



Message from Executive Director December 2008

Most of us have felt the impact of the economic crisis that has affected Canada and other countries these recent months. So many layoffs and so much uncertainty has led to an environment of anxiety at a time of year when we're used to sharing more than usual. Yet, in spite of this tension across the country, all of us here at Canadian Feed The Children are inspired and heartened by the generosity of Canadians, who have dug deep this season and shared what they have for the sake of families struggling with poverty.

Many of our supporters responded with great heart to our recent campaign to raise money in the aftermath of hurricanes that took such a toll on Haiti. This was an unplanned appeal, turned around quickly to generate urgent aid, and resulted in more than \$40,000 for our local Haiti partners to provide food and medicine to devastated families. This happened only because our supporters were moved to act – taking a moment to write out a cheque or donate online.

Our Best Gift Ever gift catalogue, created to give the opportunity to support children in specific ways and honour friends and family at the same time, is a wonderful testament to the power of sharing. People have responded to our new gifts and cards this year, giving gifts that help dramatically improve the lives of children. As I walk through the office, I see beautiful cards being printed to celebrate the holidays or other special occasions from people who have chosen alternative, meaningful gifts for those they care about.

We've had a few tears in the office recently – a result of moving stories of the great need we see, and the great spirit of sharing we see in young and old. In monthly staff meetings, our Program Managers report on recent trips, telling us of a women's group singing with appreciation for our support in Sierra Leone, a new hot lunch program for hungry children on a reserve in New Brunswick, a new set of kids from goats we provided to a family in Uganda, another few children off the street in Bolivia, another child in school in Ethiopia. We do this work so that children have every opportunity to grow and develop in health, and when we hear of such emotional examples of exactly that, we are moved beyond words.

More than a few children in Canada have responded to their own sense of sharing and connection with others in the world, and have inspired us no end. Like young Cole and Emily of Ontario and Taphatna of B.C., who told their friends exactly what they wanted for their birthday – money to help children affected by poverty. Fourteen-year-old **Alexis** dropped into the office last week with over \$300 for goats, hens, mosquito nets, school uniforms and supplies through Best Gift Ever that she raised among friends and family. On the adult end of the age spectrum, a child sponsor from western Canada, who had been sharing \$20 a month since 2001, decided to give \$100,000 this month to make as much of a difference as he could. When I spoke with the gentleman to thank him, he expressed what an honour it was for him to be able to help in this way. I was so proud to let him know his support will be spent exactly how he envisions – with the highest level of effectiveness and efficiency, and in the very best interest of the children who will benefit.

Canadian Feed The Children has been around for more than 20 years now, growing in expertise and in depth. We are small and nimble enough to respond to the very specific needs of the communities we serve, but strong enough to make a lasting difference. We are who we are because of you – supporters who have decided we are the kind of organization they can trust to do what we are charged to do – reduce the impact of poverty on children.

On behalf of our board of directors, staff and volunteers, community partners, and all the children and families we support, thank you for caring so genuinely and for sharing at this special time of year and throughout the coming months. We wish you all the best.

With great thanks for your support,

Jim Dahl
Executive Director