



Hero Stories  
September 2020



# Making her birthday count

Birthdays are a big deal. This year, Hilary Todd made her fifth birthday an even bigger one. Instead of presents, Hilary asked her family and friends to bring her a food donation for The Exchange. Here's why Hilary and her family believe in the value of simple acts of kindness that can have a lasting impact for other families in their community.

**Rather than receiving gifts, Hilary wanted to celebrate by collecting food for the Exchange.**

During COVID-19 birthday celebrations are looking very different. For children, celebrating their birthday without the usual fanfare of family and friends is a challenge. As

Hilary Todd's fifth birthday approached, she had one wish. Rather than receiving gifts, Hilary wanted to celebrate by collecting food for The Exchange.

With more time spent in conversation around the dinner table these days, Hilary's mom Kim, has been discussing the challenges many families are having right now. "We talk a lot about how not everyone is as fortunate as we are," she says. The family has also been talking about what each of us can do to help within our communities.

"Giving back to others is a wonderful lesson because children can so easily get caught up in the "I want" notion especially on their birthday," she says. "Doing something like this is one way to really emphasize helping others." When

Kim sent out the invitation for Hilary's birthday parade celebration, family and friends were asked to bring food donations instead of gifts. The response was tremendous. "Our neighbours saw Hilary's signs and brought out donations, it far exceeded our expectations," she says. "We had prepared with one small box to fill and before we knew it, we had a whole table filled with food."

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Kim says Hilary found the whole experience to be very powerful, and she wasn't the only one who realized the significance of their impact. Kim's seven-year-old son Lucas is now considering doing the same thing for his birthday at the end of August. "Children can relate to feeling hungry and make the connection in that, this is one very simple way they can help people," says Kim.

As a teacher, Kim understands what it means for families who currently do not have access to breakfast and other food programs due to COVID-19. During this time she has been thinking of these families, which has, in part, inspired her to make this a teachable moment with her children. "We want our children to be understanding of different circumstances and lifestyles," she says, "It's important to understand the benefit of giving back to others and whenever you can, you should."



## LIFE HERO

### CAST

CHANGEMAKER  
HILARY TODD  
Age 5

LUCAS TODD  
Age 7

KIMBERLY TODD  
Mom

FAMILY, FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

### COMMUNITY IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS\*

\*Statistics referencing 2020-2021 Community Impact Report

<b>459</b> Children supported	<b>1,640</b> Client care plan visits	<b>3,090</b> Volunteer hours
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