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Monthly Message: Food bank calls for strong community response in 2026

We welcome the new year with hope and a clear awareness of the challenges many in our community continue to face.

Over the past year, the Shelburne Foodbank has seen a significant increase in use. More families, seniors, and young people are relying on emergency food support, often for the first time. Rising living costs, housing cost pressures, and unexpected hardships have made it more difficult for many to meet even basic needs.

The pressure on foodbanks is being fuelled by multiple factors:

Economic pressures: with higher food prices and the cost of living squeezing household budgets. That means more families are turning to emergency food support that is already stretched thin.

Reduced resources: many food programs have less food than in previous years. For example, Ottawa's food bank network announced cutbacks of 20-50 per cent in food distributed to partner agencies due to funding and supply limitations.

Drop in donations and grants: after a surge in charitable giving and emergency funding during the pandemic, many non-profits now face leaner giving seasons as demand continues to grow.

This reality calls for a strong community response. Foodbanks are not just shelves and supplies. They are lifelines built on generosity, kindness, time, and care. As demand continues to grow, so does the need for donations, volunteers, advocacy, and awareness.

Advocates emphasize that foodbanks, which play a crucial emergency role, cannot substitute for stable income supports like adequate wages, robust social assistance or food security policies.

?Food insecurity is not just about food. It's about deeper systemic challenges,? according to a 2025 hunger report.

Without additional funding and structural change, the gap between need and available support is only likely to widen.

As 2026 gets underway, the Shelburne Foodbank is urging the public not only to donate but also to push for policies that address the root causes of food insecurity. We invite everyone who is able to take part by donating, checking in on neighbours, and support efforts that address food insecurity. Even small actions, when made together, can make a meaningful difference.

Together, we can make sure hope and nourishment are part of everyone's new year ahead.