

Good Food Box delivers its 50,000th bag of produce

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Somewhere among the bags of fresh fruit and vegetables is a ticket.

It's not a golden ticket, per se, but it will entitle the holder to the richness of fresh produce.

On Wednesday, after 12 years in operation, the Georgian Good Food Box packed up its 50,000th bag of produce.

"To me it's another bag, another bag after another bag," volunteer Michael Kacmar said with a laugh as he worked his way through the 280-plus bags containing apples, carrots, turnips, and other produce. "I've been doing this for so many years it's just, 'I've tied that many?'"

Georgian Good Food Box founder and current director Mark Redmond said the person who receives the 50,000th bag will have something a little special in the newsletter that accompanies every Good Food Box – a coupon for a free box next month.

"Fifty-thousand is a huge number when you look at us doing 400



Georgian Good Food Box director Mark Redmond and volunteer Michelle Wright pack a bag full of produce. IAN ADAMS PHOTO

or so a month. Over 12 years, I'm a little blown away by the 50,000, but more blown away by the tonnage – 50,000 bags of potatoes works out to 500,000 lbs. of po-

tatoes," he said. "When you talk about it in terms of half-a-million, for the potatoes, the carrots, apples, and onions, that really blows me away."

GEORGIAN GOOD FOOD BOX BY THE NUMBERS

- Number of boxes over 12 years: 50,000-plus
- Pounds of potatoes: 500,000
- Numbers of boxes packed in February: 615 (287 in Collingwood, 176 in Stayner, 152 in Wasaga Beach)
- What's in the box: Leeks, rutabaga, potatoes, carrots, onions, apples, oranges, a turnip, cabbage, beets, and a large spaghetti squash

for a large, or \$10 for a medium. The value of the produce in the large box is about \$25, or more.

The packing and distribution is also handled in donated space – in Collingwood, the organization packs at the Royal Canadian Legion, while the group operates out of St. Patrick's in Stayner, and the Lion's Den in Wasaga Beach. Most of the produce is local: the cabbage comes from Stayner, the apples are from Glen Huron, and the potatoes are grown in the Reddickville area.

Michelle Wright shows up every month to the legion to help out with the packing and delivering, and gets a box for herself.

"I love to give back to the community and donate my time," said Wright, who has two young children. "When they get old enough I'm going to bring them here so they understand what it means to give back and do things out of the good of your heart."

It's also a chance for her family to have access to fresh produce.

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The Good Food Box program distributes high-quality produce once a month using an all-volunteer force to handle distribution and packing. The 'boxes' cost \$15

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Fridays

► Ski Season Services

WHEN: 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. **WHERE:** Blue Mountain Community Church, 219 Bruce St. South, Thornbury **CONTACT:** 647-284-8844, skiseasons@ gmail.com **COST:** Free

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Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays

► Blue Mountain Bridge Club

WHEN: 1 p.m. **WHERE:** Collingwood Leisure Time Club, 100 Minnesota St. **CONTACT:** Christine, 705-446-9592, chrisedb@rogers.com

The Blue Mountain Bridge Club runs three games per week. All games are ACBL sanctioned and run year-round.

New members and beginners welcome.

Tuesday, March 1

► Free Workshop: 4 Steps to Permanent Weight Loss

WHEN: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. **WHERE:** Or-

thocellular Nutrition and Exercise Incorporated, 169 Eighth St., Unit 302 **CONTACT:** Jim Safianuk, 705-293-0950, jim.safianuk@rogers.com **COST:** Free

Also workshops on March and March 15. Limited seats. Register early.

Wednesday, March 2

► Bingo night

WHEN: 5:30 p.m. **WHERE:** Manito Shrine Club, 2265 Fairgrounds Rd. **CONTACT:** Jim Park, 705-429-9979

Manito Shrine Club hosts Wednesday night bingo. Doors at 5:30, first game at 6:45 p.m. Proceeds go to Shriners Children's Hospital transportation fund.

Thursday, March 3

► Senior's bus trip to Casino Rama

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. **WHERE:** Collingwood Legion, 490 Ontario Street **CONTACT:** Alma, 705-429-2886 **COST:** \$2

Senior's bus trip to Casino Rama. Leaves the Collingwood

legion at 10 a.m. and Wasaga Beach RecPlex at 10:30 a.m. Leaves Rama for return trip at 5 p.m. Seniors from both communities welcome. Buffet lunch included.

Friday, March 4

► World Day of Prayer service

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. **WHERE:** All Saints Church, 32 Elgin Street, Collingwood **CONTACT:** sharon-goldsworthy@gmail.com **COST:** Free

A worship service for the whole community to participate in, written by the Christian women in Cuba. Light lunch to follow.

Monday, March 7

► Collingwood and District Historical Society Meeting

WHEN: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. **WHERE:** Leisure Time Club, Minnesota St. **CONTACT:** Joan Miller, 705-445-1119, millerjoan@rogers.com **COST:** \$3

This week's topic: The Collingwood Shipyards - by Michael Moir, archivist, historian and author.

Food box takes a community

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"It's a gift, and amazing that the community will come together," she said. "My kids love it - it's like Christmas morning every time I come home with it. They raid it as soon as I get in the door."

Cindy Wilson was in to pick up a box on behalf of her son, who is on a fixed income.

