

EDEN COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

NEWSLETTER

July 1, 2008

More words of wisdom from Bill



A lot of exciting and wonderful things have happened in the months since our last newsletter but the most exciting has to be the offer of offsite storage space. This is something we have dreamed about for many years and now it looks like it will come to fruition.

A local company, located nearby in Streetsville named Torchfire, has offered us about 600 square feet of their warehouse complete with racking. The length of our stay there may be from one up to four years so it means we can now have some guarantee of space for a fixed period.

This could not have come at a better time as we are obligated to empty our present storage area in a local school within two weeks. It is a dream come true for Eden.

We had a very successful tag day at Wal-Mart this year, bringing in \$6,500.00. A big thanks to Wal-Mart, who gives so generously, and to all the volunteers who worked so hard to get those donations.

Stephen Lewis Secondary School did a project on Eden Community Food Bank and their entry was selected by their school as the best. As a result they were able to get a \$5,000.00 donation from the Toskan-Casale Foundation payable to us. It was an exciting afternoon with one million dollars in cheques from the foundation being presented to over 130 schools from across Canada. It was an amazing thing to be part of with over 700 cheering kids giving cheques to charities within their communities. As well Premier Dalton McGuinty spoke and there was marvelous entertainment. See inside for more information.

Last week we did our second annual hunger awareness event at the church and it was a great success. It was a moving occasion that brought tears and tugged at the heartstrings of all of the attendees. See article inside newsletter for more information.

Last month saw us celebrate in a different way - it was our volunteer appreciation evening. Preceded by our A.G.M., it honours all of our many volunteers. We have now standardized the awards recognizing 100, 250, 500, 1000 and 2,000 hours.

A new initiative at the food bank was the recent introduction of Halal meats to our Muslim clients. This is as a result of an ongoing donation and allows us to better serve our clients with foods geared to their dietary preferences.

After a day long meeting back in March on behalf of Foodpath, we are working with them to change the way that they will operate and partner with us and other food banks in Mississauga. The emerging model is to be a "hub and spoke" with Foodpath being the "hub" as a central collection, storage and distribution centre supplying to "spokes" such as Eden. It is presently in the planning stages but we hope it will help us to better supply our clients on an

ongoing basis. The goal for us is more and better food supplied uniformly.

On a more serious note, Easter was a bit of a disappointment for us this year in terms of food donations. With it being so early and so close to March break, we collected only a small fraction of what we normally expect at that time. A ray of sunshine was the “cram a cruiser” event just after that brought in over 2,000 kilos and meant that our shelves were not empty with summer approaching. We know that the summer months are lean ones for us –between holidays, almost no organized drives and traditional increased demand it can be hard to keep food flowing. This coupled with steadily rising food prices augers a challenging summer for us. We hope that our many supporters will keep us in mind for food donations over the summer.

Some of our other events since our last newsletter included “Cawthra Sings” a night of song featuring an amazing 180 voice choir. Patrons were asked to provide a donation of either cash or food and we collected 5 carts of food as well as over \$1,100.00 in cash. As well we had our third “Souper Bowl Sunday” and this year’s was the best yet. Many thanks to Beth Barnes for her help in pulling off this event.

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Here we grow again.

I have no way of knowing whether our readership is interested in these statistics, which I have put into every issue since I started writing this newsletter, but it is one way of keeping track of the increasing numbers of clients we serve every month. I suppose it could be said that ECFB would very much like to find themselves in a situation where our services are no longer needed because everyone can afford to feed their family without our assistance. Regrettably, this is not the case, and our services are being used more and more each month.

There are the occasional “blips” in the growth curve, such as the Christmas period, but the upward trend in the number of new families added to our files every month is quite alarming. So, to

our donors, supporters and volunteers, we again say a big “THANK YOU”.

People served	Jan '08	Feb '08	Mar '08	April '08	May '08
Adults	?	387	422	442	420
Children	?	301	314	337	327
Babies	?	32	26	38	40
Total people	762	721	762	817	787
Families	233	224	240	238	235
New Fam's	25	14	19	73	20

April had the largest number of new families added to our roster, in over a year.

While I am on the subject of statistics, a report published this week on the use of food banks in the GTA from April 2007 to March 2008, stated that the number of people served by food banks increased by 5% over the previous year. However, this number is likely understated, since not all food banks participated in the collection of data.

Single adults make up 47% of those using food banks last year, up from 37% last year.

50% of those adults are reported to be experiencing “persistent poverty”, having been reliant on food banks for over two years.

New immigrants represent 46% of food bank clients, though almost half of them have lived in Canada for about 10 years.

Children make up 34% of food bank users, down from 37% in 2003.

Think about it!!

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Officers and Committee Chairs.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors on May 6 2008, the following were elected as Officers:

- President**—Bill Bates
- Vice President**—Rakesh Gupta
- Treasurer**—Gayle Morais
- Secretary**—Karen Skyba

At the same meeting, the following Committee Chairs were appointed:

Marketing—Ron Saito

Advocacy—This position remains vacant, pending a knowledgeable person coming forward.

Fundraising—Donna Behmer is overseeing this position, but the chair remains vacant.

Foodpath Rep—Dave Pratt and Karen Skyba will sit on the steering committee

Eden United Church Rep—Dave Pratt.

