

Thank You and Reflections from the Executive Director

Dear friends:

We hope that this newsletter finds you in good spirit enjoying the longer days of spring.

Our goal with our **GLEANINGS newsletter** is to update you on the work of Edmonton's Food Bank. Gleanings is distributed three times per year to our supporters. In January, we launched our new website which was developed and donated by Lift. The new website is updated on a regular basis with events, information and issues related to our organization and work. Our website is www.edmontonsfoodbank.com.

Because of your support, the following are some of the many milestones achieved by Edmonton's Food Bank in 2011:

- ❖ Food was distributed to over **190 agencies, churches and food depots**.
- ❖ A depot distributes food hampers to anyone in need in a specific geographical area. There are currently **40 depots** affiliated with Edmonton's Food Bank. *(In 2008, there were 32 depots affiliated with Edmonton's Food Bank).*
- ❖ Over **3.1 million kilograms** was collected, sorted, repackaged and distributed. *(It is estimated that Edmonton's Food Bank is collecting approximately \$17,000,000 worth of food each year).*
- ❖ Over **40,810 volunteer hours** were worked by committed supporters.
- ❖ **Provides warehouse space** to our provincial organization, the Alberta Food Bank Network Association. *(This relationship creates an opportunity to assist the work of other Food Banks across Alberta. We share resources, ideas and food to assist Albertans in need).*
- ❖ Continues to be a **teaching facility for Concordia University's Environmental Health Program**. *(Food safety for our clients is essential!)*
- ❖ Edmonton's Food Bank was honoured in December with a **Human Rights Award** by the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights.



Shami Sandhu
accepting Human Rights Award
on behalf of the Food Bank

Edmonton's Food Bank has been very fortunate to be supported by the wide range of committed volunteers, donors and other supporters. Your kind support and ongoing encouragement to reduce hunger in our community is appreciated.

Yours truly,

Marjorie Bencz, CM
Executive Director

**Thank you again!
Your Support is
Appreciated!**

HUNGER IS COMPLEX. The underlying reasons why an individual or family needs the services of the Food Bank can vary from household to household. Some people need access to educational opportunities in order that they can get a better paying job. For others, access to safe, affordable housing is a priority. Edmonton's Food Bank is pleased to work with over 190 agencies, churches and food depots in Edmonton. These affiliates are providing direct food services to people in need. Many of these affiliates provide hampers to low-income families. Others provide meals or snacks to the disadvantaged. Edmonton's Food Bank makes every effort to provide nutritional, quality food to these groups in order to reduce food insecurity. Many of our affiliates offer comprehensive or specialized services in the community. For example, some groups offer counselling, workshops, ESL lessons, mentorship programs or other programming to develop people's potential or to strengthen the community.



Have you ever been in any of these situations? Meet a few of our clients...

The Food Bank received a call from a young lady who had recently left an abusive relationship. She had a small child who she was very concerned for, but was nervous to phone the Food Bank because she had never used it before. With desperation in her voice, she said she had used all the money she had to escape from violence and find a safe place for her and her daughter. She was encouraged to come down to the main depot as soon as she could find a ride. When she arrived, a client services staff member met with her and discussed other resources available in the community. The young lady shared the experiences she was going through. At the end of their conversation, she graciously thanked the worker for spending a few minutes with her and was so relieved that the Food Bank was there to help her when she needed it the most.

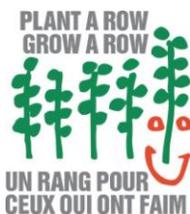


Your life can change in a split second. A female client called and shared with our Client Services Worker a story of heart break and confusion. Her husband, while returning home from work, was tragically killed in an accident leaving her and their four children. This left finances in a disarray and required the Food Bank to assist the family with food resources and support material. This was a very overwhelming time for our client and we were glad we could help this family through such a tragic time in their lives!

so with these in mind, remember...

HUNGER AWARENESS WEEK is May 7-11, 2012. Please look for and support any events in Edmonton which support Edmonton's Food Bank. Our website will have more information posted at the end of April regarding **Hunger Awareness Week**.

Plant A Row Grow A Row (PARGAR)



The **Yellowhead Youth Centre (YYC)** is a residential treatment facility for youth at-risk, operated by Edmonton & Area Child & Family Services Region 6. The **Plant A Row Grow A Row (PARGAR)** project at **YYC** is more than just planting seeds in the ground. It is an opportunity for youth to be a part of a program that teaches cooperation and problem solving skills while increasing confidence and self-esteem. For our youth, it is also an opportunity to build hope, for if you can take care of a plant, you can see what the future brings.

YYC began its' involvement with the Edmonton Food Bank in the spring of 2007 when they began volunteering by making food hampers. The summer of 2008 was the first season they tended to the Edmonton Food Bank's community garden at the Muttart and 2011 marked the fourth year of this partnership. During the 2011 **PARGAR** project, 16 youth volunteered 67.5 hours of their time by planting, nurturing and harvesting which resulted in a total of 359.7 pounds of fresh produce which was delivered to the Food Bank.



The **PARGAR** project not only provides an opportunity for experiential learning, but also provides some young people a reason to get up in the morning. "It gives me a reason to get out of bed and not sleep in, something to do over summer," was a comment given by one of the young men who was a helpful volunteer who carried the potatoes when no one else could lift the bag. Another youth was excited to learn about gardening and brought his new knowledge and skills back to a garden at the Center to ensure it was successful. Other youth mentioned that they enjoyed helping out the Food Bank by providing fresh vegetables.



For all 16 youth involved, they worked hard and learned something new throughout the project, which is why the **PARGAR** project is more than just about planting seeds in the ground.

How about planting an **extra row of vegetables** for the Food Bank this year? For more information on **PARGAR** see www.edmontonsfoodbank.com or call **Special Events** at 780.425.2133.

HungerCount 2011

HungerCount is done on an annual basis each March. The results are released to the public in November. The following overview is from the most recent **HungerCount**.

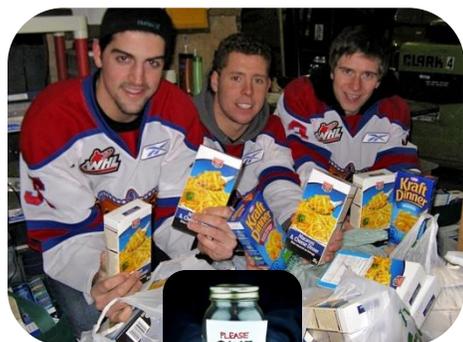
In Alberta in March 2011:

- ❖ Food bank use was **75% higher** than in 2008, before the start of the recent recession;
- ❖ The province experienced the **second highest level** of food bank use on record;
- ❖ 44% of those assisted were **children and youth**;
- ❖ 53% of households assisted were **families with children**;
- ❖ **1 in 3 households** helped had **income from current or recent employment**.



Are you in the mood for SPRING GLEANING yet?

If you wish to help us out by holding a **special event** and **need assistance in organizing** one and/or you need a **pick-up** or **delivery** of donation or cash boxes, please contact **Special Events** at **780.425.2133**.



Edmonton's Food Bank gleans, collects, repackages, stores, and redistributes food to over 190 agencies, churches and food depots.

Gleanings is published three times a year by Edmonton's Food Bank.

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