

Newsletter

Summer Edition 2008



THE
FoodBank
OF WATERLOO REGION
Sharing with my community.
Every day.

Please Set an Extra Place at Your Table

National Hunger Awareness Day

"I thought only people in Africa were hungry," commented one grade 7 student from Laurelwood Public School during a visit to The Food Bank on June 5, National Hunger Awareness Day.

To focus attention on hunger in this community five classes of grade 7 and 8 students from Laurelwood Public School visited The Food Bank. The students brought in the results of their food drive, sorted food and participated in a situational game to help them realize the everyday occurrences that can add up to needing assistance.

"The face of hunger will surprise you," says Wendi Campbell, Executive Director of The Food Bank. "Most people in our community probably know someone who uses a food bank. We just aren't aware they need the help. We see seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, and adults with jobs that don't pay enough to make ends meet needing food assistance. Across Canada 720,231 people require food assistance each year. In Waterloo Region, approximately 25% of those requiring food assistance are working. Hunger Awareness Day is an important opportunity for all of us to think about what it would be like to be unable to feed ourselves or our family."

For every person using a food bank, it is estimated that four or five others are struggling to get the food they need. In Canada, the problem of hunger is in large part a problem of income. Across the country, almost 20% of food bank clients are working or receiving insurance from recent employment. Approximately 25,000 people access emergency food in Waterloo Region each year. Almost half are children.



Agency Profile – How your donations help.

The Betty Thompson Centre

The Food Bank of Waterloo Region provides over three million pounds of food each year to 67 different agencies in our community. Safe Haven Shelter at Lutherwood's Betty Thompson Youth Centre is one such agency.



Safe Haven Shelter provides a secure and caring environment for youth aged 12 to 15. Youth come to the shelter for a variety of reasons. Perhaps most important, it provides a break from difficult home situations. While they stay at Safe Haven Shelter, staff work with the unique situation of each youth. Their basic needs are met first— they are given food, a safe place to sleep, clothing, medical attention, and other supplies as necessary. Safe Haven also supports school attendance of the youth and offers programming, counseling, and recreational opportunities. Both the youth and their families are also connected with resources and services in the community to support them.

Each year, hundreds of youth stay at Safe Haven Shelter for an average of 7 to 10 days. Safe Haven Shelter relies on many community partners to help these youth. The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, as one partner, provided 7400 lbs of food to the shelter in 2007. This food is given to the many youth who stay at Safe Haven Shelter, and is an important part of making them feel secure. "Being able to count on The Food Bank enables us to focus on what we do best -- helping youth and families," said Kelly Craigmile, Program Supervisor of Safe Haven.

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Hunger and Poverty in Ontario – A Time for Change?

Guest Columnist Brice Balmer of Kitchener is Secretary, Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition and former Chaplaincy Director at the House of Friendship.

Is it possible to reduce poverty by 25% in 5 years (“25 in 5”)? The United Kingdom set up plans and exceeded their target during Tony Blair’s years as prime minister. Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador believe that poverty should be eliminated, have enacted legislation, and are achieving significant results: fewer individuals and families in poverty.

Now it is time for Ontario to reduce the distressing poverty that has built up over the past fifteen years. During the 2007 election campaign, all three provincial political parties agreed to establish a poverty reduction strategy if elected. Premier Dalton McGuinty appointed Children and Youth Minister Deb Matthews MPP to head up a cabinet committee and a major consultation to create an Ontario poverty reduction strategy. The committee included ministers of education, housing, social assistance, finance, colleges, universities and training, etc. Poverty is complex and needs cooperation of all levels of government and many ministries.

Since the election, support for poverty reduction in Ontario has grown. A “25 in 5 Coalition” has formed with 200 people at its first mass meeting in January 2008; in April, over 500 people attended its second consultation. Faith communities, poverty advocates, labour unions, city governments and others are joining the movement.

A consensus is developing that several issues need to be addressed in the strategy:

- Strengthened labour regulations and enforcement for today when there are more temporary, contract, part time, and seasonal jobs.
- Increased income security through both social assistance benefits and minimum wage. A person working full time (over 30 hours per week) should have enough money to provide shelter, food, and other essentials.
- Community resources including safe affordable housing, community programs, training and education. Surveys indicate that many individuals and families are paying more than 50% of their income for housing.

Empty Bowls 2008



Over 450 Over 450 people purchased tickets for the 10th Annual Empty Bowls

Event, organized by the Waterloo Potters Workshop and the Canadian Clay & Glass Gallery. Participants experienced the gallery, selected a beautiful one-of-a-kind pottery bowl, enjoyed delicious gourmet soups and breads provided by local artisans and raised almost \$19,000 for The Food Bank. Thank you!

As communities and municipal governments tried to address these issues, federal and provincial governments have been largely absent. These levels of governments have the most money and are not reliant on property tax. Their surpluses have been used for tax and debt reduction, rather than assisting local communities to tackle poverty, environment, affordable housing, and child care.

Minister Matthews is holding consultations across the province. Will the voices of those who are working at low wages or on social assistance be heard? She is encouraging communities to conduct their own consultations with their MPP(s) present. Faith groups and local communities established food banks, soup kitchens and emergency shelters as temporary measures – now they seem permanent. There is change in the air! We must speak up to eliminate poverty in Ontario.

For more information on the Ontario government’s Poverty Reduction Strategy visit www.health.gov.on.ca. Information on 25 in 5 can be found at www.socialplanningtoronto.org and www.isarc.ca.



Casey’s Feed the Soul

The Food Bank staff and volunteers enjoyed the launch of Casey’s Feed the Soul in Kitchener. Feed the Soul was a special promotional menu featured by Casey’s restaurants across Ontario from April 28 to May 25 this year.

