



# Food for Thought !

# Eden Food Bank

Quarterly Newsletter, July, 2006

[www.edenfoodbank.org](http://www.edenfoodbank.org)



The second Tuesday of June was **National Hunger Awareness Day**. This day was created in 2002 to serve as a platform to raise awareness about hunger in

our world and this year we utilized this campaign as our focus to educate people about the needs right here in our community. We hosted display displays at both Wal-Mart and the Erin Mills Town Centre where we were able to chat with the thousands of people who passed by, and many provided financial donations to help our work. We were thrilled by the many local businesses who hosted events at their workplaces. Special thanks go to **Bill Bates** (our Vice President) and Donna Behmer (Fund Raising Operations Manager) for co-coordinating the multitude of tasks and people who supported these efforts.

Most people are shocked to learn that there is the need for a **food-bank in our community**, let alone that we provided **7,729 kg** of food to **787 people** in just the month of June, 2006. Recent results published from the Daily Bread Food Bank's annual survey of "who's hungry" include the following key statistics for Peel/Halton:

- **49% of foodbank clients are children**
- 38% of households relying on food banks and caring for children are prevented from working due to the cost of, and / or a lack of access to daycare.
- The median household income per month is \$1,160.
- 67% of income is spent on rent (anything above 50% places someone at risk of homelessness).
- 41% of those surveyed say they have a disability or serious illness.
- 55% of households with expectations of employment have at least one person working (39% of all households)
- 23% of clients have graduated from college/university and 2% have earned post-graduate degrees.
- 40% of adults and 20% of children go hungry at least once a week.

There is no stereotype of a food-bank client - any of us could be affected. The scope of the need is frightening. Thank you to everyone who has supported our initiatives by volunteering their time, donating food and providing much needed financial donations.

**Your support does make a difference.**

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## And the Oscars go to....

As our President said in his lead-off article this issue, we have been very busy, of late, with fundraising etc, and in this issue, as you will see, we have a whole bunch of photographs showing some of the people who were able to assist in generating donations of food and cash (both being much appreciated).

Hunger Awareness Day was recognized by many Corporations in our area, by way of barbecues, dress down days, fund raising, displays (with donation boxes), various events all geared to awareness and donations.

Included in the list of Companies working with us, were the following:

Bosch, Golder Associates, Mattel, Abbott Canada, DuPont, Sysco Foods, General Electric, Remax Realty, Excel Software, BioVail, Ciba Vision, Wal-Mart, and Fenix Data Systems.

We also had booths in the Wal-Mart store, and at Erin Mills Town Centre.

Dennis and Stephanie Devey organized a "Hoops for Hunger" event which attracted 67 participants each of whom paid \$2 to Eden Food Bank to enter, and also donated a whole bin full of food.



Picking out names of the people in the above photographs, would be kind of difficult, but somewhere in the above, you will find Bill Bates and Donna Behmer from EFB, Lily Wu from Sysco Foods, Sean Holomego from Wal-Mart, Verna Pelletier, Carol Landry, Carol Doyon and Charles Speranza from Abbott Canada, along with a whole bunch of other people who were so generous with their time and donations.

I hope I have not mangled your names TOO much!

Thanks to everyone who played any part in these events, and my apologies if lack of space did not allow me to get YOUR picture into this issue.

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### Here we Grow Again!

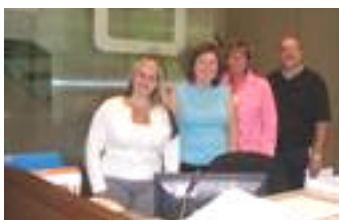
In the past few issues, we have reported how our numbers have changed, and this information has been well received. So, let me bring you up to date. In the last three months for which I have data available, this is how we have grown:-

People served	Apr '06	May '06	June '06
Adults	370	395	425
Children	275	289	304
Babies	56	58	58
Families	221	237	261

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### More corporate help.....

We are pleased to be able to acknowledge regular donations of desserts from Starbucks at Winston Churchill and Argentia, pizza from Little Caesars at 10th Line and Eglington, and fresh fruit from Edible Arrangements at 63 Queen Street South in Streetsville.



