



COMMUNITY IMPACT

2022-2023



THE
FoodBank
OF WATERLOO REGION



“It was another difficult year for many of us. The overall cost of living continues to rise, affecting everyone but especially our most vulnerable community members. **More people than ever before are struggling to afford to put food on the table and this is reflected in the record-breaking numbers reported by The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.** As food insecurity continues to reach new heights, I’m grateful to the staff, volunteers, sponsors, and donors for their dedication and commitment to ensuring that no one in Waterloo region goes hungry.”

Karen Armstrong, Chair

Executive Message

When I think about this past year, I'm filled with gratitude. For our volunteers who gave their time, talent, and energy. For our donors who continue to give so generously. For our sponsors who supported our programs and events. And for our staff and community partners who came together in the spirit of collaboration and resilience to ensure no one in our community goes hungry. In a year as challenging as this one was, we couldn't be more grateful for our community's support.

Like other Ontario cities, food insecurity rose rapidly in Waterloo region and food bank use hit an all-time high. At The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, we saw the highest need for food assistance in our almost 40-year history. And the need didn't slow down. Month after month, our Community Food Assistance Network agency partners recorded record-breaking numbers with more people accessing local food assistance programs than ever before. Sadly, we expect the number of people accessing food hamper programs to continue to grow as the overall cost of living continues to increase.

The year also brought ongoing supply chain issues largely due to lingering effects from the pandemic but also due to weather-related events and industry strikes. Despite these logistical challenges, we continued to provide consistent food support to the 120+ community programs and agency partners that make up the Network.

We also piloted the distribution of grocery cards to some agency partners. This innovative initiative supplemented food orders, diversified the type of support we offer, helped us address transportation challenges, and overcome supply chain issues affecting The Food Bank's bulk purchasing.

While we still hope for a time when food banks will no longer be needed or seen as the solution to food insecurity, we couldn't do this important work and help keep our neighbours nourished without the generous support of our community. As you read through this Community Impact report, I hope you see how your generosity makes a difference to people in Waterloo region experiencing food insecurity. I truly can't thank you enough for all the ways you help hungry neighbours in need. Thank you so much for your continued support.



Kim

Kim Wilhelm
Interim CEO

2022-2023
Board of Directors

thefoodbank.ca/about/board-of-directors

Karen Armstrong, Chair
David Brenneman, Vice Chair
Darsh Dalal, Treasurer
Natalie Brady, Director
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Julia Malott, Director
Darren Gilroy, Director
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In the Community

LIBRO CREDIT UNION

Through their Annual Grants program, Libro Credit Union generously provides funding to organizations all over southwestern Ontario, supporting initiatives that align with their four key pillars: financial resilience, employment, housing, and food accessibility.

Under the food accessibility pillar, Libro provided The Food Bank of Waterloo Region with funding for two years for our Fresh Approaches Food Centre, our award-winning, onsite food processing facility. In this space, staff and volunteers slice, dice, and repackage dry, fresh, and frozen food, extending the shelf life and increasing the variety, quality, and quantity of food distributed to our agency partners in the Community Food Assistance Network.

“The [Fresh Approaches Food Centre] was a great fit for what we’re trying to achieve with our pillars,” explains Scott Macleod, the regional manager of community banking at Libro. “The approach that room takes is so unique and is a great way of maximizing donations.”

To date, over 400,000 pounds of nutritious, edible food has been processed in the Fresh Approaches Food Centre and distributed to the more than 58,600 people in Waterloo region struggling to afford to put food on the table. We truly couldn’t be more grateful to Libro for helping us increase our capacity so we can provide more fresh, healthy food for people experiencing food insecurity.





ROYAL LEPAGE WOLLE REALTY

For nearly 30 years, Royal LePage Wolle Realty has been supporting The Food Bank of Waterloo Region through their annual Christmas Classic, an event to show appreciation to their clients while simultaneously giving back to their community by collecting food and funds for The Food Bank. Year after year, it's one of our largest community-hosted food and fund drives, collectively raising more than 940,000 meals!