With the purchase of any item from their featured menu of classic dishes, Casey’s donated \$1 to the Ontario Association of Food Banks and The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.



Pictured: Cassandra Edwards, Operating Partner, a member of the Casey’s staff and Food Bank Executive Director, Wendi Campbell.

Volunteers are the Heart of The Food Bank!



Volunteers are directly involved in all aspects of the mission of The Food Bank: *Through community partnerships, we obtain and distribute emergency food from our neighbours for our neighbours.* Volunteers coordinate food drives, deliver supplies, pick up food and financial donations, make thousands of follow-up phone calls for special events, answer telephone inquiries, speak to groups, sort food, count cash, safely store and move food in the warehouse, assist member agencies and keep the warehouse clean while always presenting a compassionate and positive image to the public.

Bernie and Keith, profiled below, are just two of the **1900 volunteers** who helped The Food Bank and its 67 member food programs provide food to approximately 25,000 people in Waterloo Region in 2007. They were recognized at the annual volunteer breakfast sponsored this year by St. George Hall. Awards for years and hours of service were also presented. Of particular note was the presentation of the 15 year volunteer service pin to Don Allen and Floyd Jenkins.

Volunteer of the Year Award – Bernie Poechman, 2008 Recipient

This award is presented by The Food Bank of Waterloo Region to a volunteer who provides leadership, is dedicated to the goals of The Food Bank and provides a significant contribution to the work of The Food Bank.

Bernie became involved with the Food Bank for the simple reason that he wanted to give back to the community that had been good to him. He has a strong business background and brings much experience of dealing with people wherever he goes. He has an admirable work ethic, excellent organizational skills, a desire to help others and a great sense of humour.

Pictured right is our Volunteer of the Year, Bernie Poechman, in action in our warehouse



Outstanding Youth Award – Keith Skomeroski, 2008 Recipient

This award is presented by The Food Bank to a youth volunteer who has made a significant contribution to the organization and exemplifies the spirit, philosophy and goals of The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

Keith completed a summer placement in our Second Helping program, as a driver's assistant, picking up perishable food donations from local stores and delivering them to our member agencies. When he wasn't on the road, he was helping us in our warehouse moving boxes, sorting and cleaning or attending some of our special events.

When Keith graduated high school and started working, he made it a priority to continue with his volunteer work. When asked about why he continues, Keith says, *"I like helping out. The Food Bank is a well-run organization and I have enjoyed the experience and the people I met. I've gained perspective on the people we help when we deliver food."*



Pictured (L-R) are Wendi Campbell, Executive Director, Keith Skomeroski and Tim Jackson, Food Bank Board President



CH2M HILL – Take a Bite out of Hunger

This hamburger with a bite out of it, made by the team from CH2M HILL is one of the 11 structures that were on display during Canstruction. The five distinct layers (burger, tomato, lettuce and top and bottom bun) are made from pea soup, canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, kidney beans and corn.

Volunteer Impact Awards

Canstruction Waterloo Region received the Innovative Volunteer Involvement Award at the recent Volunteer Impact Awards hosted by the Volunteer Action Centre. This award is presented to a voluntary or public sector organization whose innovative and creative volunteer involvement programs successfully engage local volunteers. *If you are enjoying a challenge while you are volunteering for a good cause, the impact is that much richer.*

The first Canstruction in Waterloo Region was a great success – raising **30,000 pounds** of food and tons of awareness. Eleven corporate teams of staff volunteers designed structures using canned goods that were on display for a week at Conestoga Mall.

Special Thanks to Canstruction Sponsors: The Walter Fedy Partnership, TriMaster, NCR, Corporate Benefit Analysts and Conestoga Mall.

2008 Food Bank Golf Tournament

The Golf Tournament Committee, Jeff Butt, Dave Dickson, Ethan Goldberg, Andrew Pardy, Jeff Gates, Jen Kuhl and Kane Moser are pleased to announce that this year's tournament netted over \$40,000 for The Food Bank! Thank you to all the golfers, silent auction donors, volunteers and other supporters who made the tournament such a success!

Special thanks to: Title Sponsor – Purolator; Dinner Sponsor – Scotiabank; Platinum Sponsors – BMO Financial Group, Conestoga Rovers & Associates, Price Waterhouse Coopers and Second Foundation Consulting, and Corporate Sponsors - Miller Thomson LLP, Punch Integrated Communications, RBC Asset Management, RBC Dominion Securities Gates Wealth Management, Robert Half International, Sobeys, The Waterloo Networking Company, Your Choice Personal Communications/Bell World.



Spring Food Drive 2008

Over 190,000 lbs of food raised by approximately 70 food drives! This spring our community found many creative ways to “set an extra place” to remember a family or child in need of food assistance. For example...

Lutherwood staff worked hard to increase their food drive results by appealing to their fun and competitive nature. The coordinators set targets of 200, 400, 600, 800 lbs each with an intriguing reward attached. Several supervisors had to colour their hair and one shaved his head. As a result, their food drive increased from 100 lbs last year to 950 lbs this year!



Pictured above (L-R) are Joel Fairlie, Tom Fournier, Mike Wolf, Edgar Vieira, and Rick Eller with their new hairdos.

Supplierpipeline used “Survivor” for their theme. The photo below shows their puzzle challenge. With 20 staff they raised 3600 lbs of food this spring. Since December 2005 they have raised 8084 lbs of food and \$14,485. For each \$1 donated The Food Bank can distribute over \$8 worth of emergency food.



Pictured (L-R) above are Marian Marshall, Shannon Benson, Oricia Boterman and Gail Pratt

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Thank you for your support!

Please visit www.thefoodbank.ca to donate on-line or call 519-743-5576

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Or email info@thefoodbank.ca to request a tour!