



Food Bank Update



Welcome from the executive director

By **Sandy Singers**
Executive Director

Welcome to our first installment of Food Bank Update! We are so excited to be given this opportunity to share our stories and information by the good people at The Kingston Heritage. In this quarterly insert with your paper, you will find out about our many great donors, suppliers and volunteers and hopefully have a better understanding of our service to the community.

After operating for 31 years in the Kingston area we are pleased to bring you, our supporters, more detailed information about what we do and all the incredible people who help us do it. This format allows us to introduce you to the many generous businesses that have contributed to the food bank for many years. Without the help of these unsung heroes, we could not do what we do.

You will also meet some of our volunteers, some of whom have been with us for over 25 years. You will learn about them and

what inspires their commitment. We will also be able to share with you the many people, in groups and individually, who organise food drives and fundraisers on our behalf throughout the year and present a calendar for all of those wonderful events.

You would think that after 31 years, a solution would have come along to significantly reduce if not eliminate poverty. Sadly this is not the case. When Partners in Mission Food Bank opened its doors in 1984, it was thought at that time it would only be needed for a few years. No one could see then that the economy and government policies would only exacerbate poverty rather than address it head on. For those reasons the need for our service is as relevant today as it was back then and unfortunately demand for our service continues to rise.

Food banks are one of the best examples of a truly grass roots community based response to a social issue. The service was certainly started by the Religious

Hospitaliers of St. Joseph , but without the support of the community at large, we would have closed years ago.

We accept that we are a Band-Aid only addressing one symptom of poverty and the hampers we give out once a month will only last seven days, but we do know that the positive impact of that hamper is critical to people's lives.

You will learn in coming issues about the many ways that we work in the community beyond the hamper program and how we are improving the content of those hampers all the time. We are committed to providing high quality diverse foods to ensure that we are doing our part to provide the nutrients and compassion people need in their lives. We invite you to visit our website: www.kingstonfoodbank.net or like our facebook page: [kingstonfoodbank](https://www.facebook.com/kingstonfoodbank) , or follow us on twitter @FoodBankKtown.

We hope you enjoy learning about us and we thank you for your continued support.



Executive Director of the Partners in Mission Foodbank stands in front of the food bank building at 140 Hickson Avenue, Kingston.

Quick Stats

- In 2014, we served 6,549 people amounting to 11,734 hampers, our busiest year to date.
- 35% of those served were children under the age of 18.
- 14% of our clients were working yet still qualified for our service.
- The dollar value of the hampers distributed in 2014 was \$1,274,527.00.
- There was a 5.5% increase for demand over 2013 and a cumulative increase of 26% since the fall of 2008.
- We enrolled 683 new clients in 2014.
- 2,000 lbs of food are given out to clients each day valued at \$4,000.
- Over 53,132 lbs of food was shared with 22 local feeding agencies and Eastern Ontario food banks in 2014
- 321,409 lbs. was collected from local food suppliers and diverted from landfill.
- In partnership with the Inmates at Frontenac Institution, 60,000 lbs of fresh vegetables was grown for our clients on a two acre garden in 2014.
- 14% of our clients work
- 262,339 hampers have been distributed to date since 1986.

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Friends of the food bank

Twenty-six years ago, Susan Cooke saw a CBC documentary about homelessness and how quickly someone's situation can change for the worse. Struck with the urge to help, the next morning she got up and wrote a cheque out to the Partners in Mission Food Bank, beginning a long-standing relationship between it and her business, Cooke's Fine Foods and Coffee.

"From that point on we started sending anything we could off to the Food Bank," she says.

This can range from monetary donations to product that comes into the store in boxes that have been slightly damaged. More recently, Cooke's has also sold the Food Bank's charitable Christmas CDs and matched in donations all the money that was made from them at the store.

"One of the things that I realized from that original documentary I watched was that your next door neighbour could be going to the Food Bank and you don't know it," Cooke says... "I'm a firm believer that you have to help the people you're surrounded by because that's what keeps your own community going."



Grant Kirbyson is on a mission to ensure the Partners in Mission Food Bank gets the best bang for their buck when purchasing food from his grocery store, Grant's No Frills.

"I know what [they usually order] so if I see a good sale coming down the road I'll phone Tony and place the order," Kirbyson says. "When the order does come in I'm able to give him the best price I can."

Grant's is also the number one No Frills franchise in Canada when it comes to raising monetary donations for the Food Bank. Twice a year, No Frills across the country sell "smiles" to customers and all proceeds go back to Food Banks in the respective communities. He says giving his employees cash rewards as an incentives to sell the most smiles always helps push them to the top. In April, 2014, the store raised a total of \$10,000.

"My cashiers are really good at it," he says, explaining that he and Food Bank executive director Sandy Singers give a combined \$500 out of pocket in cash incentives.

"It's great to give back to the community because the community's good to me," he says. "A lot of people shop in my store and it's easy to do. I give them great deals and I do my part that way."



The Partners in Mission Food Bank and Pan Chancho have had a partnership for more than 20 years.

"It is fantastic and I love being able to help out," said Pan Chancho café and bakery owner Zoe Yanovsky. "We donate what the store doesn't sell and the excess that is produced. I am happy to be able to partner with a group that helps food go to mouths that need it."

Yanovsky's parents originally formed the partnership between the food bank and Pan Chancho and she chose to continue it. She sees it as a valuable contribution to the community.

"I'm not sure how big our contribution is, but we are contributing what we can," she said. "I know that the really hard work is done by Sandy and the staff of the food bank, but we try to do our part too."

Yanovsky hopes that other businesses and organizations feel the same way too.

"Perhaps if we all contribute it will make a larger impact on the community," she said. "Our partnership has been so easy and I am so happy to be able to partner with a group that helps food go to mouths that need it."



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Frontenac Institution farms for the food bank

For the past 16 years the Frontenac Institution and the Partners in Mission food bank have been working together to produce fresh fruits and vegetables. The contributions started off small, but in the past few years more and more land and resources have been dedicated to the project; last year, the Food Bank received 48,000 pounds of produce from the garden.

"When the prison farm closed down they got a larger section of about half an acre to plant and then two years ago it increased to two acres," explained Sandy Singers, executive director for the Partners in Mission Food Bank in Kingston. "At that point the production ramped up and the Food Bank started to buy seed for them and the Institution

purchased a greenhouse too."

Now, the inmates who work in the garden grow all the seedlings from seed and plant everything by hand. Some have worked the garden since its inception and each year a dozen more help out with the project.

"The community garden is a place where inmates can give back to the community through their hard work and dedication by growing vegetables for the local food bank," said Philomena McClelland, a representative from the project. "The inmates that participate in this program are doing what they can to help the less fortunate and get immense satisfaction from giving back to their community."

The contributions are very well-



received by the Food Bank and each year fresh items like zucchinis, tomatoes and squash make their way to those in need because of the project.

"It is really beautiful produce and there is always a lot of it," said Singers. "We've had people grow a row for us in community gardens over the years or individuals plant things in their garden for us, but this is on a much larger scale and the volume we receive is unbelievable."

This year the garden received a new load of soil that was generously donated by Pyke Farms and the workers in the garden hope to produce even more food than last year.

"We hope they do too," said Singers. "It has been a great partnership and we are hopeful that it will continue."



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