"Food is one of the basic necessities that no one should have to worry about," says Jen Wolle, the director of operations at Royal LePage Wolle Realty.

Before COVID-19, the Christmas Classic took place at a movie theatre. When the pandemic hit, the company restructured the event and moved it outdoors to

Bingemans' Gift of Lights. Every year since then, clients have been invited to enjoy the holiday light display and bring a donation for The Food Bank. This year, 2023, marks their 30th anniversary.

"I'm so excited it's our 30th year," says Mark Wolle, owner and broker of record at Royal LePage Wolle Realty. "This year, we should be able to break our goal of raising one million meals for people in the community."

The foods and funds donated through the Christmas Classic allow us to support the Community Food Assistance Network, a system of 120+ community programs and agency partners working together to provide food, support, and services for people in need. Thank you to Royal LePage Wolle Realty for continuing to raise food and funds year after year to help ensure no one in Waterloo region goes hungry.

AMMAR'S

Since 2021, Ammar's, a family-owned halal butcher shop and fresh supermarket in Kitchener, has been a dedicated food industry partner of The Food Bank, providing us with halal food at a discounted rate. As the region continues to grow and the need for diverse cultural food continues to increase, we couldn't be more grateful for their generosity. To date, they have provided us with over 85,000 pounds of halal chicken and beef.

"Recognizing the need for halal food options for Muslims in our community who depend on The Food Bank of Waterloo Region was the catalyst to our involvement in giving back through The Food Bank," explains Faez Al-hendi, the vice president of operations at Ammar's.

In addition to being one of our food industry partners, Ammar's also supports our Food & Fund Drive program through sponsorship. If you've ever organized or participated in a food and fund drive, you might have seen the Ammar's logo on our bags and boxes.

"The best part [about supporting The Food Bank] is the positive feedback that we get from The Food Bank and those who rely on their services when it comes to the quality of food that we provide," says Faez. "On a deeper level, it is knowing that we are making an active difference in the lives of so many people and giving them one less thing to worry about."



There's no denying the impact volunteers have had throughout the last year.

Between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023:

Volunteer driving teams travelled

36,318 kilometres



picking up and distributing a variety of fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food to Community Food Assistance Network programs and partners.

3,858
people volunteered



28,295
volunteer hours

Volunteers packed

62,070 fresh
and **5,153**
non-perishable
food hampers



7,750

perishable,
non-perishable, and
frozen food orders were
assembled by volunteers.

**Orders may
have included:**

- Dairy items (yogurt, cheese)
- Eggs
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Frozen protein
- Grains
- Juice
- Milk
- Non-perishable items (canned goods, boxed meals, rice, pasta)



**4.5 million
pounds**

of fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food,
as well as non-food items, was sorted
by volunteers, staff, and corporate and
community partners.

Neighbours Helping Neighbours

MEET JOHN VOGAN

People volunteer for a variety of reasons. For John Vogan, volunteering provides a way to stay busy during retirement as well as an opportunity to support the community.

“I had free time during the weekdays and was looking for a way to give back,” John explains.

In 2021, John began volunteering at The Food Bank of Waterloo Region where he helped in our distribution centre, sorting non-perishable food. These days, John volunteers at our events as a brand ambassador. Brand ambassadors are the face of The Food Bank at events, campaigns, and speaking engagements. They interact with the public and help them understand the impact of their financial and food donations.

That’s the part that John loves the most.

“I like the people interaction the best,” he says. “Collecting donations, talking to people, encouraging them to volunteer, meeting people outside of our circle of friends... **it really is the people.**”

John also enjoys being able to discover more about Kitchener-Waterloo.

“I’ve set up tables at The Food Bank for Waffles in the Warehouse, helped at Lazaridis Hall at Wilfrid Laurier University for Empty Bowls, and taken tickets at the door of a local restaurant for the Uptown Waterloo Comfort Food Crawl,” he notes. “Some of these places I would have never visited otherwise. Volunteering has been a great way to discover more about the community I’ve lived in for over 25 years.”