"I think it's good value and it's good for the community," she said, noting her son wouldn't otherwise have the same access to the fruits and vegetables if he had to buy them at a grocery store. "He's on a limited budget, he doesn't get a lot of stuff."

Redmond said it's people such as Wilson's son who make up about half the customer base, though at one time about 70 per cent of clients were seniors or families on a fixed income.

Today, a substantial number of clients are working families and professional business people - some of whom will buy two boxes, one for themselves, and one for the organization to donate

to someone in need.

Redmond estimated about one out of every 30 boxes packed is donated.

"People know they can get quality stuff here without having to go search for it, and they know it's local," he said.

Redmond, a retired educator, stays involved because he believes he owes a debt to the greater community.

"The people of Ontario paid for my education, and when I graduated, they hired me to teach and coach and guide their kids in science fairs. And when I approached retirement, and I have a pension they paid into, it's only fair that since I've been given some support, that I turn around and give a bit back," he said. "I knew I was damn lucky."

"It's nothing for me to do a little bit - each of us here do a little bit. That's what I love about Collingwood - we have all these committees, and everybody puts in a little bit, and then it adds up. I'm making a difference with everybody else."

Walking/Driving Routes Available in Collingwood

AA001 - Elm/Spruce/Water, 30 papers
 AA002 - Elm/Second/Spruce, 41 papers
 AA004 - Fourth St. W, Hickory, Spruce, Walnut, 50 papers
 AA005 - Braniff/Fifth/Spruce/Watts, 78 papers
 AA006 - Fifth, Hickory, Walnut, 47 papers
 AA007 - Cedar Drive/Fifth/Oak, 53 papers
 AA013 - Beech, Maple, Third, 44 papers
 AA015 - Beech/Birch/Fourth, 43 papers
 AA016 - Pine, Third, 28 papers
 AA018 - Pine, Fifth, 23 papers
 AA020 - Second/Huron/Hurontario, 57 papers
 AA100 - High, Murray, 17 papers
 AA101 - High, 33 papers
 BA062 - Waterside Lane, 12 papers
 BA063 - Minnesota, 22 papers
 BA064 - Sainte Marie, Simcoe, 9 papers
 BA065 - Elgin, Ontario, 15 papers
 BA066 - Saint Paul, 29 papers
 BA067 - Minnesota, Ontario, 24 papers
 BA076 - Ontario, 38 papers
 BA078 - Niagara, St. Vincent, 22 papers
 BA079 - Niagara, Erie, 18 papers
 BA083 - Moberly, Park, 14 papers
 BA086 - Fourth St. E, St. Marie, 29 papers
 BA087 - Fourth ST. E, Market Lane, Market St., 38 papers
 BA088 - Fourth St. E, St. Peter, 25 papers
 BA102 - Callary, 14 papers
 BB956 - Georgian Manor, Wellington, King, Belholme Lane
 CA027 - Birch, Ninth, Oak, Tenth, 42 papers
 CA028 - Birch, Cameron, Oak, Willow, 30 papers
 CA029 - Maple, Ninth, 34 papers
 CA030 - Fair, Hurontario, Maple, 42 papers
 CA032 - Mason, Mackay, Rhonda, 51 papers
 CA033 - Dickson, 29 papers
 CA035 - Ferguson, Oak, 58 papers
 CA043 - Hurontario, 18 papers
 CA044 - Hurontario, 24 papers
 CA094 - High, Telfer, 43 papers
 CA098 - Eighth, Hurontario, 30 papers

CB801 - Sherwood, Kayla, 68 papers
 CB804 - Georgian Meadows, Highland, 42 papers
 CB805 - Georgian Meadows, Highland, 29 papers
 CB806 - Georgian Meadows, Connor, 38 papers
 CB807 - Connor, 26 papers
 CB811 - Culler, Alyssa, 40 papers
 CB812 - Hill, Mair Mills, 28 papers
 CB813 - Kells, Frances, 12 papers
 CB814 - Thomas, 22 papers
 CB815 - Kells, 22 papers
 CB816 - Kells, 23 papers
 CB817 - Kells, Long, 14 papers
 CB818 - Chamberlain, 34 papers
 CB819 - Chamberlain, 27 papers
 CB823 - Patton, 43 papers
 CB824 - Barr, 22 papers
 CB825 - Barr, 33 papers
 CB826 - Chamberlain, 16 papers
 DA039 - Brock, Lockhart, 62 papers
 DA041 - Lockhart, 16 papers
 DA042 - Burnside, Carmichael, 30 papers
 DA043 - Lockhart, 25 papers
 DA044 - Krista, Dey, 21 papers
 DA045 - Lockhart, 16 papers
 DA046 - Alice, Bell, Collins, Sproule, 65 papers
 DA049 - Ste. Marie, Victory, 44 papers
 DA050 - George, Robinson, 37 papers
 DA053 - Alice, Manning, Sproule, 46 papers
 DA054 - Alice, Katherine, Lorne, Patterson, 31 papers
 DA055 - Hamilton, Robinson, Sainte Marie, 58 papers
 DA056 - Duncan, Hamilton, Patterson, 40 papers
 DA057 - Dillon, 29 papers
 DA058 - Dillon, 66 papers
 DA061 - Napier, 23 papers
 DA062 - Minnesota, 26 papers
 DA063 - Bush, River Run, 45 papers
 DA100 - Peel, Lynden, 38 papers
 DA101 - William, 57 papers

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