

**2019—2020
ANNUAL REPORT**



VETERANS HELPING VETERANS



OUR MISSION

The Veterans Association Food Bank is dedicated to supporting and enriching the lives of Veterans and their families.

OUR VISION

As a community of Veterans helping Veterans, we will be the support base where together we create healthy and resilient futures.

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“The Veterans Association Food Bank has given me a sense of teamwork and responsibility. They have helped me stay on track with my goals and given me a sense of accomplishment.”

- Don (52 year old Veteran)



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS. The Veterans Association Food Bank has made an incredible impact on the Veteran community and their families in Alberta, as well as other parts of the country. Our community and volunteer network are strong, and we provide much-needed services and support to our Veteran community. We remember our *raison d'être* and continue our primary focus of being an organization of Veterans Helping Veterans.

AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING. The Veterans Association Food Bank strives to bring awareness and understanding of the Veteran community thanks to our extremely supportive donors and stakeholders. This engagement allows the Veterans Association Food Bank to provide support programs and services to Veterans and their families. The Veterans Association Food Bank is known for supporting our Veteran community since 2018 through Food Hampers, however we have built awareness of our other programs and services: Emergency Veteran Assistance Costs and Financial Aid, Training and Employment and Supportive Peer Groups. The Veterans Association Food Bank has also assisted Veterans with finding temporary housing, financial planning and applications for benefits. We remained focused on our mission and gave our Veterans a sense of belonging and enriched their lives.

COMMUNITY. Our community is diverse, and our support comes in many forms. Every contribution matters and makes a positive impact in the lives of our Veterans and their families. We would like to thank all our community supporters and volunteers for their generosity, advocacy, and continued commitment to the wellbeing and support of our Veterans and their families.

RELATIONSHIPS. Our relationships are very important to the Veterans Association Food Bank and spreading our vision is paramount to our success. Without donations and fundraising events, the Veterans Association Food Bank would be struggling to achieve its mission. Generosity and empathy comes from individuals, large and small businesses, partners, sponsors, volunteers, and other charities. This support has had a profound influence on the Veterans Association Food Bank and positively impacts the lives of our Veterans, and their families. As we move into the future, we are excited to expand our partnerships and relationships.



growth will allow us to provide enhanced social services to our Veterans and lay the foundation for continued success.

TEAM. The founding Board of Directors set the stage for success and through their hard work and vision, established the support foundation for our Veterans and their families. I would be remiss if I didn't thank them for their dedication. On behalf of the Veterans Association Food Bank a heartfelt thank you goes out to Tom MacCarl, Marie Blackburn, Peter Domshy, Howard Leong, Dan McLean, Laura Vanderkruk and Greg Paul. They dedicated time and energy into supporting our Veteran community, which led to the success of the Veterans Association Food Bank.

IN CLOSING. We are very proud to present to you our 2019-2020 Annual Report; like the Veterans Association Food Bank, it has much to offer. What you will read is a summary of the impact the Veterans Association Food Bank and its supporters have had on our Veterans, their families and pets. This report is for you and about you – we all contribute in our own ways to enrich the lives of Veterans and their families.

On behalf of the current Board of Directors, Thank You.

Ron Fillier
Veteran, Chair Board of Directors



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

Sometimes it's best to keep it simple, without our donors and supporters, we just wouldn't exist. As we reflect on the past year, for all of you that dedicate your time volunteering and financial support, we thank you for your overwhelming commitment to our cause. As a result, were able to provide many services for our Veterans and their families, by providing stability and independence to maintain their pride and dignity.

Your support provides more than food. Since our opening, we have taken a global approach to assess the underlying reasons for assistance. Food security is a small part of the urgency that needs to be addressed, and we provide solutions for the long term. With increasing job losses, many Veterans are struggling, just to keep the lights on or a roof over their head. It is heartbreaking to hear comments like "its either my meds or food" or "I just need \$20.00 dollars for gas to get to work". Over the past year we have seen a substantial increase in emergency funding. That maybe paying rent, utilities, medical bills or even transportation to get children to school. Our main goal is to get Veterans to a better place, to prevent the ongoing crisis of homelessness and suicide. Because of you, our Veterans will not have to choose between, maintaining their homes or a hot meal or neglect life-saving medication in order to feed themselves or their families or feel hopeless. Your support has been a lifeline to us and to the Veterans we serve.

