



Share Christmas Blessings in Tough Times

Tough economic times have hurt all of us. But few people have been hurt more than the working poor in the Lower Mainland. Unemployment has risen and wages have stayed flat, yet the Lower Mainland remains Canada's most expensive place to live and work. Stuck in low paying jobs or looking for work, new immigrants, single moms, refugees and aboriginal families see most of their income fly out the door to pay for basic necessities like rent and food. For these women, men and children, furniture – even when second-hand – is too expensive to buy. Most don't have a car, so they can't pick furniture up and they can't afford to pay for delivery.



As a result, many of these families give up on what the rest of us take for granted: basic furniture.

2009 isn't over yet, but HomeStart has already served more people than last year. So far, we have delivered more than \$100,000 in furniture – 240 sofas, 188 kitchen sets, 229 dressers and more – to more than 400 homes. That's more than 600 families and individuals who are now able to live in dignity.

We're very pleased with what HomeStart has accomplished on an annual budget of only \$113,000. We're really frustrated too. Every week, our partner agencies tell us of more families needing furniture. HomeStart has no shortage of available furniture but we can't afford to pick up and deliver it more than a few days a week because we don't have enough money to pay for our movers, our rent and our delivery truck expenses. And that means that children and families end up sleeping, eating or sitting on the floor longer and longer before we can reach them.

We desperately need your help so we can do more to help our most vulnerable neighbours to live in simple dignity. This Christmas season, we are asking you to help us help your less fortunate neighbours by helping us deliver furniture.

- \$100 will pay 1/3 of our monthly utilities
- \$275 will furnish one home, including all furniture, movers' wages and delivery costs
- \$400 will keep our delivery van running for a month

\$2600 will pay one month's rent for our 1700 sq. ft. warehouse

Please give a generous gift of hope this Christmas. Share your blessings with those going through difficult times.

Quick Facts

HomeStart works with 80 partner agencies that alert us to families and individuals who need furniture but cannot afford to buy it for themselves

18.8% of Vancouver children are living in poverty

More than 18% of immigrants have arrived in the Vancouver area since 2001. They earn less than half what their Canadian-born counterparts make and have double the unemployment.

2% of the Vancouver area population is aboriginal. 32% of aboriginal people in Vancouver are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Early Christmas



Refugees often arrive in Vancouver with nothing more than they can carry. Usually, they have fled from war -torn countries, squalid refugee camps, or oppressive regimes where they would be persecuted, tortured or killed.

Recently, HomeStart helped a refugee family of 4 that was in dire need. Referred to us by a crisis services worker, they had finally found a 2-bedroom apartment but had no money left to furnish it. Their situation was made worse because the father had recently lost both his legs in war. Unable to work, he was waiting for

surgery while the government spent months reviewing the family's case.

HomeStart was able to make their lives a little easier by delivering a full apartment of furniture. The furniture HomeStart delivered has greatly improved this family's quality of life. For this family, Christmas came early. They can now live in dignity and in greater comfort as they establish their lives in Canada.

P.S. We just got more good news – the father has had his surgery and is now recuperating at home, able to read to his children as they sit together on their new sofa.

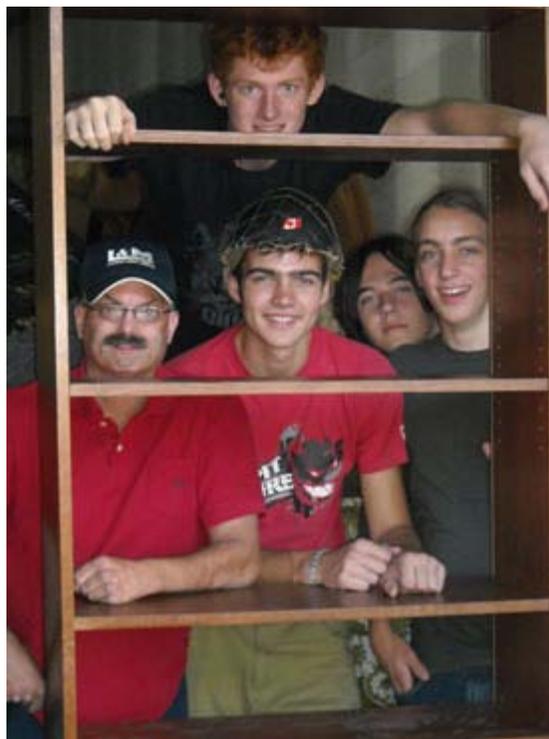
We are so grateful to everyone who has supported HomeStart's work in 2009. Without