John’s favourite event to volunteer at was at Christmas time when he collected food and cash donations at a local grocery store.



“Everyone’s in a good mood and there are lots of donations so you get rewarded for the time you spend there,” he says.

Since John started volunteering, he’s learned a lot about food insecurity in Waterloo region as well as how The Food Bank operates to support the 120+ community programs and agency partners that make up the Community Food Assistance Network.

“The scale of the problem really surprised me,” he explains. “The scale of food insecurity in our area is appalling.”

That’s why John encourages people who are passionate about combatting food insecurity to volunteer at The Food Bank.

“Don’t hesitate,” he says. “Try several roles. There’s a role that’ll suit you.”

MEET JANET SKOMOROWSKI

In Waterloo region, one in 10 households struggle to afford to put food on the table. Two years ago, that number was one in 20 households. With food insecurity rising at such a rapid rate, Janet Skomorowski says she felt compelled to volunteer at The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

But Janet also has another reason for wanting to volunteer—a close family member impacted by food insecurity. “My brother, Mike, lived on the streets here in Kitchener-Waterloo for four years,” Janet explains. “During that time, he told me he never lacked a meal or a hot cup of coffee. He would frequent community organizations such as Ray of Hope, the Out of the Cold program, St. John’s Kitchen, and churches in the downtown core that offered meals and a place to sit. Many of these organizations received food support from The Food Bank.”

Janet says her brother was eventually able to move into supportive housing. And that even in supportive housing, he and many of the other residents who also lived there sometimes had to rely on The Food Bank to supplement their food needs.

“Food security for many in our community is a daily struggle,”

Janet says. “I realize there are many complex and overlaying facets to this issue but Mike’s lived experience plus the increasing food security needs in my own community **made volunteering at The Food Bank a natural fit for me.**”

Janet has been volunteering with The Food Bank for over three years now. She has sorted food and worked on the hamper line too, but now she spends most of her weekly volunteer shifts in our Fresh Approaches Food Centre, our award-winning, onsite food processing facility. In this space, staff and volunteers slice, dice, and repackage dry, fresh, and frozen food, extending the shelf life and increasing the variety, quality, and quantity of food distributed to our agency partners through the Community Food Assistance Network.



“I really enjoy the variety of work,” Janet says. “But my favourite part is working alongside other volunteers who are from very diverse work and life experiences, ethnicities, and age ranges. These people are magnetic, and I’ve had a great deal of fun getting to know them.”

Janet also enjoys how much volunteering has taught her.

“I’ve learned that there are many generous people and organizations in Waterloo region who really care about the welfare of the marginalized, those struggling to make ends meet, and those for whom food security isn’t a given,” she explains. “I see this every time I’m on the floor. I know there are many farmers who donate crops in season, suppliers who donate meat or make it available at reduced costs, and citizens who donate food items or make monetary donations,” she continues. “I’ve learned that there are many reasons people volunteer at The Food Bank from the deeply personal to the ‘I just want to try it out.’ I’ve also learned that meeting the food needs and the distribution of food to the communities in the region is a complex undertaking.”

Community Food Assistance Network

The Community Food Assistance Network is a system of 120+ community programs and agency partners working together to provide food and other vital supports to people struggling to afford the food they need. Through coordination and collaboration, these community programs and agency partners provide food hampers, nutritional outreach services, community meals, and distribute food through shelter and residential services. So that no one goes hungry in Waterloo region, these programs and partners are in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich townships.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND AGENCY PARTNERS



FOOD HAMPERS

The reoccurring distribution of food packed to provide a three to four day supply of food.

