

About The Shoebox Project

The Shoebox Project for Women is an unaffiliated, non-religious, Canadian registered charity who celebrates diversity and inclusion.

Our Mission is to share empathy, kindness and compassion with local women impacted by homelessness through the collection and distribution of gift-filled Shoeboxes and messages of support.

Our Vision is a world where all women are seen, valued, and treated with dignity and compassion.



Who We Serve

We provide gifts & daily essentials to:

- Shelters serving: families, individuals who identify as women, transgender or non-binary; seniors; youth; refugees; adults living with disabilities; pregnant and parenting youth; among other
- Immigrant, refugee & newcomer welcome programs
- Community health centres
- Indigenous friendship centres
- Food & clothing banks
- Supportive & transitional housing programs
- Homeless outreach services and drop-ins
- Employment support services
- Mental health and addiction services
- First Nations reserves

Why Women?

Did you know that?

- At least 235,000 Canadians are homeless in any given year
- About 35,000 Canadians experience homelessness on any given night
- Per the 2016 Canada Census, women represent 27.3% of people experiencing homelessness, and at least a similar percentage experience hidden homelessness
- 10% of women in Canada live on low incomes (under \$18,000 yr) and are at a higher risk of poverty*
- 23% of women with disabilities live on low incomes *
- 28% of women-led households are in core housing need*
- Canada has the eighth worst gender pay gap, with a 16.1% difference*

**Canadian Women's Foundation , 2018*



Host a Shoebox-Raiser



The perfect theme for any gathering!

Plan a meaningful and fun gathering with your friends, book club, extended family, or your workplace. Fill Shoeboxes for local women impacted by homelessness and have a great time together!

Shoebox gift drives are simple to plan, are appropriate for people of any age, background and beliefs, and provide a hands-on opportunity to make a positive impact in your community.



Virtual Giving and Hybrid Options

For those who prefer to give virtually, we have other opportunities to give special and thoughtful gifts!

- **Host a fundraiser** – Whether a zoom party for friends, a benefit concert or a trivia tournament, we can help you make it memorable and meaningful for you and your guests.
- **Create Virtual Shoeboxes** – Through our online platform, select as many items as you would like, and purchase a **symbolic** Shoebox. Donors will receive a charitable receipt for their donation and funds can be allocated to the community of your choice.
- **Organize a Gift Card Drive** – Gift cards are one of the most coveted items **by the agencies** we support. Donate a gift card of any denomination from a local business or a major chain, and help provide local women with the food, hygiene items and basic essentials they need most.



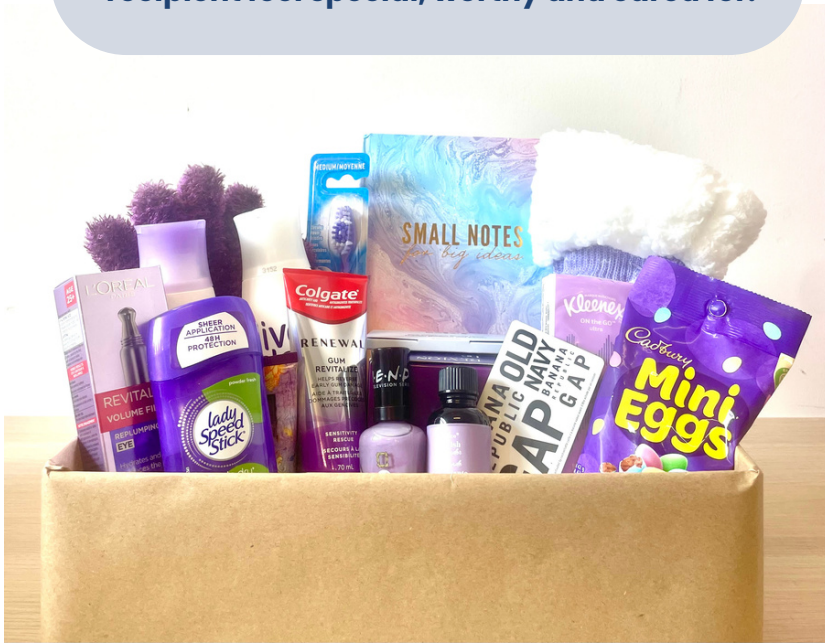
Planning Your Shoebox Gift Drive



The beauty of a Shoebox

- ✓ Shoeboxes should be valued at approximately \$50 and include new items only.
- ✓ Shoeboxes should only include items that you would love to receive yourself or feel good about gifting to a friend or loved one.
- ✓ Gifts should look as lovely and special as its recipient will feel when opening it.

