

## Report shows food bank use still at record highs – How does Peterborough measure up?



**Ottawa, November 5, 2013** - Too many Canadians are struggling just to put food on the table, and food bank use continues to hover at record levels according to HungerCount 2013, a national study released today by Food Banks Canada.

The report highlights that in a typical month, food banks in Canada now provide food to more than three quarters of a million separate individuals – 833,000 people – and nearly 4 in 10 of those helped are children.

"Far too many people are looking into an empty fridge and wondering how they're going to feed themselves and their kids," said Katharine Schmidt, Executive Director of Food Banks Canada, which coordinated the national study involving more than 4,000 food programs.

The HungerCount 2013 study found that:

- Each month, 80,000 Canadians are forced to ask for help from a food bank for the first time.
- Nearly 40,000 of those helped each month are seniors with incomes too meagre to afford enough food.
- 1 in 6 households assisted by food banks have employment income, yet still can't make ends meet.
- Canadian food banks now assist a population each month that is more than the population of New Brunswick

"The inability to obtain enough food, when it is abundant all around us, is physically and psychologically scarring," continued Schmidt. "It is simply unacceptable in a nation as prosperous as Canada. We are calling on the federal and provincial governments to make real investments in policies that will reduce the need for food banks."

The *HungerCount 2013* report provides policy recommendations that can make significant progress in reducing the number of people who need help from food banks. Recommendations include:

- **Increase access to affordable housing**, so that Canadians are not forced to choose between paying rent or buying food.
- **Increase investment in education and training for Canadians at risk of failing in the job market**, so that people can become self-sufficient through employment.
- **Invest in local food solutions in the North**, to help Northern Canadians build the capacity to feed themselves.
- **Revolutionize social assistance**, so people can build self-sufficiency instead of being trapped in poverty.

For a full copy of the *HungerCount 2013* report, [click here](#)

### **About the HungerCount Survey**

HungerCount was initiated in 1989, and is the only annual national research study of food banks and other food programs in Canada. Since 1997, data for the study have been collected every March. The information provided by the survey is invaluable, forming the basis of many Food Banks Canada activities throughout the year.

### **About Food Banks Canada**

Food Banks Canada supports a unique network of food-related organizations in every province and territory, which assists more than 800,000 Canadians each month. Together our network shares over 200 million pounds of essential, safe, quality food annually, provides social programs that help to foster self-sufficiency, and advocates for policy change that will help create a Canada where no one goes hungry. Visit [foodbankscanada.ca](http://foodbankscanada.ca) for more information.

### **Locally, here are the statistics that paint a picture of our local food bank culture:**

7724 Peterborough City and County residents were helped by food banks in March, 2013

Of those:

- 50.2% were women
- 40.8% were children under the age of 18
- 5.4% were 65 or older
- 8% were aboriginal

39.2% were families with children (either single-parent or 2 parent)

46.8% were single people

47.7% were on social assistance

30.5% had disability related income support

10.6% had job income

5.3% were homeowners

1% were living on the street

2.1% were living in a shelter/group home

Although the number of people using food banks has decreased since 2012, it is still 20% higher than it was in 2008.

Please note the local Hunger Count does not include the number of children participating in school breakfast programs as we only count the number of meals served. According to Food For Kids our school breakfast programs feed 17,000 children daily.

Source: Kawartha Food Share, November 13, 2013

Trends found by Kawartha Food Share (KFS);

- There has been a steady increase in the use of food banks, which is reflected in the numerous amount of requests from Kawartha Food Share's agencies, and the subsequent monthly orders.
- KFS continues to share their surplus with nearby regional food banks, thereby building relationships that are necessary for food exchange.
- The distribution of fresh and frozen foods have shown to make a large difference in the quantity and quality that the consumers are now able to access.
- KFS distributes thousands of pounds of fresh and frozen produce and other frozen products on a weekly basis.
- Kawartha Food Share's ability to network surplus items has been crucial in order to receive offers of additional product; this has allowed Kawartha Food Share to provide a greater variety of food to their agencies.

Source: Kawartha Food Share annual report, 2013

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