



"HUNGER IS REAL; WE HELP"



**FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE PRESIDENT**

2023

INTRODUCTION

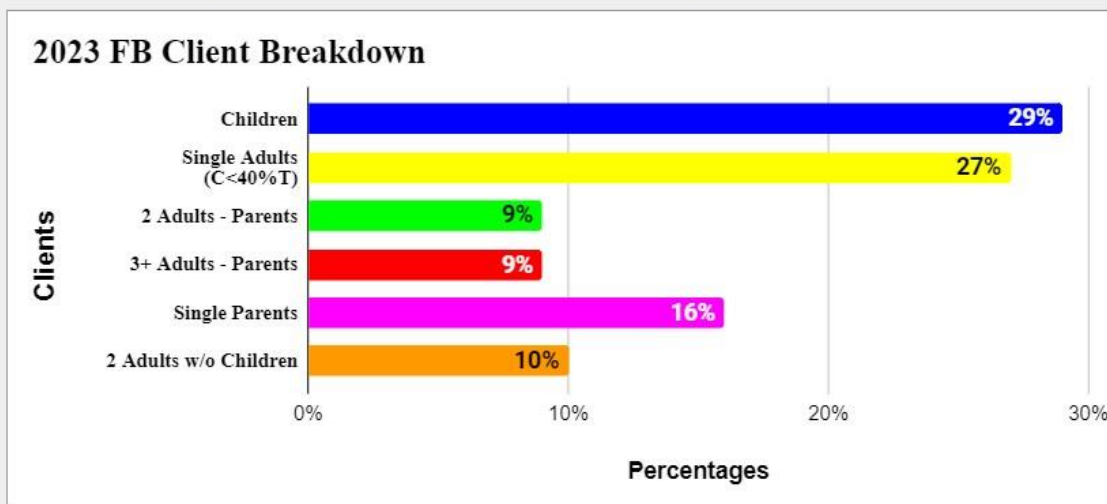
I am pleased to introduce the first annual report of the President of St. Joseph's Community Food Bank. The report focuses on the 2023 calendar year and aims to provide a picture of the important events of the year, a statistical overview of our experience with clients and a high-level outline of our financial situation.

The Food Bank is a member of Feed Ontario, a provincial food bank association that is a direct member of the national body, Food Banks Canada. Our membership provides us with a computerized client registration system (Link2Feed), and access to the National Food Sharing Program through SNAP, the Feed Ontario bulk buy program. This provides regular shipments of donated food to all member food banks based on their client volumes. This supplements the generous donations we receive from the community and makes it possible to provide more food and more variety than would otherwise be possible.

WHO DO WE FEED?

Similar to the situation across Canada, children make up the largest group of food bank clients at 29% followed closely by single adults at 27% as shown in the table below. We currently serve 813 households and have **1639 registered clients**.

