

# Souper Bowl of Caring



## TAMARA FERGUSON

During January, St. Simon's Oakville launched their annual Souper Bowl of Caring (SBC) food drive to coincide with the NFL's XLIX Super Bowl on Sunday February 1, 2015.

Launched in 2013, SBC was suggested to the Outreach Committee by Parish

Administrator Dena LeCompte, who moved to Canada from New Jersey in 2012: "In our former church, we did this every year. I thought it was such a wonderful campaign that when we moved here I mentioned it to Bronwen [Bruch, Outreach Committee Chair]. She loved it so we went ahead and started promoting for the Super Bowl in 2013."

« Collecting food items for the Souper Bowl of Caring drive at St. Simon's Oakville.

Photo: Dena LeCompte

Dena and her family attended St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield, New Jersey for eight years before moving to Oakville. While she is not clear when they started she says the church had been doing the Souper Bowl for the entire time they were parishioners there.

The first Souper Bowl of Caring was started in 1990 by a youth group at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina and went on to branch out to businesses, schools and different faith communities. In essence, it was created to take advantage of Super Bowl weekend to encourage communities across America to help fight poverty and hunger.

While the Souper Bowl of Caring in the U.S. collects all types of food items as well as cash donations, St. Simon's asked the congregation to bring in cans

of soup, stew and chili, which was then given to the Fareshare Foodbank in Oakville. In total, 333 cans were donated by parishioners in 2015. According to Dena, "we took in 100 cans that first year. In 2014 we collected 190. This year we literally had people bringing soup in by the cases. That's encouraging in my opinion. I would love to see other parishes take on their own Souper Bowl challenge."

While the Outreach Committee also donates food from various food drives to places such as Kerr Street Ministries Oakville and St. Matthew's House Hamilton, Outreach Committee Chair Bronwen Bruch thought the Fareshare Foodbank would be a good recipient for the Souper Bowl campaign. "That's where we've been sending them since we started. I've delivered every time and they seem really appre-

ciative," says Dena.

Bronwen feels the added "plus to this campaign is that the Super Bowl is all over the radio, TV, newspapers and social media in the weeks approaching it. So it helps in the promotion because when parishioners hear or read Super Bowl, it reminds them about our Souper Bowl campaign at the church."

When Dena arrived at Fareshare to drop off the cans, they were very grateful for the donation and gave Dena a tour of their facilities. "All I can say is WOW! What a great facility. I'm so glad we donated there. What a great feeling! If they are not already doing this now, it would be nice to see other parishes take this on."

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