

Media Advisory

For immediate release

December 6, 2007

Good Shepherd's "Christmas Store" will help thousands of families this holiday season

Media Advisory—Photo and Interview Opportunity

Hamilton, ON—Good Shepherd invites all media to attend the opening ceremony of the "Christmas Store," where more than 2,000 families will come for help this holiday season. The Christmas Store, normally the Good Shepherd Food Bank, provides food bank clients an opportunity to pick up needed groceries in a festive and friendly environment. Each family will receive the ingredients for a traditional Christmas meal and also a toy for each child.

What: Opening Ceremony, Good Shepherd Christmas Store

When: 10:00 a.m., Thursday, December 6, 2007

Where: The Good Shepherd Warehouse, 120 Cannon St. East (next door to the Men's Centre on Mary Street)

Who: Brother Richard MacPhee, Good Shepherd's Executive Director, clients and volunteers of Good Shepherd will be available for interviews and photos.

Contact: For more information contact Alan Whittle, Director of Community Relations and Planning, at 905.528.6565 ext. 3322 during office hours or at 905.516.2924 other times.

"Last year, 2,128 families came to the Christmas Store for help," says Brother Richard MacPhee, Executive Director of Good Shepherd. "They are families who have trouble meeting their basic food and shelter needs and might not be able to afford a real Christmas dinner or gifts for their children. We try to help them experience some of the joys of the Season."

The Christmas Store, which will be open until Friday, December 21, has been operating for 15 years. It is made possible only through a community-wide food drive involving hundreds of people and organizations and the collective efforts of some 350 volunteers.

"The Christmas Store is just one Good Shepherd Christmas program that aims to improve the quality of life of our community's most vulnerable people," says Brother Richard. "We believe it's very important to honour and respect the essential dignity of all who come to us in need, and to include them in the larger community celebrations. This is especially important during the holiday season, when the effects of poverty can be the most severe."

"Our clients are very grateful," he adds. "It shows that we care about them, and that we have faith in them. That can really make a difference in their lives."

Other Good Shepherd Christmas programs are the Sponsor a Family Program and the Annual Christmas Party. You can learn more about these programs at the Good Shepherd website at www.goodshepherdcentres.ca.

Good Shepherd has been serving people in the Greater Hamilton area since 1961, when they were founded by the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd. They are a Catholic health and social service agency that serves all people in need. Good Shepherd provides a wide range of community services for men, women, children, youth and families in need ranging from emergency shelter and hunger relief, to referral and counselling services, palliative care, housing for street youth, assistance for victims of domestic violence and housing for special-needs adults.