## A Message From Operations Mgr, Anne Greene, .....

We have had a very busy spring at Eden Food Bank.

Most importantly, we had a **Volunteer Appreciation** evening to honour the more than 100 volunteers who have helped with the running of the food bank over the past year. Although only 38 people were able to come out on April 24<sup>th</sup> to enjoy each other's company in a relaxed atmosphere, we want all our volunteers to know that they are truly our greatest asset. Certainly there would be no food bank were it not for the dedication of many, many people who give so generously of their time. Some manage to contribute many hours of hard work, others just a few, but all the efforts are much appreciated.

We wish to express our thanks to everyone who picks up food, who serves on our board of directors, who helps with fundraising and publicity, sends out thank-you notes, edits the newsletter and those who come in to sort food. We especially want to thank those wonderful volunteers who come each Monday or Thursday to help with the actual running of the food bank: front desk people, advocates, portioners, servers, stockers, carriers, fresh food people and coordinators. If it were not for the fact that everyone does their part, big or small, the food bank could not function. Lorraine Fiset and Susan Wood, two of our regular Monday volunteers, deserve a special thank-you for helping to make the decor and food so inviting and for very efficiently tidying up during the AGM that followed the social time.

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, we were once again invited to take part in the **Region of Peel Environment Day**. People, from the community, who bring a donation to the food bank, receive two bags of composted soil in return. As usual, we had a very enjoyable day and would like to thank the Region for the opportunity to bring in 847 kilograms of food as well as \$498. A big thanks goes to

everyone who participated - donors and volunteers.

Further thanks go to Eden United Church which donated close to \$1000 to the food bank. That, as well as the space they allow us to use (and sometimes over-use!) and the help of their staff, is invaluable.

Eden's Choir Director, Bob Anderson was also a great help to us in our fundraising efforts by dedicating the proceeds of two wonderful concerts to the food bank. Wearing one hat, (that of music teacher at Cawthra Park Secondary School), he brought us a wonderful evening of music with all the school choirs. Wearing his other hat, Bob brought many church choirs together to perform in the annual "Massed Choir" Event. Thanks to Bob and the (literally) hundreds of very talented people who performed in these events and helped to bring the food bank several shopping carts full of food and over \$1200.

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## Yes, We Have No Bananas....

This song was a great hit in 1923, selling at the rate of 25,000 copies of sheet music every day.

Are they good for you? Well, you decide. They contain about 110 calories, and are high in potassium, fibre and vitamin C.

We eat, on average, 75 bananas per person, per year. Technically, bananas are berries, and there are hundreds of varieties worldwide. The most common in Canada is the Cavendish banana, which was developed for its size, flavour and, most importantly, it's resistance to diseases.

Have you ever come across these (mostly forgotten) banana products?

Banana wine, banana flour (cheaper than wheat flour), banana ketchup (yuck), banana pickles (which contain no bananas!!), and banana vinegar. I kid you not.

Bananas should not be stored in the refrigerator, but allowed to ripen at room temperature; always keep them separate from other fruits

(particularly apples) since they both tend to ripen much more quickly when put in the same fruit bowl.

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## New Research on Health

This may not come as a complete surprise to most people, but recent research at the University of Toronto has brought to light the huge impact which social policies can have on the health of Canadians.

Insufficient income is strongly linked to poor health, for a number of reasons, and a key component is the way in which some foods are currently priced.

Take, for example, the fact the three apples can be bought for \$1.85, while three boxes of macaroni and cheese costs \$1.65 or less, depending where you shop.

Sugary, fatty foods, are the cheapest way to fill our kitchen cupboards, while nutritious foods such as fruit, vegetables and dairy products are very often out of the reach, and unaffordable to those living near or at the poverty line. Thus, many low-income families end up with low-quality diets, even though they might know very well how the nutritional values of various foods can differ. This can, and often does, directly increase the risk of serious health problems, not least among these, diabetes and heart disease, thereby putting an increasing strain on the already over-taxed health care system.

According to Toronto Public Health, the cost of nutritious food has risen dramatically in the last decade. However, in sharp contrast, social assistance rates have decreased by 40% (after allowing for inflation) in the past decade.