When the Veterans Association Food Bank was created in 2018, it was designed to give Veterans a place and a purpose they could call their own, a place of healing. It has been Veterans themselves that can take pride in building a strong community of Veterans Helping Veterans. They have help build a solid foundation of respect and loyalty in helping administer many of the programs that have saved so many.

Yet the truth is, these programs require financial aid and because of our donors, you as well, play such a critical role in saving lives in the Veteran Community, and for that we thank you.

Things were moving along quite nicely, then the pandemic hit. Everything changed so quick. The most difficult challenge was not being able to continue our programs. We could no longer have our peer support meetings, dinners, group classes or other planned events. It was devastating and heartbreaking for those who depended on us. We had to become more creative in finding to navigate through these dark times.

We created Curbside Dinners, where Veterans and volunteers came together to make homemade dinners. We found ourselves grocery shopping for those who could not leave the house or making weekly phone calls to those at risk. Our donors who typically donate for Remembrance Day, were now sending in donations to help get us through these difficult times. The dedication and the astounding support from, incredible individuals, community groups, businesses, churches and schools, we thank you. It has brought us great comfort, given us encouragement and the strength to carry forth with our mission. It is this dedication and willingness to help, that renews and cultivates a better life for those serving, served and to honor those who have passed.

As we face another year, we are still in the midst of the pandemic. It is critical that the support we have received in the past continues to grow. Our future plans will require funding to continue implementing programs, supporting the food bank, providing mental health support and financial assistance to those who need us.

My father who is a Korean War Veteran, severely disabled, told me that he felt so lost when he returned home and has for many years. I have heard this from many Veterans since and as a community we will work together to bring peace and comfort to those struggling.

I never know if thank you is enough, but I can tell you when you save or change a life, especially for those who have given us so much, I truly know that you know what I mean.

Marie Blackburn
Executive Director

WHO WE SERVE



The Veterans Association Food Bank recognizes any person who is currently serving or has honourably served in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Veterans Association Food Bank also recognizes those currently serving, or have honourably served with Commonwealth and Allied Forces, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Merchant Marines, or Ferry Command (Coast Guard). Support will be extended to spouses, widows, widowers, and any dependent children in need.

Veterans and Family Members

306

Single Veterans

170

Veterans with Families

48

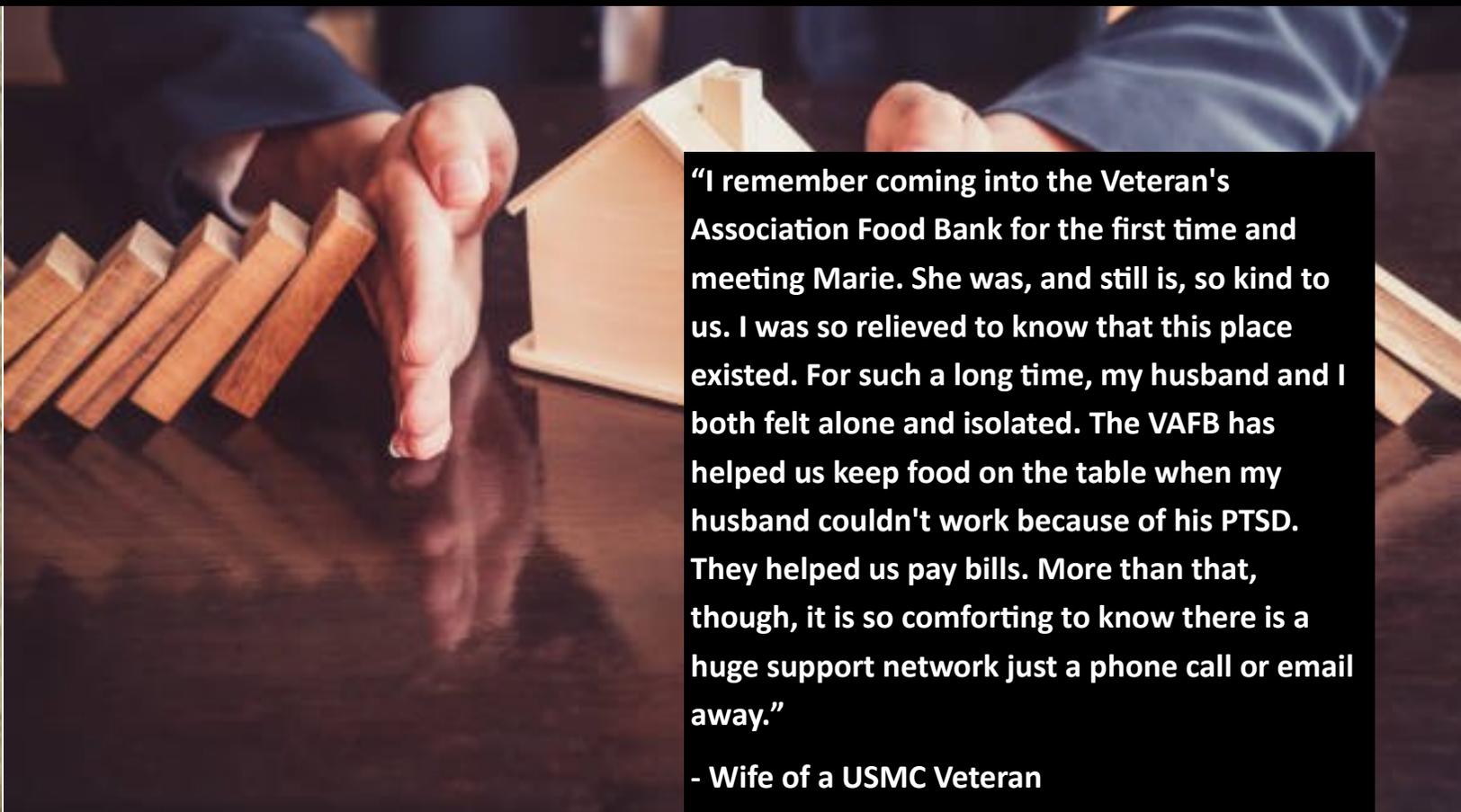
“I am pleased to say that my life is now stable and I’m in the better place both because of the food and funding from the Veterans Association Food Bank, also as equally important was the emotion support they continuously provided during my darkest days.”

