

SPRING 2024

FRESH APPROACHES

HOW YOU IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY

Executive Message

Letter from Kim



Dear Neighbour,

The food crisis continues—but through it all, YOU are there.

Thank you so much for staying by our side and giving what you can to ensure people in Waterloo region have enough food to eat.

Your gifts help individuals and families who are struggling to keep up with the high cost of living. You give people in our community access to fresh, nutritious food. Plus: you give peace of mind. You give the comfort and security of knowing where their next meal is coming from. That is no small feat!

The need for food support in Waterloo region shows no signs of slowing down. We absolutely depend on you to keep up with the need. Thank you so much.

This issue of your Fresh Approaches newsletter shares a few stories to show you the amazing impact of your giving in action to help people across Waterloo region. I hope you feel proud reading it. I sure feel proud, writing about it. **Your support truly makes a difference!**

With my sincere thanks,

Kim Wilhelm
CEO

INSIDE:
Sydney follows in her father's footsteps.

- | A springtime recipe for you!
- | Partner spotlight: A Better Tent City.





EAT 365

You can relieve hunger **every day of the year.**

You care about helping people struggling with the increased cost of food in our region. **Join EAT 365, our monthly donor community,** to help even more! You can call **519.743.5576 extension 227,** visit thefoodbank.ca/eat365 or scan the QR code below!



Or Simply scan this QR code

Your 2024 Monthly Donor Challenge:

2 Million Meals!

Last year, our monthly donor community provided over 1 million meals. **By joining EAT 365 today, you can help reach our goal of providing 2 million meals** to hungry people in our region.



Feeding our Community. No matter what.

Sydney follows in her father's footsteps. Your generosity helps others do the same.



Food insecurity can impact people from all walks of life, all ethnicities, backgrounds and education levels. *Thankfully, your generosity gives everyone in our community access to fresh, nutritious food—when they need it.*

Meet local Métis Chef, Sydney Keedwell. She has firsthand experience growing up in a food-insecure household in Kitchener. She remembers how her dad used his experience as a former chef to take the food they received from the food bank and use it to its full potential. *"We would get two bags of potatoes delivered to our house,"* Sydney explains. She recalls how she'd help her dad to wash, cook and prepare the potatoes and then freeze them to be used throughout the month.

Just as you are committed to helping people in your community who are struggling to afford food, Sydney remembers how her dad used to help others. He used to teach them how to use their food and make it last. And even though they were food-insecure, Sydney remembers a

time when a hungry boy wandered into their home and started to eat a bowl of chili she'd left on their table. *"My dad didn't yell," she says. "He didn't tell him to go. He didn't say what are you doing here? He just pulled me aside and he said, 'let him finish it.'"*

This wasn't the only time Sydney witnessed food insecurity. At school, Sydney learned that many of her peers didn't have food for lunch. *"The school did what they could," she says. "They would provide a packet of Ritz crackers filled with cheese, a granola bar, and maybe sometimes a piece of fruit and a juice box."*

At 17 years old, Sydney followed in her dad's footsteps and became a chef. She's currently the food and nutrition coordinator as well as chef of Aadanjige Café by White Owl Native Ancestry Association.

Thank you for your incredibly kind and compassionate support of The Food Bank. You're helping families just like Sydney's get through challenging times.

Community Food Assistance Network—February 2024



23,529

people visited an emergency food hamper program 46,958 times, a **27%** and **30%** increase over February 2023.



15,427

hampers were distributed, a **27%** increase over February 2023.



46,958

visits, a **30%** increase over February 2023.

109,958

meals were served, a **40%** increase over February 2023.



Feeding our Community. No matter what.



1 in 5
children live in
a food-insecure
household in
Ontario.

Leaving a legacy to provide food to people in need.

We're so very grateful to Rudolph, who recently left a tremendously generous gift in his will to The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

Before his passing Rudolph wrote to us. He said,

"I know about hunger.

I was diagnosed with cancer. I lost 60 pounds, as I could not eat. Hunger was my constant companion. Medications brought me relief. I regained 40 pounds, but I never forgot the hunger.

Before Christmas, I was at Zehrs and saw The Food Bank of Waterloo Region food donation bags available for purchase. I bought a couple, but it seemed a very small effort on my part. Exiting the store, I saw a tractor trailer delivering fresh food. That prompted me to think.

A close friend of mine was familiar with The Food Bank, and with the work that they do. The friend explained that monetary donations could be used to purchase wholesale or better. Food donations, valuable and welcome, are at retail.

Determined to do something meaningful, I had my will rewritten to leave a legacy gift. The most efficient method was to donate stocks in public companies directly to The Food Bank. This ensures ongoing funds to support their efforts. To me, that is a truly worthwhile endeavour."

We agree wholeheartedly, Rudolph. Your gift will make a tremendous impact. **Because of you, people in our community will not go hungry.**

If you have any questions about leaving a gift in your will, please contact Sarah Worthen at sarahw@thefoodbank.ca.

A recipe for you to try! Springtime Asparagus Pasta.

Serves: 6 | Prep: 25 mins | Total: 25 mins
Difficulty level: Easy

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups uncooked pasta (spiral, penne, etc.)
- 3/4 pound asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 6 tomatoes, diced
- 6 ounces cooked ham, chicken, or turkey, chopped
- 4 teaspoons dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese (optional)



Here's a **budget-friendly and healthy meal idea** for you to try. It uses some common ingredients that may be packed in emergency food hampers distributed weekly by the Community Food Assistance Network—thanks to your amazing generosity! We hope you enjoy it.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, sauté asparagus and bell pepper in oil until tender-crisp. Add tomatoes, meat, and pasta. Cook until heated through.
3. Stir in parsley, oregano, and basil. Top with shredded cheese.

Partner Spotlight

A Better Tent City: It's not a shelter, it's a home!



Your kind support of The Food Bank of Waterloo Region provides food to more than 120 agencies and community programs, including A Better Tent City in Kitchener.

Born out of the belief that **housing is a human right**, A Better Tent City houses 50 people who have experienced homelessness. Each person is given an 8 x 10 foot cabin to live in and has access to food, showers, and laundry facilities. An additional 40 guests also access services.

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

Residents and guests also enjoy the community living space. They can play pool, watch television, and read the newspaper—as well as access the kitchen. Volunteers prepare breakfasts, lunches, and dinners throughout the week as well as brunches on the weekends using food from The Food

1 in 6 households in Ontario struggling with food insecurity.



Bank. Residents and guests help with both meal prep and clean up depending on the day and what's on the menu.

There are always sandwiches in the fridge as well as a mix of both nutritious and not-so-nutritious snacks available such as apples and donuts.

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

With your incredible support, A Better Tent City serves about 9,000 meals per month to both residents and guests. Thank you!

Did you know?



Last year, the Community Food Assistance Network helped more than **58,000** of your neighbours **450,000** times through an emergency food hamper program in Waterloo region. The need is the highest it's been in 40 years.

In Your Words



"I've seen how much my own grocery bill has gone up. I'm grateful to be able to give back and help others who can't afford to purchase healthy food right now." — Seth, donor

"It's a great place to volunteer. I'm retired, and it's fun!"

— Andy, volunteer

"We encourage everyone to take what they need. That need looks different to each person."

— Anna, Community Food Assistance Network



50 Alpine Court
Kitchener, ON N2E 2M7
Tel: 519.743.5576
Email: info@thefoodbank.ca

 FoodBankWatReg

thefoodbank.ca

Charitable Registration No. 11923 3310 RR0001