



20 Years of Volunteers!

Interesting Facts from 2008

Did you know ...

- ⇒ The Ottawa Food Bank does not distribute food directly to clients? How then does the food get to those that need it? Through member agencies of which the GEFC is one of 128.
- ⇒ The GEFC distributed food to **17,634 individuals in 2008**, 7,946 of which were children 18 and under. (44% of our clients were children).
- ⇒ 3.9% of our clients in 2008 are seniors on a fixed income - up from 2.9% in 2007.
- ⇒ We served 842 families from June - Dec. 2008.
- ⇒ We have calculated that we can feed one person for 4 days for about \$30 so that means that it cost \$529,020 to feed the numbers of people that came through our doors, much of that amount given in food and money donations.
- ⇒ We receive approximately 20% of our food from the Food Bank. Thanks to the generosity and loyalty of our volunteers and donors, approximately 80% of the items on our shelves are due to your efforts. Almost \$80,000 was received in cash donations in 2008.
- ⇒ We had a total of **134 volunteers in 2008 with a total of approximately 10,611 hours** invested directly into our program. That doesn't include the hundreds of volunteers who fundraise and do food drives on our behalf.

Bits and Bites

New, new, new

- * New carpet will be installed March 12, in the west half of the building.
- * We are once again, looking to hire a summer student and are in the process of securing funds from Canada Summer Jobs.
- * The new website is on track for an April reveal.

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting will be held Wednesday, **April 29 at 7 pm.**
Join us as we celebrate 20 years of volunteers!

City Grant

We have been approved again for 2009. It includes a 2% cost of living increase and an additional \$1330 from the Community Funding Framework.

Needed Items

We need:

- individual-sized plastic water bottles
- 1 cup glass jars
- plastic grocery bags.

Thanks for faithfully bringing in your empties.

Bon Voyage

To all our volunteers travelling to exotic and snow-free locations. Safe travels and return to us with photos and stories.

Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.

~James Matthew Barrie



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Bridging the Hunger Gap

We're on the web
www.gefc.ca

*The complete GEFC
history will be available
in booklet form in April
at the AGM.*



Chapter 7: Statistics Over The Years

When we opened the Food Cupboard, we fervently hoped that it would be a temporary move. 20 years later, we are no longer so optimistic. Whether it is good or bad, it seems to be a fact that food distribution programs are needed as much today as ever.

Children are among the most vulnerable. In spite of an all-party House of Commons resolution in 1989 to end child poverty by 2000, it is still with us. Canada is found at the bottom third among wealthy western nations when child poverty is measured and in 2008, 37.6% of Food Bank users, in Ontario, were children.

Who uses the food bank programs in Ottawa?

1. Recent immigrants to Ottawa find it very difficult to get established. Many have language issues which are a barrier to employment and while a large number have post secondary education, they frequently encounter difficulties or insurmountable financial barriers to having their training recognized in Canada. About two-thirds of recent immigrants to Ottawa are living in poverty. A fair percentage of our clients are fairly new immigrants to Canada.

2. Many of our clients rely on **social assistance or disability income**. The biggest problem is that the rates do not come close to the actual cost of living. Meanwhile, housing costs have continued to climb. The only way that many of our clients can obtain housing is to share it. And it is common for people to live temporarily with friends while they try to find housing. We also see a steady stream of people who are housed temporarily at the local motel. The housing problem is such in Ottawa that there are 15,000 households waiting for social housing and the average wait is 5-8 years.

3. In 2008, food bank use has also grown among **working Canadians**. Almost 15% of our clients are part of this number. Many jobs don't pay enough to meet the rising costs of utilities, rent, clothing and food, so they make choices and sometimes reach out for help, including to food banks.

4. Students attending university and college face many challenges and often rely on OSAP loans to cover their tuition, books and cost of living. Very often they have young families and try to work part-time as well but it is sometimes not enough.

5. Seniors who must rely solely on a government pension for income find challenges in meeting all of their expenses and must rely on emergency food from time to time to help out.

As a result, it is unlikely that the need for the Food Cupboard will disappear. Thank you to all who have shown consistent support through donations of food, money, time, or talents. And a special thank you to the volunteers who generously donate their time, efforts and ideas and whose enthusiasm makes it possible for us to continue such an effective and efficient service. Your support was a great source of strength to all who are involved.

(This history was originally compiled by Ann Frederking and given as an address during the April 2006 AGM.)