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**Press release
For immediate release**

A Pay-What-You-Can Fruit & Vegetable Market Makes Fresh Produce More Accessible for ANY-Income Households in Point Saint-Charles

Montréal, Wednesday, July 5, 2017 — Thanks to a partnership with the Corbeille Bordeaux-Cartierville, Share the Warmth launches its **new fruit and vegetable market, making fresh produce more accessible to its members and the local community, while reducing food waste from local markets.** This market, held every Tuesday on Share the Warmth's terrace, has adopted a **pay-what-you-can model** after Share the Warmth's Food Security Program Coordinator Vanessa Girard-Tremblay learned from food bank members that **most members could only afford to spend between \$1 and \$4 on fruit and vegetables each week.**

"After speaking with food bank members and learning that 60% of **members eat only five servings of fruit and vegetables a week,** we wanted to develop a project that would make fresh produce available to everyone—available where they live, and at a price they can afford," explains Girard-Tremblay.

The Canada Food Guide recommends between seven and ten servings of fruit and vegetables per day for adults, while children and teens should eat between four and ten servings per day. Considering that of the 1,400 people who rely on Share the Warmth's food bank every month for food assistance 30% are under the age of 18, it is alarming that most people are not even getting a healthy number of daily servings over an entire week; that's less than 14% of what is needed for a healthy diet!

The market also aims to reduce food waste by partnering with the Corbeille Bordeaux-Cartierville to **collect unsold produce from over 20 local farms.** Over the past two years, the Corbeille **had access to 49 tons of donated fruit and vegetables. The Corbeille used about 40 tons for their programs and redistributed 6.2 tons to partner organizations, 75% of which was in excellent condition.**

"Reducing food waste and giving members the dignity and power to choose what they want is also an important part of this project," states Girard-Tremblay. "There is a definite shift in food security programs towards more customer choice. We see it with food banks in the United States and the results are impressive. There is significantly less waste and food bank members are able to make healthier choices, as opposed to having to accept whatever is given to them."

Funding from the *Clinique communautaire de Pointe-Saint-Charles* and *Hockey Helps the Homeless* has allowed the project to take off. Since a large part of the produce is donated, Share the Warmth has established vendor agreements to purchase any staple products that are missing. The market is not an emergency food program, but rather aims to make produce more accessible to low-income households while still encouraging customers to pay what they can. While there is definitely a learning curve to this type of payment model, customers are catching on. If for example, a person's budget is more limited at the end of the month, they can pay less. If they have more money to spend on produce the following week, they can try to pay the suggested price. Residents with the means to contribute more are also free to do so, thereby increasing healthy food access for their neighbours who have less. Share the Warmth does not make any profit from this market.

About Share the Warmth

Since its founding in 1989, Share the Warmth has been awakening hopes and dreams through excellence in programming aimed at the overall development and success of youth, access to healthy food, and work training. Share the Warmth offers support programs to residents of the Sud-Ouest and Verdun boroughs, including a food bank, which helps 1,400 people every month, 30% of whom are under the age of 18.

For more information on Share the Warmth please visit their website at www.sharethewarmth.ca

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Source: Share the Warmth

For more information on the market, please contact:

Vanessa Girard-Tremblay
foodsecurity@sharethewarmth.ca
514 933-5599 ext. 224