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Dufferin Food Share provides choice to clients with new ?shopping model?

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Clients of the Grand Valley Food Bank will have the opportunity to shop as if they are in a real grocery store the next time they visit, as the local food bank introduces a new distribution model.

Dufferin Food Share celebrated the launch of their innovative ?shopping model? at the Grand Valley Food Bank, located at 17 King St., on May 1.

The shopping model uses a system where points are awarded to food bank clients based on their household size. Clients are then able to shop the food bank aisles and choose the foods or items they need or prefer using points.

?This change empowers clients to select their own items, fostering dignity, choice, and exibility in their shopping experience,? reads a statement from the Orangeville Food Bank.

In 2023, the Orangeville Food Bank and Grand Valley Food Bank amalgamated their services to create the Dufferin Food Share.

The shopping model was previously implemented in the Orangeville Food Bank in 2016.

Heather Hayes, executive director of the Orangeville Food Bank, said the move resulted in a 30 per cent drop in their food distribution as clients only took the food that worked for them.

?It's a really great system that effectively and efficiently uses the donations that the community so generously provides, as well as giving people the same choice that we all want when we go to the grocery store,? said Hayes.

According to Hayes, the Grand Valley Food Bank serves about 100 individual clients each month, of which roughly 30 are children and 15 are seniors.

?Those number have gone up. Grand Valley has seen the same kinds of increases that all food banks across Ontario and Canada have seen, and we project that will grow,? said Hayes.

One of the biggest goals of implementing the shopping model in the food bank is fostering dignity for those who require their services.

?I can't imagine what it must feel like to come through our front door for the rst time or have to do it month after month because you just can't make the math work,? said Hayes.

?If we practice a model based in kindness to others, it can only help improve what must be a really dif cult time for people. I always want anybody accessing any of our programs to feel better after than feel worse.?

The Grand Valley Food Bank is open Mondays from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.