

MEDIA RELEASE

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Fall is a time to be aware of local hunger and to take action.

Our community's Fall Food & Fund Drive will kick off on Sept. 22nd, during National Hunger Awareness Week. Look for food drive bags in your local paper, volunteers at your local grocery stores and events raising food & funds throughout Waterloo Region over the next 3 weeks. Residents are asked to help The Food Bank of Waterloo Region raise enough food and funds to provide 790,000 meals.

Currently, the most needed food items are: beans in sauce, canned meat & fish, canned pasta, canned fruit, stews & chili, tomato sauce, rice, peanut butter and hot cereal.

Financial donations are also critical. By working together with food industry and community partners, The Food Bank is able to feed a family of 4 for 4 days with each \$20 donation.

The community is asked to hold or support food & fund drives at their work place, neighbourhood, place of worship or school. Anyone organizing a drive should register it at thefoodbank.ca. Donations can also be made anytime at grocery stores, fire halls, or police divisions.

Other ways to help include volunteering as Food Bank Brand Ambassadors at weekend or evening events. Regular volunteer warehouse shifts are available Monday to Friday between 8:30 and 4:30 for customer service or general warehouse assistance at The Food Bank. Space is also available in our Great Food Sort Challenge for corporate teams. It's a fun opportunity to get 10 colleagues involved in fundraising and sorting food donations.

The Food Bank acquires fresh, frozen and non-perishable food for distribution through a network of agencies and community programs providing emergency shelter, food hampers, food pantry, hot meals, outreach and other services throughout Waterloo Region.

Within the Region, 17% of those accessing food assistance are employed or receive Employment Insurance, 30% receive Ontario Disability Support. 40% of households receiving food support are families with children. "Every day, throughout Waterloo Region, staff and volunteers of the food assistance network agencies hear stories of despair turning into stories of hope, largely because along with the food comes a smile, a connection to a vital resource, words of encouragement and the knowledge they are not alone," says Wendi Campbell, Executive Director of The Food Bank of Waterloo Region. "Together, we can help the 1 in 20 households in our community that struggle to find their way from hunger to hope."

Information about hunger in our community and how to help can be found at thefoodbank.ca.

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