The main objective of a Shoebox is to help its recipient feel special, worthy and cared for.



Choosing the right Shoebox:

- Use a standard-sized Shoebox or a decorative memory box of the same size (approximately 14"x8"x5"), to ensure all recipients get a gift similar in size and value.
- Avoid using a hinged lid box as the paper tends to rip easily.
- Shoeboxes are available for purchase through our partner, Kits for a Cause. Contact us to learn more!

A few important rules:

- The lid of your Shoeboxes must be wrapped separately from the bottom of the box.
- **Do not seal your gifts.**
- Ensure price tags are removed on all items.
- Indicate the \$ amount of the gift card you include. We recommend a \$10 gift card per Shoebox.
- Use good quality wrapping paper and avoid using bows or ribbon. Boxes are usually stacked on top of one another and may undergo some wear and tear during transport.
- Ensure your Shoebox is well wrapped and that the paper has no rips or tears.
- Not great at wrapping? Use a decorative memory box from your local dollar store or craft store!
- Do not overstuff your boxes – the lids should fit securely and not pop off.
- Please follow closely the list of what items to include and what items to avoid.

How to Build the Perfect Shoebox

1

Shoeboxes should include basic hygiene items and essentials of daily living that would help someone feel more healthy, comfortable, and confident.

Each Shoebox should contain these essential items:

- Gift Card (we recommend \$10 to a grocery or drug store)
- Shampoo & Conditioner (consider all hair types and textures)
- Body Wash
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- Socks
- Chocolate/Candy (nut-free)

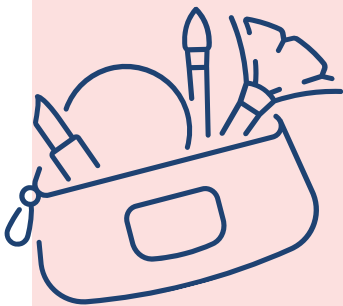


2

Shoeboxes should include little luxuries that allow women to feel beautiful & worthy

Each Shoebox should also include these little luxuries:

- Cosmetics (lipstick, eyeliner, mascara, nail polish, etc.)
- A cozy accessory (hand warmers, hat, mitts, scarf)
- Skin care (sunscreen, face cream, body/hand lotion, cleanser)
- Self-care (journal, facial mask, eye mask, lip balm)

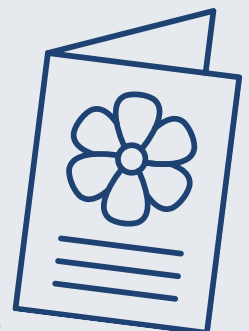


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The supportive messages included in our Shoeboxes is one of the most appreciated elements!

Each Shoebox should include a message or card. Keep in mind that:

- Your Shoebox could be going to someone of **any** economic and cultural background, religion, or age.
- Every woman's circumstances that led them to seek shelter or support are different.
- A simple note to wish them well and to let them know that you're thinking of them can go a long way.
- Please refrain from making any religious references.



Inspecting Your Shoeboxes



If you are collecting completed Shoeboxes at your event, your gifts will all be unique and personal, but this also adds a critical extra step: The Shoebox Inspection Process!

Even with the best of intentions and clear instructions, you should expect that:

- **Some Shoeboxes may need some extra product added.** We recommend having lots of extra product on hand for this purpose. The total value of the contents should be approximately \$50 and should contain the items listed on the previous page.
- **Some Shoeboxes may need some items removed.** See the list of prohibited items below.
- **Some Shoeboxes may need to be wrapped, re-wrapped, or moved into a nicer gift box.** We want our recipients to feel excited and uplifted by the beauty of their special gift!