- Craig (51 year old Veteran)

“The Veterans Association Food Bank has saved my husband’s life. It has given him a place to go and a purpose outside of the house. Without the Association I don’t know where he would be.”

- Spring (Wife of a 43 year old Veteran)

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

A photograph showing a pair of hands in blue sleeves carefully placing wooden blocks to build a small wooden house. The blocks are arranged in a row, and the house is partially constructed. The background is dark and out of focus.

“I remember coming into the Veteran's Association Food Bank for the first time and meeting Marie. She was, and still is, so kind to us. I was so relieved to know that this place existed. For such a long time, my husband and I both felt alone and isolated. The VAFB has helped us keep food on the table when my husband couldn't work because of his PTSD. They helped us pay bills. More than that, though, it is so comforting to know there is a huge support network just a phone call or email away.”

- Wife of a USMC Veteran

FOOD HAMPERS

Through our Food Hamper program we ensure that our Veterans and their families do not have to worry about where their next meal comes from. We provide food hampers on a monthly basis. Included with the food hamper is a \$100 grocery gift card and a variety of fresh vegetables and frozen meat when available.

**Hampers distributed
527 (Value of \$223,975)**

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Through activities such as Soup Thursdays, Veteran Dinners and social events we provide a new sense of community for many Veterans. Allowing Veterans to reconnect and renew old friends or build new ones is paramount to our model of “Veterans Helping Veterans” and it is because of this model that we are able to have the impact we do.

**Gift Cards Distributed
\$46,250**

EVAC

Our EVAC (Emergency Veterans Assistance Costs) program ensures that Veterans and their families are able to keep a roof over their heads and the lights on. EVAC has prevented many of our Veterans from ending up on the street and in some cases has taken Veterans from the street and helped them to re-establish stable and successful lives.

**EVAC Funding Provided
\$154,569**

WHO IS



A photograph showing several people in yellow shirts packing canned goods into a large cardboard box. In the background, there are several large blue water bottles and a plaid bag.

VOLUNTEERS

FULL-TIME VOLUNTEERS: 5

VETERAN & FAMILY VOLUNTEERS: 200

COMPANIES & GROUPS WHO VOLUNTEERED: 40

VOLUNTEER HOURS: >30,000



A close-up photograph of a hand writing on a donation receipt. The receipt is from 'YOUR BANK OR CREDIT UNION' and has 'One hundred' written in the amount field. The word 'Donation' is partially visible at the bottom.

