

For Information

DATE: March 8, 2012

REPORT TITLE: **FOOD SECURITY IN PEEL**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide detailed information on food banks and food organizations in Peel, and provide a status update on the two major food distribution systems that developed since the close of the Food Distribution in Peel project: The Mississauga Food Bank and the Brampton Food Sharing Network.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 30 organizations in Peel are part of the charitable food sector, providing food to thousands of people each year and advocating for increased supports for people experiencing poverty.
- These diverse faith-based and non-profit organizations feed people in schools, neighbourhoods and community programs.
- All of the food programs rely significantly on contributions from corporations and individuals; some receive grants from funders such as the Region of Peel, United Way of Peel Region and Ontario Trillium Foundation.
- In 2011, Regional Council received a final report of the Food Distribution in Peel project which aimed to bring all of the stakeholders involved in the charitable food sector together to determine if it was feasible to increase the amount and quality of food in the system.
- A report entitled "A Peel Collaborative Project on Food Security" summarized the work of the project, identified challenges within the sector and highlighted several examples of other regional approaches to expanding food bank capacity.
- The Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee is in the process of creating a three-year strategy that will address four issues, one of which is food security.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

In Peel, food agencies are generally organized by local municipality. The largest organizations are part of a 'hub and spoke' model headed by The Mississauga Food Bank (TMFB) in Mississauga and the Salvation Army in Brampton. Both TMFB and the Salvation Army are the official members of the Ontario Association of Food Banks and receive food on behalf of their local members.

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In 2010, as part of its three-year strategic plan, TMFB implemented a new model of food distribution for its members in Mississauga. This new model means that TMFB no longer serves clients directly, but distributes food to seven food banks in Mississauga including Eden Community Food Bank (two locations), Seva Food Bank (an initiative of Sikhs Serving Canada), St. Mary's Food Bank (two locations), the Malton Food Bank and The Compass.

In 2011, the Salvation Army became the official hub for Brampton food organizations and through the Brampton Food Sharing Network they continue to build relationships and develop a plan to implement a full 'hub and spoke' model. Organizations in the Brampton system include: Knight's Table, Grace United Church, Mount Zion Apostolic Church, Ste Louise Outreach and the Islamic Forum of Canada. City of Brampton provides staff support to the Brampton Food Sharing Network. Apart from this formal network, many faith organizations such as Sikh Gurdwaras will provide meals at any time to any resident in need.

In Caledon, the largest organization providing food is Caledon Community Services and plans are under way to expand their current program into a full-time food bank. Other local initiatives include Eat Local Caledon sponsored by the Caledon Countryside Alliance.

Food organizations rely extensively on private donations from individuals and corporations for food and other products that they distribute. Additionally, many of the smaller and faith based organizations rely exclusively on volunteers. Larger organizations have a combination of paid staff and volunteers to run the programs. Funding for food banks in Peel comes primarily from three sources: Region of Peel, United Way of Peel Region and Ontario Trillium Foundation.

2. Peel's Food Sector Capacity

The report entitled "A Peel Collaborative Project on Food Security" which summarized the work of the food distribution project identified current need and capacity in Peel region. The project team undertook an assessment of agency capacity (# of clients served, pounds distributed), but noted that due to different methodologies used by agencies, the data collected may be inadequate to determine the need for future investments. The report found that:

- Based on the low-income cut-off measure (LICO), 167,000 people in Peel struggle to make ends meet; being below LICO puts someone at risk of struggling to meet their basic expenses;
- Fourteen Peel food agencies collectively touch an estimated 16 per cent of people in poverty (27,440 clients), providing them with an estimated 12.5 per cent of their annual need (3.3 million pounds food per year);
- These 14 agencies, and others like them, do a lot with a little: marshal hundreds of volunteers, manage food drives, and raise dollars, food and in-kind donations;
- Network members identified access to more food as their key challenge, however, key questions that remained at the end of the project include: how much food would satisfy the current and future needs of food agencies, how much can they accept, and how often.

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3. Other Regional Involvement in Food Security

Food agencies in Peel received funding through the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (\$717,501 over 3 years) and Community Grants program (\$128,636) for organizations such as Knight's Table in Brampton, St. Mary's Food Bank, Malton Food Bank, Eden Community Food Bank, The Mississauga Food Bank and Caledon Community Services. In addition, funding from the Neighbourhood Development Grant funded jointly by the Region of Peel and United Way of Peel Region is providing more than \$64,000 to fund six food programs throughout Peel region. Funding allows organizations to increase their capacity, expand programs and/or provide valuable programs that address food insecurity.

