

Monthly Message: Community support needed at the food bank this summer

Food insecurity is a non-partisan emergency. That's why Food Banks Canada and each of its 11 provincial and territorial associations have called on ALL political parties to commit to reducing food insecurity in Canada by 50 per cent by 2030.

Hunger in Ontario is not caused by a lack of food but rather the inability to afford it. Nearly 5 million people in Canada ? one out of every seven individuals ? currently live in poverty. Reducing poverty in Ontario is essential to addressing food insecurity.

Everyone is one crisis away from needing a food bank.

Could it be you? Or your neighbour? As our mayor, Wade Mills, has said, Neighbour is not a geographical term. It is a moral concept.

This summer is a time to take stock and support others as you can. Donations typically go way down during the summer months ? a time when demand usually increases as school food supports for children stop for the summer. We are incredibly grateful to all those in our community who support the Shelburne Food Bank regularly and creatively.

Support comes in many ways, through the donation of money, donation of goods and donation of time.

We were blessed this year to celebrate a very successful Food Rescue Van Campaign and are incredibly grateful to the local businesses that donated funds for this van.

As a result, each week we can pick up food donated by No Frills, Foodland, Starbucks, Mary Browns Chicken and Cobs Bread. We also pick up donations from community members who have put them in the bins at the front of No Frills and Foodland.

The Shelburne Food Bank van can also be seen at some community events, collecting donations. We hope the Town of Shelburne, other municipalities that we support, and others will look to invite us to their events as a way of supporting the food bank.

Many local businesses also have access to grants and fundraising opportunities, and we have been fortunate to have been the recipient of these from Starbucks, PepsiCo Foundation, Farm Credit Canada, Maple Leaf Community Cruiser and No Frills' Give a Little, Help a Lot Campaign ? to name a few. We are extremely grateful for both their support and creativity in finding ways their businesses can support the ongoing work of the local food bank.

We are also grateful to partner with the local service clubs who support the Shelburne Food Bank.

The Lions Club of Shelburne is currently hosting a Classic Car/Truck Cruise every second Sunday in the summer. Entry is by donation to the food bank.

The Rotary Club of Shelburne just donated \$5,000 from the Tim Horton's Smile Cookie Campaign and has started its Backpack Program again, providing the families we serve with a new backpack, lunch box and water bottle. This supports students returning to school.

This September, we will again turn to local businesses asking for support in ensuring that every food bank client can receive a turkey for Thanksgiving. Last year, TransAlta, Caravaggio IDA drug store, Paul Downey Electric and Jimmy & Stef's No Frills made certain this could happen.

Looking forward to October, the Rotary Club will host the annual town food drive.

Thanksgiving weekend and the Little family's Halloween Haunt end October with a great fundraiser.

Then thoughts turn to the Christmas Hampers.

So there are many chances to donate goods to make a difference.

The donation of money is always welcome, and donations that do not require a receipt can be made to shelburnefoodbank@gmail.com. If a tax receipt is required, donations can be made to Trinity Primrose United or Compass Church with the Shelburne Food Bank in the memo line, and a tax receipt will be issued.

The donation of time is immeasurable! We host around 65-70 volunteers who assist in the day-to-day operations of the food bank. We have a board of directors that meets monthly to discuss and decide on key operational issues of the food bank. We have monthly drivers that do our deliveries, weekly hamper builders, shift workers, stock buyers and student volunteers ? all who do it from a place of kindness and compassion. They bring both joy and fun with them.

Without them, the food bank could not operate. And the Shelburne Food Bank is 100 per cent volunteer-led and run, so that 100 per cent of donations go to the clients.

This summer, we are fortunate to have our community garden being run by Brad Reid and volunteers from the Shelburne Horticultural Society. We look forward to the produce we will receive from it! We welcome any extra produce that anyone grows, so feel free to drop it off.

Please, take a minute to think about how you can support your neighbours in need. Can you donate to the food bank? Or could you host a fundraiser for it? Could you ask your business if there is a way they can help? Or your child's team? Or your church? We welcome ALL ideas! Please feel free to contact us at shelburnefoodbank@gmail.ca.

We look forward to hearing from you.

And a great BIG thank you to all those who already do so much! We are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support.

Let's help Ontario meet that 2030 goal of reducing food insecurity by 50 per cent. It will only make this small town even better. Thank you.