- Aids Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo Area
- Anishnabeg Outreach Employment and Training
- Cambridge Food Bank
- Cambridge Vineyard Church
- Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health
- Conestoga College
- Emmanuel United Church
- Glencairn Mennonite Brethren
- House of Friendship
- OneROOF Youth Services
- Ray of Hope
- The Salvation Army Cambridge Citadel
- The Salvation Army Kitchener Community Church and Family Care Centre
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- St. Columba Anglican Church
- Stanley Park Community Centre
- Supportive Housing of Waterloo
- The Healing of the Seven Generations
- Traverse Independence
- University of Waterloo
- Wellesley Food Cupboard
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- Woolwich Community Services
- YWCA
- All Saints' Anglican Church
- Kingdom Community International Church
- St. Aloysius Church
- Wilmot Family Resource Centre



NUTRITIONAL OUTREACH

The regular distribution of food packs or a temporary cooking program.

- A Better Tent City
- Aids Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo Area
- Cambridge Food Bank
- Cambridge Vineyard Church
- Grand River Collegiate Institute
- House of Friendship
- Langs
- Lutherwood
- The Salvation Army Cambridge Citadel
- Sanguen Health Centre
- Sexual Assault Support Centre
- The Healing of the Seven Generations
- The Working Centre
- Traverse Independence
- Trinity Community Table
- Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region
- Woolwich Community Services
- YWCA
- Services and Housing In the Province
- Nutrition for Learning
- Kinbridge Community Association



COMMUNITY MEALS

A reoccurring meal served to the public.

- Cambridge Shelter
- Cambridge Vineyard Church
- Community Ministry
- Emmanuel United Church
- First United Church
- Food Not Bombs
- Langs
- OneROOF Youth Services
- Ray of Hope
- The Salvation Army Kitchener Community Church and Family Care Centre
- St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church
- The Working Centre
- Trinity Community Table
- Cambridge Neighbourhood Table



SHELTERS / RESIDENTIAL MEALS

A reoccurring meal served to shelter guests or supportive housing residents.

- A Better Tent City
- Cambridge Shelter
- Porchlight Counselling and Addiction Services
- House of Friendship
- KW Underhill Residential Home
- Lutherwood
- OneROOF Youth Services
- Marillac Place
- The Working Centre
- Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region
- YWCA

“Without supportive partners and collaborations, Sanguen would be at a loss to conduct the extent of outreach we do. **Having The Food Bank as our partner enables us to have a first point of connection and build relationships with many folks who would otherwise be hesitant to approach us for help or care.** We value and recognize all the effort that goes into filling our weekly orders, delivering the food, and ensuring we have as many options as possible for visitors to the mobile Community Health Van!”

Sanguen Health Centre, Community Food Assistance Network agency partner

How the Community Food Assistance Network Works

Government
Commodities



Farms



Restaurants
& Hospitality



Acquire surplus food



Producer



Food
Manufacturers
& Distributors



Community



Grocery
Retailers

THE FoodBank OF WATERLOO REGION

Cambridge Food Bank

Distribute to the Community Food Assistance Network

Community Food Assistance Network: Community programs and agency partners

Food hampers, nutritional outreach, community meals, and shelters and residential meals.

Distribute to hungry people



Feed hungry people in Waterloo region

58,688 unique individuals were supported by the Network

35% of people supported by the Network were under the age of 18

450,387 visits were made to a food hamper program

1 in 10 households accessed a food assistance program

2,395 community meals were served every day

7,549 new households served by the Network

61% of food acquired and 58% of food distributed was fresh or frozen

7.2 million pounds of food acquired and distributed to the Network as well as provincial partners with the Food Bank Distribution Services program.

6 grocery card pilots provided the same as **24,870** pounds of food or **19,430** meals

Wilmot

Wellesley

Waterloo

Woolwich

Kitchener

Cambridge

North Dumfries

Between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

Agency Spotlight

A BETTER TENT CITY

At The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, we acquire and distribute food to 120+ community programs and agency partners in Waterloo region. These organizations make up our Community Food Assistance Network and together, they provide services and direct food support to more than 58,600 people in need.

A Better Tent City is one of our agency partners that we provide with food. Born out of the belief that housing is a human right, A Better Tent City in Kitchener houses 50 people who previously experienced homelessness. Each person is given an 8'x10' cabin to live in and has access to food, showers, and laundry facilities. An additional 40 guests also access the organization's services.

