

VOLUNTEER CORNER

THE GRAHAM'S FAMILY CHRISTMAS

Adam and Amy Graham were 10 and 9 years old respectively when Christmas day took on a whole new meaning. They woke their parents, Tracey and Ron, and everyone trooped downstairs to open gifts. As is usually the case, the big event was over in a matter of minutes, and Amy and Adam were feeling deflated and a little disappointed. Ron had an idea that he felt couldn't wait. The whole family, still in their PJs, put on their winter gear, got in the car, and drove to the Byward Market. Ron wanted the children to see that some people – the homeless in our community – didn't have any Christmas at all.

This experience had a huge impact on the children. They began coming downtown each Christmas morning with small gifts to hand out, paid for with money they had saved or raised. Four years ago, they found themselves at The Ottawa Mission handing out socks. When they asked staff what else people might enjoy, the answer was Tim Horton's gift cards. This simple gift could work wonders – it would allow them to get out of the shelter and go to a place where they would feel just like everyone else.

Adam and Amy began raising money in earnest, dropping flyers off with their neighbours, and



holding fundraisers at school and with their sports teams. The first year they funded about 40 cards. Last year, between their efforts and Dad contacting Tim Horton's for a little extra help, they were able to hand out over 300 cards – plenty for people at The Mission and other local shelters. According to Mom Tracey, "We get so much out of this small gesture. Everyone we meet is so thankful, and Adam and Amy (now 15 and 14) have gained an appreciation of the true meaning of Christmas that they carry with them into their lives all year round."

Thank you to the Graham family for making Christmas day special for so many people in need.

Our Mission Statement

The Ottawa Mission reflects Jesus' love in serving the homeless, the hungry and the lost by providing food, shelter, clothing and skills and offers faith and hope for building a wholesome future.

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We Offer

- Food, Shelter & Clothing
- Spiritual Support
- Day and Residential Addiction Treatment
- Education & Job Training
- Employment & Housing Services
- Primary Medical & Dental Care
- Hospice

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