellbeing. They love school and they work hard to do well with their studies.</p> <p>Gift Card Suggestions: The family would be so grateful to receive gift cards from Dollarama, No Frills and Winners. The girls require clothes for school and dad needs a large frying pan. The girls would love a gift card from Toys R Us or Indigo to buy some art supplies and DIY crafts (to make homemade gifts for friends' birthday parties). As a special treat for the holidays, the family would love to be able to go to the movies and maybe out to dinner.</p> <p>This family is truly appreciative of any support that they will get. Thank-you for your generosity!</p>