

Good evening, everyone, and thank you for being here tonight.

As Chair of the Board of Harvest Share Community Food Programs, I'm proud to speak about the past 12 months, the accomplishments of this organization, and the direction we are taking as we move forward. Over the last year, Harvest Share has continued to do what it does best: provide access to healthy, nutritious food for individuals and families in need across the District of Parry Sound. Through our food bank, fresh food program, community meals, food rescue, and outreach efforts, we have remained a steady and compassionate support for people in our community.

This past year has shown the strength of Harvest Share in very practical ways. Our core services have continued, including food bank appointments, emergency food support, access to fresh items like produce, eggs, milk, meat, and bread, and community meals that bring people together in a warm and welcoming environment. Those services matter because they provide not only food, but also dignity, connection, and a reminder that no one in this community should have to face hard times alone.

It has also been a year that reminded us how much this organization depends on people who give generously of their time, their energy, and their hearts. Harvest Share continues to be supported by dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners, and that support is what makes this work possible every day. The strength of this organization comes from a community that believes caring for one another matters.

This year has also brought change in leadership. Harvest Share recently announced Corrine Empringham as the new Executive Director, and that marks an important next step as we continue to build on a strong foundation and look ahead with confidence. The Board's role in this next chapter is to provide steady governance, support staff and leadership, and ensure Harvest Share remains strong, focused, and responsive to the needs of the community.

I also want to take a moment to speak about loss.

This past year, Harvest Share lost Chris Cardy, our Treasurer, a longtime volunteer, and a deeply valued member of our Board. Chris gave so much of herself to this organization over the years. She was generous with her time, thoughtful in her work, and deeply committed to Harvest Share and the people it serves. For many of us, Chris was more than a board member. She was a calm presence, a caring colleague, and someone whose kindness and dedication made this organization stronger.

Her passing has been felt deeply. We miss her wisdom, her reliability, and the way she quietly but meaningfully helped carry this work forward. Tonight, we remember Chris

with gratitude, respect, and affection, and we honour the lasting contribution she made to Harvest Share.

As we look to the year ahead, our direction is clear. We will continue to protect the programs people rely on, strengthen our partnerships, support our volunteers and staff, and keep building an organization that is both compassionate and resilient. We want Harvest Share to remain a place where people can find not only food, but also dignity, welcome, and community.

Tonight is a chance to recognize how much has been accomplished over the last 12 months. It is also a chance to recommit ourselves to the work ahead. Harvest Share has made a real difference in the lives of many people in this community, and with continued support, it will keep doing so in the months and years to come.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in that work. Thank you for your commitment, your compassion, and your belief in what Harvest Share means to this community.