



Food for Thought !

Eden Food Bank

Quarterly Newsletter, December, 2005

www.edenfoodbank.org



Dave's Corner.

With a bit of luck and a lot of hard work, we hope to get this newsletter to the majority of the regular readers just before the Christmas season descends upon us.

Many of our clients at the food bank use us because things get tough from time to time, and it is likely that this Holiday season presents more challenges than usual for these people. Therefore, on behalf of the members of the Board of Directors at Eden Food Bank, and our 80+ volunteers, I want you all to know that we are thinking of you and wish you all the best for the Season, and the hope that the New Year will bring better fortunes for you and your families.

There are too many names to even considering singling out everyone who has helped us this year, which in many respects has been a "year of change" at Eden Food Bank, but I could not let this time pass without thanking every single person who has helped us in achieving many of our ambitious goals in 2005.

Fund raising was "Job #1" this year, and through the wonderful efforts of a lot of people, we managed to meet our target for 2005 – a year when most other organizations were experiencing a dramatic drop in funding. More details of the specifics of our fundraising can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter, but I would like to take the opportunity, to especially thank the folks who worked so diligently to organize and perform in the "Share the Harvest" concert in No-

vember. Beth Barnes and her committee did a stupendous job, and our gratitude goes to them, and the "Edenfolk" group who spearheaded this initiative and co-ordinated the guest performers.

Who would have ever thought that a fund raiser based on the simple "Toonie" could be such a wonderful source of (hopefully continuing) income for Eden Food Bank. Our thanks, to Donna Behmer who came up with the original concept. You, too, can use the Toonie Tuesday concept to continue to raise funds for us.

As you will see later in this Newsletter, the Schools in our area raised over \$14,000 through the Toonie Tuesday campaign. According to Ester O'Toole, our VP, and a Separate School Trustee, this is the first time that the two school boards have joined forces for a common goal outside of school activities. Those children who were able to do so, were asked to donate a Toonie to help support families and neighbours in our community. From the results, it is clear that just one Toonie does make a difference.

The benefits of these events goes far beyond the money raised. The exposure of participants, donors and media helps spread the idea that there is help for those who need it, and together, hunger can be beaten in our community.

In closing, let me just repeat my thanks to everyone who has worked with Eden Food Bank in 2005, and wish all of you, especially our clients, a very Happy Holiday, and good times in 2006.

Food Bank Use is on the Rise

The Canadian Association of Food Banks reported recently (Nov 23 2005), that while the actual number of people using food banks is almost unchanged, the outlook is grim.

According to Charles Seiden, executive director of the association, this is essentially due to the rise in the cost of living (especially the cost of energy) which he foresees will cause the situation to worsen this winter.

Bear in mind that Seiden is talking about the overall picture for Canada, and the situation in our area of responsibility, while similar, will not necessarily be the same.

According to Seiden's report, 823,856 Canadians, including 300,000 children, visited food banks in March - the latest month for which the CAFB has data. He also stated that overall, food bank usage in Canada is up 24% from 1997, and a whopping 118% from 1989. In Ontario, the number of users has risen by 21.5% overall since 2001.

His demographics indicate that just more than half of food bank users are on social assistance, while more than one in eight is employed in low-wage, part-time jobs with no benefits and little income security.

“Hunger is seen as a symptom of a much broader poverty problem, including that of the working poor”, says Wayne Hellquist, chair of the CAFB. In 2001, it would have cost \$18.6 billion to bring every Canadian up to the poverty line. Nearly 40% of all food banks report that they have difficulty meeting the demand for food.

Across the GTA, 43% of food bank clients are children — a jump of 11.7% since last year — and 14.5% of clients are employed.

There are more working poor, more children, more new Canadians and more families using food banks in Ontario. We live in the most prosperous province, in one of the most economically powerful nations in the world, yet tens of thousands of Ontarians struggle every month to feed their families.

University Students get Hungry, too!!

If you have children at University, you will recognize that the cost of tuition, books, meals and transit, are all increasing. Believe it or not, there are students at the University of Toronto at Mississauga (formerly Erindale College) who simply cannot afford to buy food.



(University of Toronto at Mississauga)

So, the Student Council has started its own on-campus food bank, which is being supplied by FoodPath every week. They are starting out small, aiming to serve 50 students per week, who cannot make ends meet while attending school. (The downtown campus of the U of T caters for nearly 200 students per week).

Apparently, students who are signed up for the programme can stop by every two or three days to pick up such items as milk, bread, eggs, meat, vegetables and canned goods.

Quotes & Quips

“Where there is charity and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance”
St. Francis of Assisi, 1225

We Are Needed!!

