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Shelburne Food Bank summer breakfast program returns

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Shepherd's Cupboard Food Bank has brought back the kid's summer breakfast program for a second year.

?Food insecurity is prevalent for everyone right now, and we hear it every week when we're servicing the clients that we serve,? said Ardith Dunlop, volunteer coordinator at Shepherd's Cupboard. ?We're thrilled to reach out and to partner with anybody that helps us service the community needs better.?

Earlier this month Shelburne's food bank re-partnered with five local schools, Centre Dufferin District High School (CCDHS), Glenbrook Elementary, Hyland Heights, Centennial Hylands, and Primrose to provide healthy snacks and breakfast meals to children within the community throughout the summer.

Funded by the Children's Foundation of Guelph and Wellington Food and Friends program, the same one used within the schools, Shepherd's Cupboard summer breakfast program is available for any kids who attend the five schools.

?Our breakfast program mirrors what the schools were doing with providing the breakfast program,? said Dunlop.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, food banks have seen a rise in the number of people accessing their services. Prior to the pandemic, Shepherd's Cupboard saw between 70 and 80 families, but Dunlop says they now serve between 80 and 120 each month.

According to the 2019 Hunger Count study issued by Food Banks Canada, children make up nearly 35 per cent of food bank recipients, while making up less than 20 per cent of the general population.

Dunlop said by providing the summer breakfast they're hoping to continue to help establish the healthy eating patterns the kids get during the school year.

?It's long been recognized that kids who are not hungry performed better in their academics, and there is some help available in the schools during the school hours, yet that goes away once the summer's there. Parents are expected to provide and those are additional cost to parents that right now, especially with COVID beginning to recede, they don't have the money for,? explained Dunlop.

Shepherd's Cupboard, this year is running the kid's breakfast program once a month for the entirety of the month, meaning families will only need to go once instead of every Wednesday to pick up their weekly hamper.

The local food bank is also running their backpack program again, sponsored by the Shelburne Rotary Club, where backpacks with school supplies are provided to those who need it to attend school.

?We are here to help, nobody should wait ?til they're in a crisis, and we don't expect them to be in a crisis to make use of us,? said Dunlop. ?We're here to help so that their funds can go to other places within the family that are needed, so please make use of the food bank and our programs.?

Those in the community looking to access the summer breakfast program, can contact the food bank through email (shelburnefoodbank@gmail.com), messaging on Facebook, or on their website(www.shelburnefoodbank.com).