2023 Food Bank Client Breakdown



HUNGER COUNT

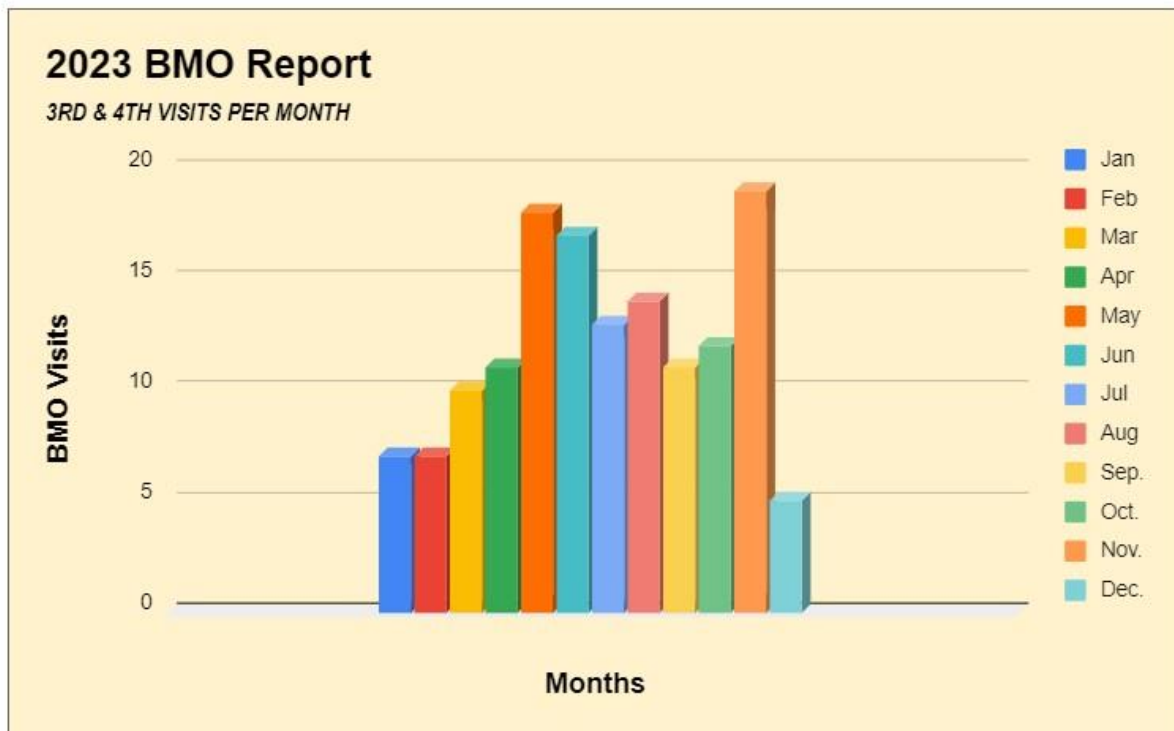
The hunger count represents the number of individuals for whom we provide food. For example, an individual may visit the Food Bank alone, but they may have 2 dependents for whom they are also receiving food. In that case, the hunger count is 3.

The number of meals provided in 2022 increased to over 103,000 from 76,480 in 2021. The average number of clients served per week in 2022 was 199 with a total hunger count of 10,342.

In 2023, the Food Bank provided over 130,000 meals for an increase of 26% over the same period in 2022. The average number of clients served per week in 2023 was 237 with a total hunger count of 12,206.

BREAD AND MILK ONLY (BMO)

Clients can make two visits per month to the Food Bank to pick up their food hampers. If they visit more often, they can only pick up bread and milk. A total of 64 clients took advantage of BMO orders during the year. 144 orders were given out for an average of 12 per month.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM– 2023

Major changes took place in the Christmas hamper program for 2023. We did not have the resources to continue with the diverse program we've had over the past few years. Instead, we moved to a system of providing clients with gift cards roughly equal to the value of hampers in previous years and allowing them to do their own shopping. This reduced the workload of volunteers significantly. One volunteer managed the entire process from processing gift cards, through registering clients and handing out the gift cards. The gift cards proved to be very popular.

The 2023 Christmas program was very successful. A total of 368 households received gift cards. This fed 804 individuals. Only 8 households failed to pick up their card.

In comparison, 329 households received hampers in 2022, feeding 769 individuals. A total of 43 households failed to pick up their hampers.

OPERATING HOURS

For many years, the Food Bank operated on a once per week operating schedule; primarily on Monday mornings. However, it had become clear over time, that the once per week opening made it difficult for many working poor to come to the Food Bank on Monday mornings because of their work schedule. In an effort to better support these families, operating hours were expanded. Thursday opening hours began in October 2022 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. to improve accessibility.

Clients responded slowly to the changes at first, but within months, as clients became familiar with the hours, we saw a major shift in the use of our services. By the end of 2023, our clients were more evenly spread between Mondays and Thursdays to the point where between 43% of clients have now shifted from Mondays to Thursdays. This has helped us to distribute workload more evenly and clients are much happier having two options for attendance each week.

WAREHOUSE EXPANSION

We have spent two years exploring the options available to us for solving our problem of limited storage and administrative space for Food Bank operations. A number of options have been considered. Discussions are ongoing and it is expected that a decision on the appropriate direction will be made by the Board in 2024. Options include:

1. A new building constructed on land donated by the Zion Lutheran Church at the intersection of Munro and D'Arcy Streets; **(cost \$1.6 to \$1.8 million)**
2. Renovated space at our current location - a long- term lease that would allow us to increase our storage space by over 1000 square feet; **(costs to be determined)**

3. Purchase or lease of an existing building renovated to suit our needs and operated on a sustainable basis. Thus far, no suitable buildings have been identified that would satisfy our needs. **(costs will vary depending on type of building)**

We have shifted the focus of our fundraising to concentrate on our fundamental need for more warehouse and packing space.