It seems that the number of people we serve continues to increase monthly. The number of families we served in September was 254, making it the highest monthly demand this year, and 20 more than the month before. Making up those families were 781 people, comprised of 414 adults, 327 children and 40 babies.

The month of October saw us distribute 8230 kg of food. I don't know about you, but I simply cannot imagine what 8230 kg of food looks like, but after a little bit of digging, I managed to find out that it is equivalent in weight, to that of seven fully equipped Ford Focus cars.

That is a lot of food!!

Donations are Increasing

In the month of September, we were fortunate to receive some wonderful cash donations from individuals and from groups, and all of these were eligible for the Kraft Hunger Challenge, through which Kraft Foods matched donations, thereby doubling the amount of money we have to spend on food to re-stock our shelves. Privacy concerns prevent us from naming the people and organizations who made these generous donations of cash, but you know who you are, and you also know that we truly appreciate your generosity and kindness. Individual donations have ranged from \$2 (through the Toonie campaign), to as high as \$1000 from one local couple.

We kicked off our Toonie Tuesday campaign in local schools, with a breakfast at which 20+ people were present,

including many School Board members, Principals and staff from the schools within our area of responsibility.



All present went away with a large water jug in which to collect the Toonies, and promotional material about Eden Food Bank.

Children at the schools were encouraged to drop a Toonie in the jug at their school. In some cases when it came time for us to collect the jugs and count to money, it took two people to carry the jug out to the car!!



Considerable manpower was needed to count, roll and record the amount of money in those jars.

At the time of writing this newsletter, we still have Toonies coming in, but to date, our collections from the schools in our catchment area comes to over \$14,190, with more than \$2550 of that coming from just one school.

We are grateful for everyone's involvement in this project, and for the way everyone got behind to concept, and helped to put us in a position to assist more of those in our area who are in need of food once in a while.

If you want to help us by running a Toonie Tuesday fundraising event at your place of work, whether you have a small business, or you work for a multi-million dollar operation, just e-mail us at info@edenfoodbank.org, and we will have someone get in touch really soon.

Food, Glorious Food!

Food donations have also been coming in nicely, and according to Anne Green and Donna Behmer, our operations managers, the Erin Mills Farmers' Market was kind to us all summer. Between June and the end of October, we received about 6,000 kg of food from Ralph Lise, Jeff McNiece, and Valerie and William Blyleven. Food drives conducted by the Rotary Club, various Companies in the area, a Scout troop, a number of schools, brought in some wonderful supplies with which to stock the shelves in the pre-Christmas period.

In one unique, and enterprising move, a couple challenged the congregation of their Church to bring in food, and the Church agreed to match the donations with \$1 per pound of donated food. Eden Food Bank came out the winner, with a donation of \$700 and nearly 700 lb of food. Thanks for this initiative.

Anyone want to make this into a challenge?

In the words of the old song, "Anything you can do, I can do better!". Incidentally, not that any of my readers probably care, but that song came from Irving Berlin's "Annie get your gun" (book by Herbert and Dorothy Fields), which opened on Broadway in 1946 starring Ethel Merman in the leading role of Annie Oakley – a role she reprised at the Lincoln Center in 1966. Betty Hutton played the role in the 1950 movie version, and a 1999 Broadway revival showcased Bernadette Peters, who probably stands as the prettiest and sexiest Annie to date, not to mention probably the greatest singer of the bunch.

But, enough of my digressions, let's get back to Eden Food Bank business., but stay with music.

SHARE THE HARVEST

Our Neighbourhood Music Café must rank as an outstanding success. The evening, which was planned by a Committee comprising Beth Barnes, Kathy Beard, Kenn Hughes, Kim Alderman and members of the EFB Board of Directors, went off without any obvious hitches. The sound was "spot on"

thanks to Bob Hill, Darlene Gow was the efficient Stage Manager for the evening, and John Cumming was MC for the performance.

Lorraine Fisset and Kathy Graham were responsible for decorating, and they are to be congratulated, while a team headed by Mary Lou Ling and Clara Fernandes kept the food and drink flowing at the appropriate times.

Dave Pratt and Anne Green were interviewed by Cable 10, and together with a powerpoint presentation organized by Kenn and Denise Hughes and Julie LeBreton, we were able to make more people in the community aware of who we are and why we are needed.



The entertainment was provided by Thomas Street Middle School's Chamber Choir, (directed by Carol Anderson), and Kathy and Colin Bales, Edenfolk, and Rivers Edge.