"It's not a shelter; it's a home," says Nadine Green, the site coordinator at A Better Tent City. "Residents help around the community, and they have a say. They have a new outlook on life. They have hope."

Residents and guests also have regular access to medical care. Twice a week, the Waterloo Region Community Health Van, operated by Sanguen Health Centre—also a part of the Network—is onsite to provide a variety of healthcare services.

"There's excellent access to healthcare," says Laura Hamilton, who sits on A Better Tent City Board of Directors. "People are physically and mentally healthier."

Residents and guests can also enjoy the amenities in the community living space where they can play pool, watch television, and read the newspaper. The kitchen is also located in the community living space. This is where volunteers prepare breakfasts, lunches, and dinners throughout the week as well as brunches on the weekends using food from The Food Bank. Residents and guests help with both meal prep and clean up depending on the day and what's on the menu.

"It's a labour of love," Laura says. "We could not exist without The Food Bank."

Laura also mentions there's always sandwiches in the fridge as well as a mix of both nutritious and not-so-nutritious snacks available such as apples and doughnuts.

"There's always something healthy... and something you want to eat," Nadine says with a smile.

"Nadine serves dinner but other than that, it's a self-serve place," Laura adds. "We don't want people to have to ask for a snack. Residents have autonomy to take what they want."

A Better Tent City serves about 9,000 meals per month to both residents and guests. While they are proud of all that's been accomplished, the biggest challenge they wrestle with is that they can't help everyone experiencing homelessness.

"The number of people who don't have anywhere to go grows every day," Laura says. "We need affordable housing. We need housing for everyone. It takes public funding and collective political will to look after everyone."

In the meantime, they will continue to support as many people as they can for as long as their help is needed. They invite you to join the cause.

"Get to know somebody who is homeless," Nadine says. "And don't judge."

To learn more about A Better Tent City, visit abettertentcity.org.



We endorse Feed Ontario's policy recommendations for change and call on the Ontario government to invest in affordable housing as outlined by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. **We also endorse Food Banks Canada's policy recommendation pillar and call on the Canadian government to build more affordable housing.**

Difficult Times Can Lead to the Greatest Innovations

GROCERY CARD PILOTS

As the cost of living increased over the past year so did volatility in supply chains and uncertainty in food donations. These difficulties coupled with the rapid rise in demand on food assistance services challenged food banks across the country including The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

At The Food Bank, we normally use food purchase dollars to fill gaps in our inventory, but this year we couldn't always buy the foods we needed in bulk due to supply chain issues. We also experienced transportation challenges related to increased gas costs and accommodating large food orders that would have meant more delivery trips.

Identifying an opportunity to innovate, we shifted the way we provided food support to some agency partners in the Community Food Assistance Network. We developed and launched six grocery card pilots in which participating agencies received grocery cards to supplement their food orders.

By the end of these pilots, we had given out the equivalent of 19,430 meals. While this is only a small percentage of the total support we provided to Network partners, this innovative initiative played an important role in our response to the increasing need for food assistance in Waterloo region. By embracing innovation to explore new experimental ways to nourish our community, we maximized the efficiency of our operations to provide fair and equitable food support without straining the capacity of our food inventory.

As we continue to acquire, coordinate, and distribute food to the 120+ community programs and agency partners in the Network, we'll continue to identify areas for improvement and innovation to better support our partners who provide direct food support to more than 58,600 people in need in Waterloo region.





▲ Demtool Inc. employees raised an incredible 5,148 meals for people in need.

Food & Fund Drive Program

Helping neighbours in need is a community effort. Between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, **food and fund drives** provided **1,030,043 meals** to people and families in need across Waterloo region. The food and funds donated through community and corporate drives allow us to fill gaps in our inventory, buy food to meet diverse cultural and dietary needs, keep our delivery trucks on the road, and support the Community Food Assistance Network. Thank you to everyone who hosted a food and fund drive!

