

INTERFAITH FOOD BANK SOCIETY OF LETHBRIDGE

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

SPRING 2008



Support Our Annual Bakeless Bake Sale

*The snow is finally melting,
The grass is turning green,
And right on time, like every spring,
Our Bakeless Bake Sale is on the scene.*

*We know everyone is busy
And how much time that it would take
If we asked each of our supporters
To send in cookies or a cake.*

*We won't ask you to heat the oven,
or get flour on your hands;
No need to shop for ingredients,
Because we have other plans...*

*We thought we'd make it easier
To help us feed a hungry tummy,
Just use the enclosed envelope
To send a bit of money.*

*And now your gift of giving
Is done without the stress,
So sit back and have a cup of tea,
With no worry and no mess!*

- Charitable Tax Receipts will be issued for donations of \$15 or more.
- Tea Bags generously donated by Streetside Eatery

The Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge, incorporated Edmonton, AB, July 5th, 1990, is planning to raise an estimated \$20 000.00 from the Bakeless Bake Sale. It will cost our organization an estimated \$3000.00 to run the program. Donations will be used for food purchase and operational costs. For further information, please contact Danielle McIntyre, Executive Director at (403) 320-8779.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- *Interfaith Food Bank is open year-round, not just at Christmas Time.*
- *Food Hampers are designed to last 5-7 days.*
- *It takes approximately 36 volunteers per week to run Interfaith programs and services.*
- *In addition to regular food services, Interfaith offers:*
 - *Cooking classes through The Interfaith Chinook Country Kitchen*
 - *Low-cost household items available at the Interfaith Garage Sale. Proceeds go to support the Food Bank.*
 - *Back to School Supplies*
 - *Birthday Bundles*
 - *Referral Services*

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Danielle McIntyre

Progress, progress, progress! I can't help but be proud of all of the successes we've shared over the past year, and I'm exceptionally glad to be working with such a dedicated team of staff and volunteers!

As we prepare for our Annual General Meeting, I'm reminded of just how much hard work and community support was put into our organization last year. Physical changes to the facility, improved accounting and inventory procedures, alterations to our Client Intake and Volunteer Programs, and the addition of the Whoop Up Days Pancake Breakfast and Friends of Interfaith Charity Dinner and Silent Auction are just a few of our undertakings in 2007, and we're not done yet!

2008 will also continue to be a year of progress as we use Wild Rose Quarterly Grant funding to build the internal capacity of our organization and explore various means of sustainable funding. Our Board of Directors will participate in strategic planning this year, which will allow us to assess and evaluate our activities and determine our future courses of action.

As we are constantly aware that we do not accomplish any of these things without the support of our community, we are asking all of our stakeholders (Clients, Donors, Staff and Volunteers) to participate in a Needs Assessment Survey prior to the Board of Directors establishing our Strategic Plan. Those interested in participating with this Needs Assessment are encouraged to contact our office so we can gather your feedback, ideas, and opinions.

It's not always about change, however, as Interfaith has been supporting those in need since 1989 through contributions from private donors, churches, schools and service clubs, and also from corporations and local business. **Our mission, to recognize the human dignity of those in need and to provide food and access to services and resources generated from within our community**, will remain constant. Interfaith Food Bank will also continue to work collaboratively with other agencies and charitable organizations in Lethbridge to limit duplication of services and to make the most of our resources.

Our annual fundraising campaigns and food drives will continue to generate supports for those we serve, and we are confident that our ever faithful community will continue to support their campaign(s) of choice. A list of upcoming events is included on the last page of this newsletter, although I'd like to draw attention to our current campaign, the Annual Bakeless Bake Sale, which generates funds for food purchases and operational costs. We hope you'll "take a bite" out of hunger by sending in your "dough-nation" in the envelope included with this mailing!

We are a community response to a community need, and are ever grateful for your contributions of food, funds and free time to help us with our goals in helping the hungry.

Have a wonderful Spring!

Danielle McIntyre



Spring Cleaning?

Interfaith Garage Sale

will accept new or gently used household items. Please note that we no longer accept furniture or used clothing, and prefer items that are likely to generate funds for food bank operations.

