

## SSVP Brant rides the Covid Wave

In Brantford/Brant County we have **five conferences** who meet with our neighbours in need in **home visits**. We also have a **Store operation** with **100% volunteer** staff. We consider that, for our neighbours in need, **the Store visit is the fulfilment of the promise of the home visit** - as that is when the individual or family shops free using the vouchers provided by the conference members – for non-perishable food, clothing, household items and/or furniture.

In mid-March our conferences determined that they would continue to serve by providing emergency food assistance in the form of grocery gift cards, dropped in mailboxes upon request made by phone. The decision to close the Store was made March 15th by the Store management team.

At this point (late September 2020)

- Conference members continue to respond (by phone) to phone calls requesting assistance, dropping off vouchers to those in need.
- The Store operation has re-opened, on a limited basis, to accepting donations and to retail shopping.
  
- **Guiding principles** of this journey have been the following:
  - Ongoing communication, connection and consultation with volunteers, through the conference presidents and the Store management team
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  - Focus on our core business – serving those in need by providing basic material items
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  - Networking
    - Locally
      - comparing notes with other charity thrift stores
    - Regionally
      - with other SSVP Stores, sharing challenges and solutions
    - Nationally
      - Absorbing shared information about health precautions & governmental assistance programs
      - Using promotional material in communications
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  - Direction from public health officials
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  - Steady movement forward with continuous re-evaluation