Important Guidelines for the Inspection Process

- All restricted items must be removed from Shoeboxes (**see list on following page**).
- Useful items that are removed from the Shoeboxes such as sanitary products and jumbo-sized containers will be given to a shelter/agency in bulk as a separate donation. Please pack these items in a box and label it accordingly.
- Avoid items that are breakable or delicate
- Shoeboxes must be valued at about \$50, and must include a good variety of essentials and little luxuries (see full list on previous page).
- We encourage all donors to include a personal message or card with their Shoebox. If a Shoebox is donated without a card, please consider adding one.
- All of the contents, including the card, should be completely inclusive, as our Shoebox recipients come from diverse cultural, religious and economic backgrounds.
- Do not include religious items, or cards that mention religious verses/phrases, prayers, etc.
- Do not include messages that make assumptions about the person's circumstances. Some Shoebox recipients may be in crisis, but not all!



Inspecting Your Shoeboxes

Items that Must be Removed from Shoeboxes:

- **Used goods, hotel samples/free samples** are not the type of items to make someone feel special and loved
- **Sized clothing** (i.e. S, M, L, XL) should not be included because beautiful women come in all different sizes
- **Mouthwash** or **hand-sanitizers** containing alcohol
- **Bubble bath** or **bath bombs**, as most shelters do not have bathtubs
- **Candles** (some agencies accept candles, but many do not)
- **Foundations or concealers** because each person has a unique skin tone
- **Razors** are restricted by some shelters
- **Jumbo-sized containers** do not fit well in a Shoebox
- **Books** are difficult to choose for someone you don't know
- **Feminine hygiene products** are essential items, but aren't considered a special treat. Please put them aside and we will donate them separately.
- **Anything opened or not well-packaged**
- **Children's Items**
- **Perfume or heavily-fragranced products**

Introducing: Gender Inclusive Shoeboxes



A Gender Inclusive Shoebox is identical to a typical Shoebox, but geared toward our Shoebox recipients who identify as trans or non-binary.

Ideally, these Shoeboxes will be packaged or wrapped in a neutral colour and the card should not be specific to women. The value of the items included remain \$50, but should be appropriate for someone of any gender. Along with our standard list of prohibited items, items that should try to be avoided in these Shoeboxes are:

- Items targeted to women only (i.e. women's shampoo, strongly scented products, women's deodorant, women's scarf)
- Packaging that is heavily marketed towards women

Why Is This Important?

Our Shoeboxes aim to enhance a person's well-being, to bring joy, and to remind them that they are valued. By providing gifts that allow for self-expression, enjoyment, and authenticity, we will show them that we truly care.

How to Donate a Gender Inclusive Shoebox:

Please attach a clearly visible label or note with your donated gift(s) indicating which ones are gender inclusive. This will help our team, as well as the shelter or agency receiving the gifts, make sure they get to the people who would appreciate them most.

Suggestions for Organizing Your Shoebox-Raiser



The "Shopping List" Approach

This is a great way to make sure you have all the items you need for your Shoeboxes!

- Decide how many gifts you want to make, i.e. 5 Shoeboxes
- Designate the items you want each person to bring
- Each set of items per person should total about \$50
- Ensure your attendees are comfortable with a \$50 budget

In advance of your Shoebox-Raiser, provide everyone with a Shopping List. For example:

- Paola brings five \$10 gift cards
- Angela brings 5 bottles of hand lotion, 5 sticks of deodorant & 5 nice chocolate bars
- Jen brings 5 journals, 5 nice pens & 5 pairs of socks
- Cora brings 5 nail polish, 5 lip gloss or mascara & 5 pairs of gloves
- Faith brings 5 body wash, 5 shampoo, 5 toothbrushes & 5 toothpaste
- Everyone brings blank greeting cards, wrapping paper, etc.



The "Fundraising" Approach

- Ask your attendees to send you their \$50 contribution to the Shoebox-Raiser, in advance of your event.
- Use the pooled money to purchase all of the materials you need to build your gifts.
- Host your event and have fun!



For the Creative Bunch

- Provide your guests with blank notecards or plain card stock and a variety of arts & craft supplies.
- Put your guests to work making beautiful handmade greeting cards!
- If you want to get even more creative, incorporate other projects in your Shoeboxes such as hand-knit scarves or hats,

If you would like help purchasing empty Shoeboxes and/or Shoebox-making supplies, please contact Kits for a Cause at shoeboxproject@kitsforacause.com

Learn More at
shoeboxproject.com



Contact Us

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