



Annual Report 2015

PARTNERSHIP WEST FOOD BANK
2015-2016 REPORT
to the Community,
March 31 2016

Overview

In 1991, a small number of Burlington churches gathered around to discuss how best to address the growing need for food each were experiencing in their parishes. The result was the establishment of a short term emergency food bank, where they could combine their resources and distribute food to those in need. Partnership West quickly became a main source of food for those in need, becoming Burlington's designated member of the Ontario Association of Food Banks.

Now, 25 years later, that same food bank exists distributing food to those in need. Clearly the issue of hunger in Burlington was not something that was a short term condition, nor was it something easily remedied. Typically, organizations celebrate being "in business" for 25 years – in the case of a food bank, that is not necessarily the case. In fact, when regarding a food bank, it would be a wonderful thing for us to go out of business, knowing that everyone in our community is well cared for, and has enough to eat. Until that time, however, Partnership West will continue to strive to fulfill our commitment to the community that no one in Burlington struggles with hunger.

Our progress towards our commitment is represented in a variety of different ways. In 2015, we had close to 3,000 visits to our food bank. These visits resulted in feeding close to 8,000 of our neighbours, and distributing over \$700,000 worth of food. Working closely with a range of dedicated partners, we have participated in contributing financially and with food donations to weekly community meals, food cupboards and snack programs. Through these partnerships we were able to contribute to providing over 300,000 meals in Burlington!

Our Resources

Continuing to provide this level of assistance can sometimes become challenging. While we are fortunate to have food donations from our community, the bulk of them come in the fall – Thanksgiving and Christmas being the most popular time to drop off non-perishable food items. This can sometimes make the spring and summer months very difficult to stock our shelves, a time when some families need us even more, with kids home from school and not benefiting from snack programs. Fortunately, many of our local

churches came out in force this past June with food drives targeted for these leaner times. The efforts were so much appreciated, and we hope to make it an even bigger drive this coming spring.

Once again, the Gift of Giving Back Food Drive, founded by the Burlington Eagles, brought in staggering amounts of food. Over 300,000 pounds of food was collected by young people throughout our City, inspiring us all with their dedication and commitment. We are grateful to have been one of the organizations who benefited from these great efforts. Our local elementary and high schools were well represented this year as well, organizing food drives and volunteering to sort through the donations. Witnessing the youth engagement in helping our community is definitely something to celebrate.

Partnership West also relies heavily on financial donations to keep our doors open, and to provide fresh food items such as milk, fruit, vegetables, bread, cheese and meat to our clients. We continue to benefit from the kindness of our corporate and individual donors for their generosity. Tim Horton's Smile Cookie Campaign donated proceeds in the amount of over \$49,000 in 2015, an incredible impact to our day to day operations and improving the lives of too many to count. Long time financial donors like the Burlington Old Timers Hockey Association make us proud to be part of this community, and their support for over 20 years a testament to their commitment to making things better. Please take a moment to check out all of our generous donors listed on our website. We have had the privilege of receiving many other special donations over the past year; the two young brothers who sold some of their prized toys and donated the proceeds, the teenager who after receiving her first ever pay cheque donated the first percentage off the top to us, and countless lemonade stand profits and "in lieu of birthday gifts" funds. No effort is too small. To quote Mother Teresa, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one."

Our volunteer base is perhaps our greatest resource. From our many can sorters, box lifters, and drivers to our volunteer Board Executive and Board of Directors, over 6000 hours a year are donated by caring individuals making a difference every day. Hats off to you all, and thank you so much for your efforts – we couldn't do it without you.

Moving Forward

In order to truly make a positive change in terms of hunger in our community, it is imperative that collaborative efforts are made with all agencies within Burlington. At Partnership West, we value our relationships with similar organizations, and look forward to working even more closely with them to help determine how best to help those in need. We will need to actively strive to truly understand the changing needs in our community, and ensure we are open and creative to meeting them. Further, we will need to help identify gaps in our programs, and eliminate any barriers that may exist to receiving food. We welcome you, members of our community, to work alongside with us to ensure no one in Burlington struggles with hunger.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Alyson McQueen-Hickerson,
Chair

March 31. 2016