In addition to direct funding, the Region of Peel also plays a direct and indirect role in food security. Three examples are:

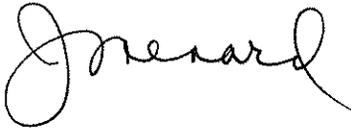
- a) **Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee:** Peel is a member of the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee (GTA AAC), a partnership involving the four regional municipalities, four Greater Toronto Area Federations of Agriculture (Halton, Peel, York and Durham); the City of Toronto, Toronto Food Policy Council Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the food sector.
- b) **Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers:** Regional Council supported Sarnia-Lambton MPP Bob Bailey's private members bill 78: Taxation Amendment Act, 2007 (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers). This bill called for farmers to get a non-refundable Ontario tax credit of 25 per cent of the wholesale value of food they redirect to food banks (Resolution 2011-250).
- c) **Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee:** As co-chair with the United Way of Peel Region, staff is working with the community on the development of a three-year poverty strategy. One of the core issues identified in the draft strategy is food security. Community-wide consultations are currently underway to gain consensus about the issues and determine actions that will address them.

As part of the Food Distribution in Peel project, members visited several Ontario based food organizations, including The Stop, Daily Bread Food Bank, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and Food for All in Northumberland. The visits were intended to create greater understanding of how communities address the need for emergency food, as well as how other food organizations build capacity and become sustainable. The experience showed that there is no one approach to creating, building and sustaining food organizations. Food for All in Northumberland, for example, received financial support for the purchase of a warehouse and ongoing operational costs from Northumberland County. In contrast, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region relies on diverse funding sources primarily from the private and non-profit sector.

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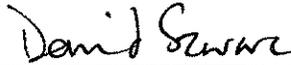
CONCLUSION

Food security continues to be of concern to residents and stakeholders and is an issue being addressed by multiple stakeholders through funding, advocacy, awareness and policy and direct delivery (see Appendix I). The forthcoming Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy will harness past collective experience and continue to engage all key players in the food sector to advocate for changes in food policies and ensure resources are aimed at those in greatest need. Staff will continue to monitor the emergency food sector's efforts to coordinate and collaborate, and where appropriate offer support.



Janet Menard
Commissioner of Human Services

Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact Lisa Duarte at extension 4862 or via email at lisa.duarte@peelregion.ca

Authored By: Adaoma Patterson

c. Legislative Services

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APPENDIX I

Food Distribution in Peel Network

Ontario Association of Food Banks	Ed Borkowski
Knight's Table	Annie Bynoe
Deacon's Cupboard	Belinda Morrow/ Linda Leeder
Eden Community Food Bank	Bill Crawford
Mississauga Fruit Tree	Carlton Allen
EcoSource	Carolyn Bailey /Sarah Fairley
Ste. Louise Food Bank	Catherine Rivera
The Mississauga Food Bank	Chris Hatch
John Howard Society	Kathryn Lynch
St. Jerome's Parish	
Grace Mount Zion Food Bank	Edris Thomas
Grace United Church	Eugenie Dover/Erika Friesen
The Salvation Army Brampton	David Rennie
Islamic Forum of Canada	Hafiza Hosein & Azam Hosein
Malton Network/ Holy Cross Breakfast Club	Helene Burrowes
Grace Place/Feeding the People	Jean Leckie
Caledon Community Services	Jo Anna Lenz
Feeding the People	Joe Crump
St. Paul's United Church	Kent Ward
Salvation Army Brampton Citadel	Kathie Sharp
Redemption- Food Kitchen Pantry	Lynda Arthey
Square One Farmers Market/Lion Club	Manuel Castellino
Regeneration	Ted Brown
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church	Maureen Kelly
Mount Zion Church	Mrs. Patterson/Mrs. Hamilton
St. Mary's Food Bank	
Harvest Community Services	Papillon McFarlane
Malton Food Bank	Rukhsana Asghar
Breakfast for Kids/Boys and Girls and Club	Debbie Smith
Hope Centre	Tony Papisidero
Society of St. Vincent de Paul	William Graham /Shirley Graham
Supportive Housing In Peel	Naima Adan Ismael
St. Anne Food Assistance	Jacqueline Regan
City of Brampton	Lindy Greenhall
Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group	

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