Before the show, and during the intermission, a Silent Auction was held, and sometimes it was difficult to get to the front of the line to sign the sheet to make a bid for one's favourite items, such was the popularity of this part of the proceedings.



All in all, after the dust had settled, and the accounts were all closed, Eden Food Bank provided a full evening of entertainment, fed a full house of guests and some 90 entertainers, and earned a little

over \$6,000 for the evening.

Thank you to all those of you who helped get us to that total. If you missed the event, keep your eyes open for the next one. I venture to suggest that now that this team (and what a TEAM!!) has learned how to do it, they will have to prove it was not luck, by being persuaded to repeat their success. Well done to all concerned.



These are Christmas cards dating from the 1940's (on the left) and 1880's, (below right).

We are striving, as hard as we can, to get this letter out to you before Christmas, and if we are successful in this endeavour, the following might be of some interest, in the section we normally reserve for the:-

Recipe of the month

Of all the popular Christmas traditions which seems to hang on despite the pressures of modern living, is the mince pie. In my family, we have a custom that with the first bite into the first mince pie of the season, you must make a wish. (As a child, my wish always was that my Mother would make many more mince pies!). After that, you must try to eat at least one for every day of the twelve days of Christmas, which will then bring you good fortune for the twelve months until next Christmas.

Another old custom associated with mince pies, is that you should offer, and



accept, a mince pie in each house you visit over Christmas. Not to offer these is bad manners, and was at one time thought to be so inhospitable as to bring bad luck on the house for the rest of the year. To refuse them, was to turn away good fortune.

My Mother always made her own mince meat, and actually used a variety of recipes including a 16th century recipe using real meat. However, my favourite is an old family "sweet meats" recipe as follows. Note: you can adjust the quantities according to your requirements, but this recipe makes about 15 lb.

- 1 lb sultanas
- 1 lb raisins
- ½ lb currants
- Peel and juice of 2 plump lemons
- 2 baking apples, grated or finely chopped and mixed with
- 1 lb of Demerara sugar
- About 12 finely chopped dried figs
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp each of ground ginger, nutmeg, and mace
- 1 cup of Brandy (or more, to taste!)

Mix all together, and put in a preferably large stone crock with a cork bung, or (as a last report) in the usual jamming jars, such as Kilner or Mason jars

Make about three months before Christmas and allow it to mature before use.

Make a short pastry using half fat to flour, rub in and roll out as for pies, then take a pastry cutter about 2 ½ " in diameter, cut out rounds and put them into pie tins. Place a spoonful of the matured mincemeat into each pie, and cover with a pastry lid. Cut two small slashes in the top, brush with egg and milk mix, and bake until lightly golden.

You can actually make these up to 10 weeks ahead and freeze them. Thaw and re-heat before eating. Dust with icing sugar before serving.

In case you are in need...

We have volunteer advocates to help anyone needing advice or information. Client's needs are always kept in strict

confidence. Advocates refer clients to agencies or groups that could help them become less dependent on the food bank.

This includes but is not exclusive to: youth shelters; women's halfway housing; aids information; legal help; distress lines; immigration support groups; basic nutrition for infants and children and education programs.

Many clients have already taken advantage of the free courses offered at the Peel Adult Education Centre, such as skills training and English as a second language. They realize the need for improving their skills in this highly technological and competitive market place.

Want to donate on-line?

If you want to help support us, but want to do it without leaving the comfort of your house, consider using CanadaHelps. For complete information, please take a moment to go to our website at www.edenfoodbank.org, and on the left hand side, click on "Donate Now".

CanadaHelps is a registered charity created to accept online donations for many charities, including Eden Food Bank.

You can find all the information you might need on their web-site, and there is a comprehensive FAQ section which will serve to explain how they operate, and how to use their service.

Whether you use CanadaHelps, or donate some other way, your assistance is always very much appreciated.



As the Christmas season is now upon us, we would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of our clients, to thank you for

your often intangible gifts of time, kindness, dedication, support, and encouragement, without all of which, we would not be able to offer the services which we do our best to provide.



This is our gift to you, our readers, as we say to you:

May all that you give and share with others, return in kind to embrace you during this Festive Season, and Always.

Personnel

Operations Managers :

- Anne Green
- Donna Behmer

Executive:

- Dave Pratt, President
- Esther O'Toole, Vice-President
- Gayle Morais, Treasurer
- Pat Bardon, Secretary

Board Members:

- Bill Crawford,
- Mary Lou Ling

Newsletter

Written, assembled, edited and published by Michael Burgoyne, with contributions this month from too many people to mention, to all of whom, we offer our many thanks.

.....and so, here's to the next time!