2007 Statistics

Thanks to the generous contributions of donors and volunteers, we were able to distribute the following supports to those less fortunate in 2007:

- * 5354 Hampers were distributed to assist 7258 Adults and 6114 Children
- * 7056 daily food supplements provided (over and above hamper allotments)
- * 38 Single parent families, including 105 children, received larger than usual hampers for the winter months, thanks to our *Follow The Star Program*
- * 40 Families were provided with supplies for the Christmas Meal and gifts for each family member through our *Adopt-A-Family Program*
- * 589 Christmas Hampers were distributed, helping 750 adults and 631 children to enjoy Christmas, complete with Ham or Turkey dinner and gifts for the little ones under 17 years of age.
- * 464 children received backpacks & school supplies from our *Back to School Program*
- * 104 Clothing vouchers were distributed to clothe 131 adults and 100 children
- * 394 Diabetics were assisted with their special dietary needs
- * 269 Infants were assisted by our *Infant Feeding Program*
- * 139 Pregnant mothers given increased food during this crucial developmental stage
- * 62 Birthday bundles allowed parents to offer something special for their children on this special day

MOST WANTED FOOD ITEMS

January—November

- Canned Fruit / Vegetables
- Canned Meats / Salmon / Tuna
- Canned Soup and Soup Mixes
- Canned Pasta/Stew
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Unsweetened Juices
- Baby Food in Jars
- Infant Cereal
- Baby Formula with Iron
- Canned Tomatoes
- Canned Pork & Beans
- Peanut Butter / Jam
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Hamburger Helper

Online?

If you would prefer to receive correspondence from us electronically, we'd be happy to save the stamp!

Give us a call at 320-8779 so we can add your email address to our list of contacts.

2007 Hunger Count

Every March, Interfaith Food Bank participates in the National Hunger Count Survey that is administered by the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB). Hunger Count tracks statistical information about the people who access food banks across the country, including demographics, income sources, and this year we also tracked information about housing.

Nationally, the statistics show that 720,321 Canadians were assisted by food banks in one month.

- * **39% of those assisted are children, and 51% of households served contain children**
- * **13.5% of food bank users are employed, 50.7% report social assistance, 12.5% disability supports, 6.1% pension and 5.3% employment insurance as their source of income**
- * **Over 85% live in rented accommodation, with the majority paying market rent; 7.7% own their homes.**

Provincially, the statistics are interestingly different. The number of employed people accessing food banks is highest in Alberta (27%), despite our recent economic boom. Alberta food banks are also feeding more children on average (43%). Those receiving social assistance account for 34.9% of those served.

It seems that the good times are not so for all. For those who are unable to obtain gainful employment, or for those who do not earn enough to afford decent housing, it seems harder to "catch up" to the rest of Albertans who

are able to keep up with rising housing costs, fuel prices, and the ever growing cost of household utilities.

At home here in Lethbridge, we are seeing our statistics to be much more in line with the provincial statistics, with a few exceptions. The majority of the people (68%) who accessed services from Interfaith Food Bank in 2007 receive some type of government funding, such as Social Assistance (35.9%), Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (23.5%), or Canada Pension (8.6%). These government programs are intended to provide for those who face barriers to workforce participation. Unfortunately, for many of the families we serve, these sources of income do not provide enough for basic needs.

Another large percentage of those who access Interfaith services are employed (25.1%), however, limited hours or low wages keep them from having enough to get by.

Housing costs are a major factor for food bank recipients in Lethbridge. Very few of those we serve are fortunate enough to own their own homes (2%). Some have been accepted by programs such as Social Housing that subsidize rental costs (12%), although many food bank recipients live in private rental housing (79%) and struggle with rising rental costs and limited affordable housing. Many of our clients are forced to decide each month if they will pay for rent, or for groceries.

Compared to national statistics, Interfaith Food Bank is feeding more children (44%). There are many reasons that contribute to parents not being able to provide enough food for their children. Many families require two incomes to meet minimum standards of living. Single parents often have a more difficult time, especially if they became parents a young age, before acquiring the skills and education required for well paying jobs. Some of the parents we serve suffer with illness, injury, or disabilities that don't allow them to earn a suitable income for feeding a family. The majority of households we serve (57.6%) have at least one child at home.

The Canadian Association of Food Banks has several recommendations to address the issues that place Canadians in food bank lineups:

- Reform Employment Insurance, and broaden eligibility for Working Income Tax Benefit
- Increase National Child Benefit
- Institute strategies for affordable housing
- Provide ongoing support of early learning and affordable, quality child care
- Raise provincial minimum wages
- Raise social assistance rates and reform welfare system

At Interfaith, our focus is on providing food security and access to immediate resources. We encourage our community to continue to care for those less fortunate, and to continue to have faith that we can make a difference in the lives of others by giving a little of ourselves.

For more info on the Hunger Count, visit www.cafb-acba.ca/documents/HungerCount2007.pdf



Virtual Bottle Drive



Interfaith Food Bank and the Rehabilitation Society of SW Alberta have joined forces for a Virtual Bottle Drive.

- Do you recycle your bottles and cans?
- Would you like to support us with little effort, and shorten your wait at the Bottle Depot?

Take your empty bottles and cans to either the downtown or north side facility to have the refund designated to Interfaith Food Bank. Each month they will forward us a cheque in the amount equal to the refunds that are designated to our cause.