DONATIONS & FUNDING

INDIVIDUAL DONORS: >2500

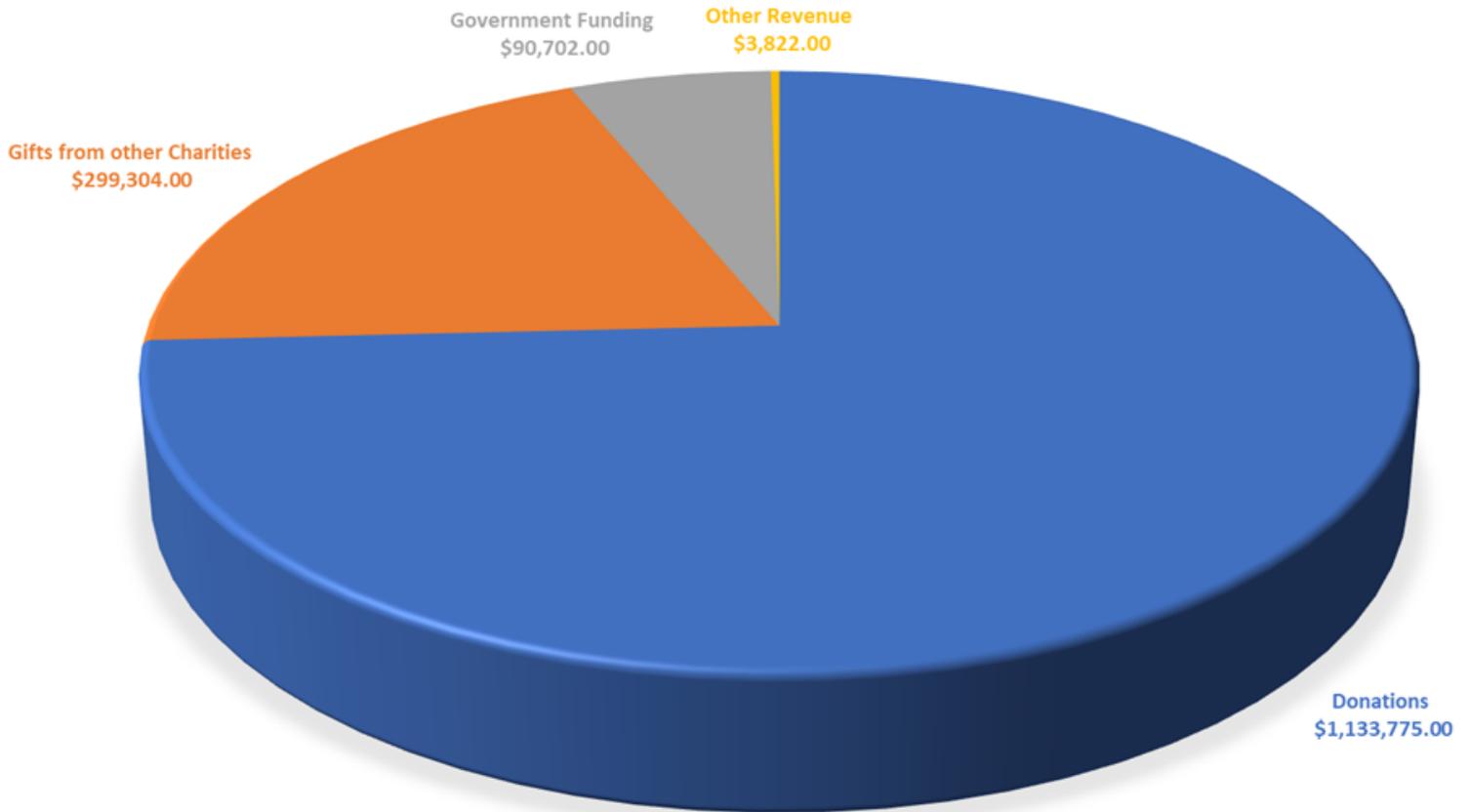
CORPORATE DONORS: 811

COMMUNITY GROUPS: 325

OTHER CHARITIES AND FOUNDATIONS: 52

HELPING US

DONATIONS AND FUNDING



Our Community Partners



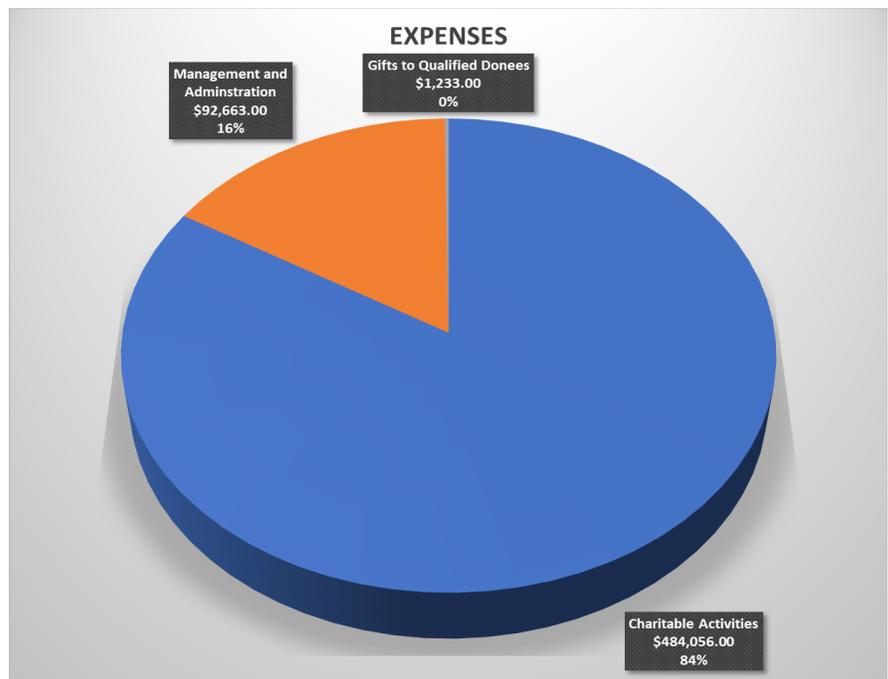
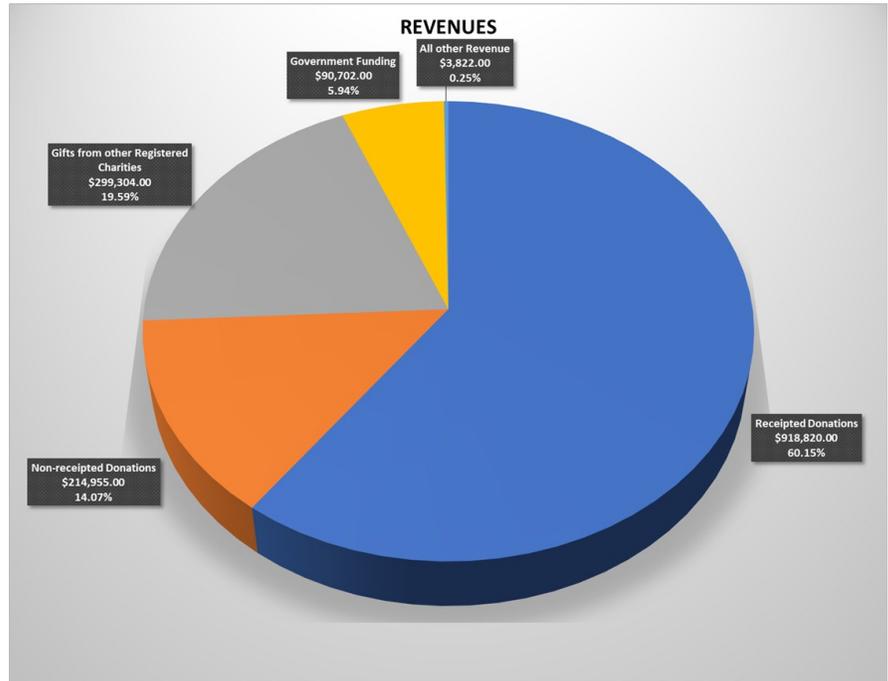
FINANCIALS

June 12 2019 - May 31 2020

SIGNIFICANT EVENT The global outbreak of COVID-19 has severely impacted global and local economies due to varying restrictions put in place by federal and local governments around the world. As a result, the Association had cancelled certain events which impacts the amount of contributions received during the period of closures and restrictions. The restrictions enforced are continually changing and the extent to which COVID-19 will impact the Association's ongoing operations will depend on future developments, which are highly uncertain and cannot be predicted at this time.

To review full audited financial statements, please visit www.veteransassociation.ca/about/annualreport

If you would like to request a print copy for review, please call 403.367.8387



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & SENIOR MANAGEMENT

2019-2020

BOARD EXECUTIVE

Tom McCarl, Chair

Dan McLean, Vice-Chair

Laura Vanderkruk, Treasurer/Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

Peter Dumshy

Greg Paul

Howard Leung

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Marie Blackburn, Operation Manager



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“Veterans Helping Veterans”

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