

SPRING 2025

FRESH APPROACHES

HOW YOU IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY



INSIDE: How you helped Kitty make it to graduation

- Behind the scenes at The Food Bank
- A tasty new recipe for you to try



Executive message



Dear Neighbour,

To say you're wonderful would be an understatement. **Thank you for stepping up to support our Waterloo region neighbours facing food insecurity.**

A staggering 1 in 8 households locally now rely on food assistance — up from 1 in 20 households just three years ago. With the rising costs of food, rent, and mortgages, every day is now an emergency for many people. Food assistance is the only way many families in our community can get by.

It's because of you that food assistance is available. With your help, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region distributed more than 8.9 million pounds of fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food to the Community Food Assistance Network... A number we anticipate will only continue to grow.

In these challenging times, the giving hearts of our fellow community members are making such a vital difference. Together, we are filling a gap in the social safety net — and filling plates that would otherwise go empty.

I'm so very grateful for your kindness. Thank you for ensuring adults, children, and families in every city and township in Waterloo region have access to essential food support close to home.

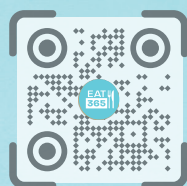
Warmly,

Kim Wilhelm
CEO



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

Join EAT 365 and help feed your neighbours all year long by becoming a monthly donor. Visit thefoodbank.ca/eat365 or call The Food Bank of Waterloo Region at **519.743.5576 extension 224** to sign up today. **OR:**



Simply **scan** this **QR code!**

Your **2025 Monthly Donor Challenge:**

3 Million Meals!

Last year, our monthly donor community provided over 2 million meals. By joining EAT 365 today, you can help reach our goal of providing **3 million** meals to hungry people in our region.



Feeding our community. No matter what.

The road to a brighter future

You helped Kitty make it to graduation



32,772
volunteer hours
donated in 2024



4,491
individual volunteers

"I immediately started going," Kitty explains. "And it was awesome because they also gave tampons. Those kinds of needs that I was desperate for were filled by this resource. I used [the food bank] daily throughout my university education."

Against the odds, Kitty graduated from the University of Waterloo with a bachelor of arts in Speech Communication. She now works in corporate business development and volunteers at The Food Bank.

"I didn't have anywhere to go."

Kitty Ibele recalls her time as a student at the University of Waterloo when, due to an unfortunate family situation, she found herself with nowhere to live.

In spite of the challenges she was facing, Kitty was determined to complete her program of studies. "The last thing I wanted to do was stop getting educated," she explains.

The road ahead of her was anything but easy. Determined to graduate, Kitty worked three part-time jobs to pay for her post-secondary education. All the money she made

went to her tuition, leaving little left over for rent or food.

Kitty ate food that people left behind in the campus cafeteria and she spent some nights sleeping on the couches at the university's Student Life Centre. Eventually, a school custodian told her about the campus food bank, offering a ray of hope for the tired but tenacious student.

The University of Waterloo's food bank, a part of the Community Food Assistance Network, receives fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food support from The Food Bank of Waterloo Region — thanks to the kindness of people like you!

"I volunteer where I can and give back in the way that was given to me. If it wasn't for The Food Bank, I wouldn't have been able to graduate. It literally was my lifesaver."

— Kitty, volunteer



Your support of The Food Bank of Waterloo Region ensures people like Kitty have somewhere to turn in times of struggle. Thank you for your generosity!

Feeding our community. No matter what.

Behind the scenes at The Food Bank of Waterloo Region



5.7M

pounds of fresh, frozen and non-perishable food sorted in 2024



in 2000, when The Food Bank of Waterloo Region first moved to our current 31,000-square-foot location at 50 Alpine Court in Kitchener, our space felt enormous. This space meant food no longer had to be stored at various offsite locations — it could all fit under one roof, making operations more **efficient and cost-effective**. That year, we distributed 2.8 million pounds of food to 40 food programs, helping 26,205 people in need.

More than 73,600 people in Waterloo region accessed food assistance in 2024 – a 25 per cent increase over last year.

