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Organizers of the 17th annual Better Together Food Drive are excited that the event returns as an in-person activity and are counting on residents to make the drive another success.

This year's food drive occurs Monday, Oct. 31, from 5:15 to 9 p.m., with the event kicking off at Hillcrest Apostolic Church and moving over to the Moose Jaw Exhibition Grounds for sorting and packing. Those items will then be shipped to the Moose Jaw and District Food Bank.

Canvassers are encouraged to arrive at Hillcrest Church at 5:15 p.m. to check in, find their team, and start collecting food. Volunteers are encouraged to dress warm and wear their best smile during the evening.

Nearly 400 volunteers in teams of eight to 10 will fan out across the city with maps to pick up food along 40 routes. They will return to the exhibition grounds around 7:15 p.m., where they will assist the sorters already there.

If residents cannot go door to door but still want to help, they can register to sort food or drive a vehicle for canvassers.

Visit www.hillcrestmj.com/fooddrive to register. Or, call the church at 306-692-5600.

Homeowners will receive a bag marked with the Better Together Food Drive logo. If they don't receive one, they can pack food in a box.

"We are thrilled (to return to in-person collecting). I hope that Moose Jaw still remembers the drill," laughed organizer Karen MacNaughton. "But I think that they will. It's pretty exciting to be able to do it."

This is a fun activity because it's thrilling to see nearly 400 people come together to collect and sort thousands of pounds of food in under five hours on one night, she continued. This would be a great activity for new residents to try.

17th annual Better Together Food Drive returns as an in-person activity

Jason G. Antonio - Moose Jaw Express



Hillcrest Apostolic Church ran the Better Together Food Drive as a financial fundraiser during the past two years because of the pandemic. Last year residents donated around \$41,000, while two years ago, residents gave roughly \$65,000.

The food drive raised around 50,000 pounds of food each year from 2009 to 2019, which equals about \$120,000 each time.

Raising money during the two pandemic years was "incredibly important," considering more and more people have been accessing the food bank's services, said MacNaughton.

"As you know, the cost of everything keeps going up. And people on fixed income or who don't have enough need the food bank. It's a very necessary part of our community," she remarked. "We didn't want to see it suffer during those years when we couldn't deliver food."

Hillcrest Church and the food bank have found that the community is incredibly generous with supporting this initiative, MacNaughton added. She pointed out that the food that residents have donated during the past decade — over 500,000 pounds — is an incredible response for a city this size.

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