A little-known provision of the welfare regulations, (the "special diet allowance"), *until recently*, helped to take care of this huge discrepancy by allowing doctors to authorize a monetary supplement if they felt a patient required a 'special diet'. Last year, several doctors, together with the Ontario Coalition

Against Poverty, held large clinics aimed at signing up huge numbers of people for this supplement.

Unfortunately, the Ontario Government seemed to disapprove of the resultant increased use of the supplement, and so they made drastic changes in October 2005. Under the modified rules, a social assistance recipient must have one of a limited list of medical conditions, meaning that fewer people can now qualify. This smacks of saving a few bucks today, at the expense of increasing health costs later.

Patients interviewed for the research programme reported that with the special diet allowance, they were able to purchase more nutritious foods, especially fresh fruit, vegetables and dairy products, and their use of food banks decreased. They also reported feeling significantly healthier and less worried about food security.

If the government doesn't want to give out cheques so that those in need can buy healthier food, it might seriously consider funding the various food banks to give them (us?) the wherewithal to go out and purchase fresh fruit and vegetables for our clients.

Wouldn't it be nice if apples were cheaper than macaroni and cheese?  
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### Tony's Corner....

Tony Hill has offered to write an article for us, and this is his first message. Read on:

I was shocked to see in a sheet of statistics that 75% of clients of the Food Bank think that they should be eating meat (and 60% of clients think that they should be getting milk products) for their health and well-being, but cannot afford them. The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) says:

*"World-renowned figures as diverse as philosophers Plato and Nietzsche, political leaders Benjamin Franklin and Gandhi, and pop icons Paul McCartney and Bob Marley have all advocated a vegetarian*

*diet. Science is also on the side of vegetarianism. Multitudes of studies have demonstrated the remarkable health benefits of a vegetarian diet.*

*Vegetarian diets, which contain no meat (beef, pork, poultry, or fish and shellfish), are naturally low in saturated fat, high in fibre, and full of vitamins, minerals, and some cancer-fighting compounds.*

*A multitude of scientific studies have shown that vegetarian diets have remarkable health benefits and can help prevent certain diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. We encourage vegetarian diets as a way of improving general health and preventing diet-related illnesses.*

*Vegan diets, which contain no animal products (meat, dairy, eggs, or other animal products), are even healthier than vegetarian diets. Vegan diets contain no cholesterol and even less fat, saturated fat, and calories than vegetarian diets because they exclude dairy and eggs. Scientific research shows that health benefits increase as the amount of food from animal sources in the diet decreases, making vegan diets the healthiest overall.*

Tony has volunteered to periodically write an article for this newsletter. In the meantime, if you have access to the Internet, Tony recommends you visit the PCRM site, at <http://www.pcrm.org/>.

Look out for more in Tony's Corner in future issues.

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### Trillium Foundation

We would not be able to do many of the things we are presently undertaking, were it not for the assistance we get from the Trillium Foundation.



Our continued thanks to the **Ontario Trillium Foundation** for their two year investment to facilitate our hiring of staff to manage the daily operations of the food bank .

The Ontario Trillium Foundation annually receives \$100 million of government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative. The Foundation allocates grants to eligible charitable and not-for-profit organizations in several sectors, and this includes Eden Food Bank.

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### ESL for Beginners.....

I know that several of the Food Bank clients are now taking, or have in the past taken, courses in "English as a Second Language". I am not sure how much emphasis is normally placed on correct punctuation in such courses, but a friend of mine who teaches such classes recently told me of an experience she had with a homework assignment.

She had asked the class to punctuate the following:

**"A woman without her man is nothing".**

When she checked the homework later, she found that the majority of the men in the class had written: **"A woman, without her man, is nothing"**, whereas the women had written **"A woman: without her, man is nothing"**.

Oh, what a complicated language we have!!

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Well, that's another newsletter put to bed. I would just like to take a moment to thank, once again, anyone and everyone who had anything to do with our fundraising efforts recently, and on a more personal level, to thank the various contributors to this issue.

**- So, here's to the next time!**

Please note: The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the various contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of Eden Food Bank.