MAIN FACILITY

1610—29 Street North

DOWNTOWN CONNECTION

416—8 Street South

Call for Directors

Are you a community minded individual interested in making a difference within our city? Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge is currently accepting applications for positions with our Board of Directors.

Qualifications Required: Interest in the organization and the services we provide; tact and the ability to work with others; time and willingness to serve; knowledge of the community; and skills and knowledge which can support the Board process.

Time Commitment: Nine Board meetings per year, each meeting lasting approximately 2-3 hours; Committee meetings as required; Special meetings required for Board Orientation, Strategic Planning and Board Development.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact our office for a confidential application package. Please call Danielle at 320-8779.

How YOU Can Help!

Interfaith's Wish List

The following non-food items would assist us in working more efficiently and to make the most of our human and/or financial resources:

WAREHOUSE

- Pallet Racking
- Portable Shelving
- Pressure Washer
- Pallet Jack
- Utility Carts
- Pallet Wrap & Dispenser
- Hardware gift certificates so we might purchase General Maintenance Supplies

ADMINISTRATION

- Wireless Routers (2)
- New color laser printer
- Laminator
- Gift Certificates for Office Supplies

FACILITY

- Fencing Materials
- Furnace/Duct Cleaning
- New truck or assistance with repairs and maintenance

Bakeless Bake Sale



Each spring, our annual fundraising mail-out raises funds for food purchases and operational expenses.

No knead to bake, just enclose a small contribution in the envelope provided and send it in your *sweet treat* to us! Thanks for helping us *raise some dough!*



INTERFAITH FOOD BANK SOCIETY OF LETHBRIDGE

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Interfaith Successes—One Family at a Time

Larry & Marie

Larry was a ward of the state from the time he was 6 years old. He met Marie as a child, when her family helped to look after him whenever his step-mother was unavailable. After living a childhood within the "system" he was sent out on his own at the age of 18. He did manage to hold a couple of minimum wage jobs as an adult, at 7-11 and a local car wash, but now receives only Canada Pension benefits.

Marie suffers from numerous health problems, including rheumatoid arthritis and angina. She receives funding from Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH).

The pair have been married for 36 years and have committed to struggling through a life in poverty together. By far, this couple are the most resourceful of our clients, at the beginning of each month they pre-pay all of their household bills, which includes putting \$100-\$150 on credit with their neighborhood grocery store.

They access as many community services as they can find, and make do with the little bit they do have, making their own shampoo, doing their own mending, and accessing clothing drives and second hand stores for their basic needs.



Larry and Marie, married for 36 years, are grateful for the support they receive from Interfaith Food Bank.

Larry & Marie's volunteer work provides them with a support network as well, as they give of their time to organizations such as The Good Food Club, Sikokhitoki Friendship Centre, and the Norbridge Seniors Centre.

Larry often praises those who give: "Thanks to the good graces of those who support Interfaith Food Bank. We are very proud of those who support and run the food bank programs, without this support we might not be here today, and I'm honoured to say thank you!"

Upcoming Events



Grow A Row—Think of us this Spring when you are planting your garden! No matter what your harvest, we will gladly accept donations of fresh veggies and fruit. Fresh produce is hard to come by at the Food Bank, and is so necessary for nutrition.

Target Hunger—Local LDS churches will run the annual Target Hunger campaign to help restock the shelves of Interfaith Food Bank and Lethbridge Food Bank. Pre-printed bags will be dropped off at every household in Lethbridge. A printed list of our most wanted items will be on the bag, just fill it up and place on your doorstep for pickup!



Red Dress Run—Help us create a sea of Red on Canada Day. Guys and Girls will wear red dresses on this 5k run around Henderson Lake, a food donation is the entry fee. Meet in the parking lot by Nikka Yuko Japanese Gardens at 10AM Tuesday, July 1st. To sign up or for more information contact Runner's Soul 327-2241.

Whoop-Up Days Pancake Breakfast— On Tuesday, August 19th, Interfaith will host a Pancake Breakfast to kick off Whoop-Up Days! The event will begin at 7:00 am and end at 9:00 am, just in time for the parade. We would love to borrow your grills and coffee urns, and will need donations of disposable plates, cups, and utensils to serve the food.



Friends of Interfaith Charity Dinner & Silent Auction—

We had such a great response from our event in October 2007, we have decided to make this an annual event. Be sure to mark **Friday, September 19th** on your calendar! This event will be held at the Italian-Canadian Cultural Centre, and will include good food and good entertainment for a great cause! We are recruiting substantial goods/services that are likely to bring in significant bids at the silent auction. Tickets are \$50 or \$450 for a table of 10. Official receipts for income tax purposes are issued for 50% of the ticket price.

Please contact our office if you are able to contribute your time or resources to any of these activities.