If you wish to learn more about the vacant positions, please get in touch with Bill Bates through the ECFB e-mail address or telephone number, both published elsewhere in this newsletter.

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Toskan Casale Foundation

The Toskan Casale Foundation is committed to supporting and strengthening community-based grassroots organizations that, through their social programmes, reach out to at-risk people and provide them with immediate relief and long-term stability.

This Foundation reflects the passion and beliefs of its three Directors, Julie Toskan-Casale, Victor Casale and Frank Toskan, founders of MAC Cosmetics. Building on a tradition of innovative thinking, the Toskan Casale Foundation was launched in 2001.

After countless interviews with students at Stephen Lewis Secondary School, these students made a presentation to the Foundation on our Food Bank and were judges a winner, resulting in a cheque being presented to the students, for \$5,000, payable to ECFB.

Way to go, guys!! See the picture on Page 4.

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Hunger Awareness

ECFB Manager, Donna Behmer, sent me this note after the Hunger awareness breakfast:

“I would like to thank everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to attend our breakfast kick-off for National Hunger Awareness Day on June 5. This was a day to bring awareness and a

face to hunger here in Mississauga. I think that we accomplished that—there was not a dry eye in the place! I would like to send a special thank you to our clients who came out and told their stories, and to the students from Shelter Bay Public School and St. Joan of Assisi Secondary School who presented information on hunger in our community. Also, thank you to Meadowvale Tim Horton’s for a wonderful breakfast.””

The following speech was presented to the meeting and we thought these words from the heart would be of interest to those of you who were not at the meeting:

“Good morning everyone. I am not one for public speaking, so I hope that I get the point I am trying to make, across to you all.

I am 27 years old, married, with three children. A few years back, things were going pretty good for my husband and I, until my husband was seriously injured at work.

Since then, we’ve had our children, and we ran into some financial problems. Before I got pregnant with our third child, it got so bad that my husband and I would only eat once a day so that our children would be fed three times a day. I knew at this point that we needed help.

I tried to get some type of assistance to help us with food, but was denied. They suggested that I call local food banks in the area.

When I heard that, I thought that food banks were for the homeless, but to my surprise I was wrong. They are also for families like mine who need help getting by or help getting your feet back on the ground.

Eden was the first (and last) place I called. I came in, they listened to my situation and opened their arms like family. They helped me through my pregnancy and I owe them everything for that.

On that note I would like to say thank you to Eden for helping us through these hard times. I would also like to thank everyone who participates in helping families like mine. Thank you”

Space permitting, I will reprint another story in our next issue.

Karen Shank Foundation.

All proceeds from the Foundation's 3rd annual "Spike out Hunger" beach volleyball tournament in support of Hunger Awareness day, was for the benefit of Eden Community Food Bank and the UofT, Mississauga Campus food bank. This year's event raised over \$6500, and we plan to buy a freezer to match the restaurant-style refrigerator we purchased last year with our proceeds from the Karen Shank Foundation. Our thanks to the KS Foundation, and all their volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

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Credit Valley A.M Rotary Club

This Rotary Club held a Bowl-a-thon recently, in aid of Eden Community Food Bank and The Dam. As a result of this event, we have been advised that they raised around \$4000 for our food bank. This generous donation is much appreciated.

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Other Community Events

March and April were busy months in our community in terms of promoting and supporting ECFB.

Peel Regional Police, 11th Division, held a "Cram-a-Cruiser" event on March 1st, bringing in a record 2584.5 kg of food (The next "Cram-a-Cruiser" event was scheduled for June 14. No details yet).

Cawthra Park Secondary School held their annual "Cawthra Sings" concert of 300 voices joined in harmony, St. Joan of Arc Secondary School held their first ever arts and craft sale, Pace fitness at Derry and 10th Line held a promotion for free registration with a donation to ECFB, and Oscar Peterson Public School held a spring concert. In all of these events, admission was a voluntary donation to Eden Community Food Bank. Our sincere thanks to all of you.

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Our June "Needs List".

As of the present time, our list of items which are running low, include the following:

Flour, Rice, Cooking oil, Salt, Instant Coffee, Side Dishes, Dry soup, Baby Food (jars, powdered formula, and cereal), Diapers (size 2 and 4) Cereal, Oatmeal, Canned tomatoes, Canned

vegetables, Canned pasta, Canned fruit, Kraft Dinner, Cookies, Assorted Crackers, Baked Beans, Canned Juice and Juice Boxes, Personal needs (soap, toothpaste household cleaners, laundry soap etc).

If you can help, please contact a Committee member.

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Department of useless information...

I stayed in a hotel recently, and on the breakfast menu, was a statement which helped wake me up:-

"The brain is a wonderful thing - it starts working the minute you wake up, and doesn't stop again until you get to the office!!" HMMMMM!!

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Presentation at the Elgin Theatre, to students from Stephen Lewis Secondary, from the Toskan-Casale Foundation. Donna Behmer and Bill Bates in attendance

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Final thoughts for now...

With so much going on recently, I have no room left for some of our usual articles. Thanks to all of you for your support, but please do not stop now. With our client base growing, we need your help as much now as ever. Perhaps even more!!

Contact us by phone at 905-785-3561, or visit our web site at www.edenfoodbank.org for more information.

- So, here's to the next time!

Note: The opinions expressed here are those of the various contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Eden Community Food Bank.....