We also thank our **2022–2023 Food & Fund Drive sponsors** for covering the costs of the bags and boxes used by the community, and for contributing another **277,000 meals!**



Financial Statements

Income statement for the year ended June 30, 2023

Our community's generosity ensured that 58,688 people in Waterloo region had access to food when they needed it.

DONATIONS & INCOME (\$30,182,536)



67% Food Donations 26% Donations & Fundraising 3% Covid-19 Response & Recovery 2% Region of Waterloo – Community Food Assistance Network 0.49% Food Bank Distribution Services 1.38% Investment & Other Income

EXPENDITURES (\$27,319,803)



74% Food Donations 11% Personnel 2% Administration 4% Fundraising/Food Drives 4% Food Purchase & Processing 1% Facilities 0.3% Professional Development & Agency Relations 1% Transportation 2% Community Food Assistance Network – Region of Waterloo Funding 0.4% Community Food Assistance Network – COVID-19 Response 1% Property & Equipment

Note: In the past year more than 6.2 million pounds of food was donated, valued at \$3.21 per pound

The Food Bank of Waterloo Region remains committed to fostering growth, sustainability, and innovation, all while maintaining financial stability to navigate fluctuations in donations or economic uncertainty. In addition, the Board of Directors has identified the following operating reserves to support these endeavours.

Emergency Food Purchase Reserve

\$1,000,000

provides funding to purchase food in the event of significant events and damages (such as COVID-19) or gaps in supply chains to prevent disruption to community programs and agency partners.

Innovation & Future Capacity

\$261,876

provides resources for emerging program capacity support, to ensure safe and secure spaces to distribute food and implement new programs to meet the needs of our community.

Operating Reserve

\$1,600,857

provides approximately six months operating expenses as working capital to accommodate fluctuations in cash flow and program funding.

For full financial statements, visit thefoodbank.ca/about/financial-accountability

Hunger Count

The Food Bank's Hunger Count provides insight into food insecurity in Waterloo region. The data is from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

PROGRAM VISITS

28% 8+ VISITS

32% 1 VISIT 14% 2 VISITS 8% 3 VISITS 18% 4-7 VISITS 28% 8+ VISITS

FAMILY COMPOSITION

67% SINGLE PEOPLE

67% SINGLE PEOPLE 15% TWO PARENT/GUARDIAN 13% SINGLE PARENT/GUARDIAN
5% COUPLE WITH NO CHILDREN

FOOD RECIPIENT (AGES)

35% 0-17 YEARS

2% 0-2 YEARS 3% 3-5 YEARS 6% 6-11 YEARS 6% 12-17 YEARS 15% 18-30 YEARS 12% 31-44 YEARS
9% 45-64 YEARS 3% 65+ YEARS 18% UNKNOWN CHILDREN (0-17 YEARS) 28% UNKNOWN ADULTS (18+ YEARS)

HOUSING TYPE

60% PRIVATE RENTAL

60% PRIVATE RENTAL 7% SOCIAL RENTAL HOUSING 4% HOMEOWNERS 2% RESIDES WITH FAMILY/FRIENDS
1% EMERGENCY SHELTER 26% OTHER

SOURCE OF INCOME

11% EMPLOYMENT INCOME

11% ONTARIO WORKS 10% ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (ODSP) 11% EMPLOYMENT INCOME
10% NO INCOME 3% OLD AGE PENSION 2% EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE 5% OTHER 42% UNKNOWN
6% STUDENT LOAN

We endorse Feed Ontario's policy recommendations for change and call on the Ontario government to increase Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), change the earned income clawback formula for OW to match that of ODSP, treat income from other benefits, like the Canada Disability Benefit, the same as earned income, and combine the basic needs and shelter allowance into a single flat rate. We also endorse Food Banks Canada's policy recommendation pillar and call on the Canadian government to create a minimum income floor and support low-income workers.



**THE FOOD BANK OF
WATERLOO REGION**

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We're Social!

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