your willingness to volunteer to deliver furniture, organize our warehouse and work in our office, we wouldn't be able to do as much as we do. We particularly wish to thank the following volunteers and student groups for their much-appreciated help:

- Canadian Mennonite University
- Cedars Christian School
- William Hoy
- Celia McLean
- Sarah Ouillet
- Sutherland Church
- UBC Navigators

We would also like to thank the following businesses and organizations for their in-kind donations to HomeStart in 2009:

- Angstrom Power – computer equipment upgrade
- Coast Vancouver Airport Hotel - furnishings
- Geek Squad - computer equipment, technical assistance
- 1-800 Rid of It – regular deliveries and pick up service



Volunteers from Cedars Christian School



Don Cameron of Geek Squad with Nitra Plesko & Sarah Ouillet of HomeStart

We are especially grateful to Charity Trucks and Bill McIntosh, who donated a 1-ton delivery truck to HomeStart and pays all insurance and maintenance costs. What a blessing! Without this truck, we could not deliver any furniture at all. We are deeply thankful.

HomeStart Policies

Pick Ups

- We pick up household furniture free of charge. A minimum \$25.00 donation is encouraged.
- Furniture must be clean, functional and in good repair. HomeStart staff and volunteers can refuse to take any furniture that is in poor shape or of poor quality.

- We prefer to pick up more than one item at a time to use our limited staff and resources most effectively, but will make exceptions for large or much needed items.
- Donors who wish to deliver furniture to our warehouse must make arrangements to do so. Dumped furniture that is poor quality or ruined by the weather needs to be carted to the dump. Please spare us this unnecessary expense so we can focus our resources on getting good furniture to families in need.
- We cannot accept small items like portable kitchen appliances, blankets, pillows or dishes because of our focus on household furniture. If you wish to donate these items, contact Gather and Give at Tel: (604) 637-2250 or info@gatherandgive.org.

Deliveries

- Everyone receiving furniture must be referred to HomeStart by a community partner agency. We rely on our partners to determine who is most in need. Individuals may not request furniture for themselves or their friends.
- We provide items household furniture to families that have none or only a little. We do not upgrade furniture or fill in pieces for families who already have furniture.

Donating is Easy!

It costs HomeStart \$275 for every furniture delivery to families in need.

Costs for part-time staff, renting warehouse facilities and operating a delivery truck add up. If you can help us with a donation to offset these costs, the single mothers, refugees and working poor we serve will continue to get good quality furniture so they can live with dignity in Canada's most expensive city.

Tax receipts are provided for financial donations of \$20 or more. We accept cash, cheques and donations made online though www.canadahelps.org . We also accept gifts of stocks & bonds, RRSPs, insurance policies, annuities and other forms of planned giving.

By law, tax receipts cannot be given for furniture donations unless the donor pays for two independent evaluations.

Charitable Registration Number:
872814504 RR0001



You can designate HomeStart Foundation when you contribute to the United Way Campaign at your workplace.

Privacy

HomeStart does not sell, share or lend its mailing list. If you wish to unsubscribe to this e-newsletter, please let us know at info@homestart.ca

Contact Us

To donate furniture, funds or your time, contact:

Nitra Plesko, Coordinator

nplesko@homestart.ca

604.708.9556

604.708.9560 fax

Mailing Address*

HomeStart Foundation
C/o Kitsilano Christian Community Church
1708 West 16th Avenue
Vancouver, BC.
V6S 2M1

**This is a mailing address only. Please do not drop off furniture or other items at this address.*

homestart.ca