Now, 25 years later, the need for food assistance has reached the highest level in our 41-year history. From July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, The Food Bank distributed more than 8.9 million pounds of fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food — nearly three times more than when we first moved in — to the 54 organizations in the Community Food Assistance Network. Together, these organizations provide

direct food support to the more than 73,600 individuals in Waterloo region accessing food assistance.

So, how exactly do we manage it all?

Step inside and you'll find volunteers and staff greeting community members as they drop off donations, and work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure food is stored, packed, and

ensuring no one in Waterloo region experiences hunger.

That's why we're so grateful to our staff and volunteers, whose dedication and hard work help keep our operations running smoothly every day. We also thank our generous



distributed. From navigating coolers and freezers to managing the Fresh Approaches Food Centre, where fresh donations are repacked and, every step is critical in keeping food moving to those who need it most. Though we've operated in the same space for the past 25 years, the demand for food assistance has reached an all-time high. The Food Bank continues to evolve to meet the community's needs,

donors, whose unwavering support makes it possible to continue meeting the needs of our community. Together, we're building a stronger, healthier, and hunger-free Waterloo region.

Feeding our community. No matter what.

A recipe for you to try!

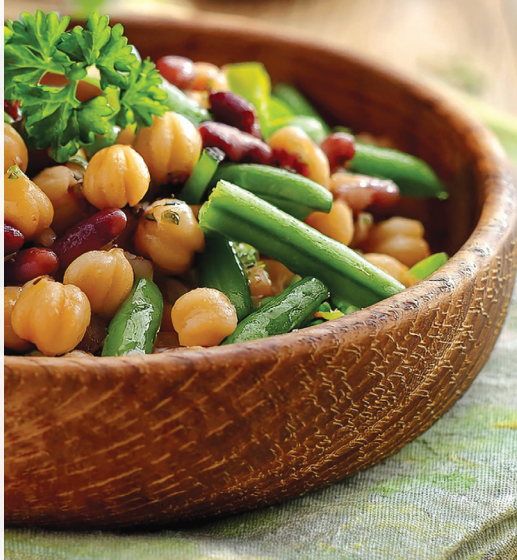
Green Bean and Chickpea Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups fresh or frozen green beans, 1 inch pieces (or one 19 oz can of green beans, drained and rinsed)
- 1 (19 oz) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed (or 2 cups cooked dried chickpeas)
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 3 tablespoons oil, of choice
- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- salt and pepper, to taste

Serves: 4 | Prep: 15 mins | Total: 25 mins

Difficulty level: Easy



Source: thefoodbank.ca/2024/06/green-bean-and-chickpea-salad/ | Adapted from: The Basic Shelf Cookbook, 1994

1 in 8

households
accesses food
assistance



Here's a **budget-friendly and healthy recipe** for you to try! It features simple, everyday ingredients that are often found in emergency food hampers—made possible by your incredible generosity.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Cook green beans until slightly tender, about 5 minutes. Drain. (Skip this step if using canned beans).
2. In a large bowl, combine green beans, chickpeas, and onion.
3. In a small bowl, combine oil, vinegar, basil, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.
4. Pour dressing mixture over green beans, chickpeas, and onions. Mix to combine.
5. Refrigerate until cold before serving.



Did you know?

Last year, the Community Food Assistance Network helped more than **73,600** of your neighbours **558,000** times through an emergency food hamper program in Waterloo region. The need is the highest it's been in 41 years.

In your Words: Participant, partner, and donor



Reflecting back on the time that we needed assistance, we didn't know these programs existed. Someone introduced us—whether it was the church that sponsored our family, a social worker, or whoever it was. We didn't know these programs existed. Thankfully, they did, because they helped our family tremendously during some dire times." — *Thien N.*



We're giving not only the items but also the freedom of choice and dignity to pick what they want. I love the pure shock that people have when they get more than they expected." — *Jess F.*



Being a monthly donor provides consistency to The Food Bank. It provides reliable funding to a good organization that's helping people in the community." — *David B.*



50 Alpine Court
Kitchener, ON N2E 2M7
Tel: 519.743.5576
Email: info@thefoodbank.ca
 FoodBankWatReg
thefoodbank.ca
Charitable Registration No. 11923 3310 RR0001