

2021 Burlington Food Bank AGM

Message from the Board Chair & Executive Director to the Community March 24, 2022

As the province of Ontario begins to remove restrictions that have now been in place for almost 2-years, we start to look forward to that time and place when we will be able to meet with friends and family as we once had and celebrate coming together, a journey back to some sense of normalcy.

But for a person struggling with the fight of food security, times are looking tougher than ever. The struggle to choose eating over providing themselves or their family with a roof over their head is the everyday battle. Unfortunately, the trends we have seen over the past two years are expected to continue. Continuing with the delivery model to our clients for access to food support, we delivered food to an additional 2,881 individuals when compared to those serviced in 2020. 34% of our clients during 2021 had not used our Food Bank at any previous time.

That is why we remain diligent and focused on striving to achieve our Missions and Values at the Burlington Food Bank. It is through the efforts of one team; made up of our staff, volunteers, member agencies, partners, and our board of directors that we have been successful in staying strong in our efforts to ensure that every citizen of Burlington who needs healthy, nutritious food is able to access in a dignified experience. Through this team, Burlington residents accessed over 485,000 pounds of food directly from the Burlington Food Bank in 2021 and over 100,000 pounds distributed through local partners.

Looking Ahead – Our 2022-2023 Strategic Plan

It is a big dream to remove hunger and probably not something that will happen in our lifetime. New challenges are becoming part of everyday concerns for people in some form or another; the threat of double-digit inflation, the negative impacts of climate change on farming and water sources, natural disasters, conflict, marginalization, and social inequalities are to name just a few. While the threats are knocking at our doorstep, The Burlington Food Bank's leadership has developed a two-year Strategic Plan to ensure that we will be able to continue with our Mission and Values all the while identifying opportunities for us to do more, do better, and remain flexible to change and adapt.

The Hunger Report

In closing out 2021, we look forward to releasing our first ever Burlington Hunger Report, outlining the challenges that we are facing in the fight to remove food insecurities. Gathering data over the past two years, we have gained insight on the changes and challenges that assisted us in developing our next, two-year strategy.

The Halton HUB:

As we have continued to improve our operations and service to our community, we have recognized that we are at a pivotal time at the Burlington Food Bank. We have identified that there is an opportunity to support the broader food security network here in Burlington, with the intention of reaching even further into all of Halton.



For over half a decade, the Burlington Food Bank has been developing a strategy of improving our services through the development of the “HUB Concept”. It was always our belief that through organization and working together with like agencies within the City, we would be all in a better position to service our own communities with greater access, storage, and means to distribute food through out each city to increase access for those in need.

For the past year and a half, in concert with developing our reach within our own city limits, we have been working with Kerr Street Mission, the Feed Ontario Agency representing Oakville, who also has the same belief that working together will benefit the greater good.

Both Burlington and Oakville have identified one similar and opportune challenge in that as the need for food assistance continues to rise in each of our communities, our current facilities are insufficient regarding space.

It is through the HUB Concept, that we are looking forward to acquiring a warehouse which we will be able to better serve not only our direct clients but also those that are served through the network of food security agencies. Our intention is to become a Distribution Centre / Hub, along with Kerr Street Mission in Oakville to provide warehousing, centralized purchasing and a better, connected network to make food distribution for those in our communities more equitable throughout Burlington/Oakville and out into all of Halton Region as we develop. This project will allow for even greater purchasing power as a network, allow for adequate space to accept larger donations and receive allocations from the various donors and food producers that Feed Ontario regularly delivers for. The intention of the Hub is to ensure that no matter where a person lives in Halton, they will have the same opportunities to receive similar amounts of fresh, nutritious food that is culturally sensitive to their household needs.

With the support of both city Mayors, the Halton Region accepted a resolution to review the development of our concepts on December 15, 2021. We hope to work in conjunction with the Halton Region to further the concept, as we continue to move forward with the development and location of space which will be best suited for the needs of the Distribution Centre.

The Burlington Food Bank has great ambition over the next couple of years as we work to best serve the hungry in our community in a timely and dignified manner. This will include identifying agencies throughout Burlington and eventually into Halton that can be utilized to serve areas that are currently underserved. Our team will be a resource to the community in hopes of using a collaborative approach to sourcing better pricing and a stable warehouse space that will allow for larger corporate donations. The warehouse space will also allow us to have corporate partners join alongside our team in sorting, packing, and distributing healthy, nutritious food out into the network. We will also continue to review our hours and accessibility to ensure that we are best serving our clients.

Growth of the Burlington Food Bank

Inherently, the HUB Concepts will require additional resources in both staffing and physical assets. Over the next three to six months, we will be developing and enhancing our staffing compliment to ensure success. Preparing the Burlington Food Bank for transition from an individual, client-based program to creation and development of Distribution Centre/HUB along with continued service model for community members.



We will continue our investment in our growth to meet the needs of the community by way of acquiring additional space, storage capacity for fresh and perishable resources, enabling greater access to larger scale donations via Feed Ontario. That will improve our ability to assist all agencies within Burlington to reduce the shortfall currently experienced in Burlington to meet the needs of our community.

Branding and Imaging in the Community

A continued focus on our branding in the community will be required as we start to roll out our HUB Concepts as not only a direct to client food support but a community minded organization that supports other agencies in the food security sector. Through concise messaging we hope to increase the understanding of the need of the community members we serve.

Building upon the HUB concept we further the voice of our associations including Food Banks Canada and Feed Ontario with a united message.

Giving Thanks

Through the pandemic, we have continued supporting our community with the assistance of organizations and private donors. We would like to thank a few of our donors publicly here for your generosity, kindness and continued abiding support.

Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd
Burlington Oldtimers Hockey Club
Burlington Oldtimers Slo-Pitch League
Gift of Giving Back
Halcyon International Ltd
Ladies of the Round Table

Megaloid Laboratories
Nicholson and Cates
Patrick J. McNally Charitable Foundation
Port Nelson Church
Rotary Club of Burlington Central
Tim Hortons

As always, a final thanks to our each of our volunteers who continue to support us each week helping us reach our clients. Without you, we would not have been able to collect, sort, and distribute to those in need.

Once again, it has been an honour to server our community. On behalf of the Board and our team we remain devoted to supporting you.

Sincerely,

Maria Nancy Thornton – Board Chair
Burlington Food Bank

Robin Bailey – Executive Director
Burlington Food Bank