SPECIAL EVENTS IN 2023

Our first fund raising event since the pandemic, took place on April 15, 2023 at the Germania Club. Barbara Blackstein donated 35 of her watercolours to be sold at auction to help us expand our building fund. Community support was high. Volunteers from a variety of organizations participated in managing and delivering the event. The auction raised over \$40,000. The Food Bank is forever in debt to Barbara and Fred Blackstein.

COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVES

The Food Bank has not run any of its own food drives for some time. However, we are fortunate that food banks have national visibility and hunger is a continually newsworthy issue. Because of that, we benefit from community groups, businesses and churches spontaneously running their own food drives on our behalf.

Some of the many **community food drives** to benefit the Food Bank in 2023 included:

- Metro
- No Frills
- White Pine Yoga
- Northern Credit Union
- My FM (picture below)
- OPP Auxiliary/Lumber Kings
- A variety of schools
- A variety of local churches including:
 - ✓ Zion Lutheran Evangelical
 - ✓ Zion Christian Reformed
 - ✓ St.- Jean- Baptiste
 - ✓ St. Luke's Anglican
 - ✓ Wesley United



Fellows High School food drive

VOLUNTEERS – THE BACKBONE OF THE FOOD BANK

- At any one time, the Food Bank has over 50 volunteers
- Volunteers contribute over 15,000 hours of labour per year
- Dollar value of donated labour is over \$180,000 per year

As a gesture of appreciation, the Food Bank hosted a volunteer recognition event on March 24, 2023 to honour over 40 volunteers. A luncheon was provided, followed by the presentation of appreciation certificates and Food Bank pins. We have many long-term volunteers who have selflessly donated their time and their talents to the Food Bank. Two of our volunteers have over 15 years of service and 3 have over 20.

The COVID 19 pandemic really hampered our efforts to get together to socialize and exchange ideas. This event was the first of what is hoped will be many more similar events over the next few years. Some of our longest serving volunteers are shown below. Thank you volunteers for all you have done!



Food Bank Volunteers

OUR FINANCES

The financial statements for 2022/23 prepared by Scott, Rosien, Black and Locke, covering the period of the fiscal year, show that our costs increased by over \$60,000 from 2021/22, while revenues declined by about \$17,000 for the same period. The decline in revenue may be the result of donors moving away from cash to food, now that the pandemic is over and the fear of contact with others allows for the delivery of food to our doors. The increase in costs, on the other hand, is a direct result of both inflation and the increase in the hunger count from about 10,000 to 12,000.

Inflation

We recently conducted a second review of the cost of our food hampers and lunches. The original review was done in August 2022. Our most recent review took place in January 2024 and showed a cost increase in our food hampers of 15% over the 17 month period. The cost of children's lunch packs increased by 9.5% over the same period.

EVOLUTION AND CHANGE

Unprecedented growth in demand over the past few years has required us to establish systems and make improvements to deal with the requirement for a higher level of accountability in finance, client services and human resources:

- ✚ Developed a comprehensive Strategic Plan that included measurable goals and objectives, a mission statement and organizational values;
- ✚ Expanded our opening hours in the Fall of 2022 from one day of operation to two, thereby accommodating working families after normal working hours;
- ✚ Rewrote our By-Laws to conform to the requirements of Ontario's "*Not For Profit Corporations Act 2010*". The draft By-laws are under consideration by the Board of Directors;
- ✚ Continued to fine tune our client registration system (Link2Feed) and generated comprehensive statistical information to support accountability;
- ✚ Implemented a capital fund raising campaign that has raised funds for building improvements focused on providing adequate and appropriate space for administration and warehousing;
- ✚ Purchased a cargo van to allow us to pick up and deliver large shipments of food;
- ✚ Developed position descriptions for carriers, packers, registrars and captains to provide volunteers with terms of reference and to help with volunteer orientation.

CONCLUSION

St. Joseph's Community Food Bank has helped those in need for 38 years. Our growth patterns reflect the experience of food banks across the country as more and more individuals and families experience the negative effects of inflation, a changing economy and declining health. This is not likely to change for the foreseeable future, so charities such as ours must continue to function effectively with the generous support of the community and the efforts of committed volunteers. Coping with change and the escalating increase in demand will require us to be resilient and creative in the way we respond to our clients needs. We are extremely grateful to those who contributed their time, money and food over the past year and we are confident that our continued partnerships will allow us to respond to the challenges of the future.