

Brunch Bunch getting established

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Court clerk Noel Clement serves toast Saturday, March 23, 2019 in Belleville, Ont. She said her work compelled her to volunteer. Luke Hendry/Belleville Intelligencer/Postmedia Network Luke Hendry / Luke Hendry/The Intelligencer

The Hastings County Law Association's new monthly meal program is gaining support and reaching more people.

The Brunch Bunch is a group of volunteers organized by the Hastings County Law Association. In March they launched a program intended to provide one meal a month at the Salvation Army building on Pinnacle Street. That first meal served 88 people. It's intended to help fill a gap in area meal programs. Volunteers come mainly from the local justice sector.

Program founder Ruth Roberts, a Belleville defence lawyer, said the program's second installment April 27 served 100 people directly and, with remaining food, reached a further 60 that week via the Army's own program.

"We're looking forward to keeping this going," said Roberts. "People really seem to enjoy it.

"We have an abundance of volunteers.

"With all the negativity out there, it's terrific to be a part of this," she added.



Terry Sheckleton, left, and Gilbert Bouvier meet for breakfast Saturday, March 23, 2019 in Belleville, Ont. Sheckleton said the social side of free meal programs is important. Luke Hendry/Belleville Intelligencer/Postmedia Network Luke Hendry / Luke Hendry/The Intelligencer

The Bunch was founded with the goal of helping some of the same people its volunteers see during their work day.

“If your belly is empty you can’t listen to your probation officer,” Roberts said prior to the program’s launch. “You can’t listen to your lawyer. You can’t make good decisions.”

That, said the Salvation Army’s Abby Mills, is what makes it special.

“It’s showing the people who are so often in conflict with the law that the people at the courthouse care about them,” said Mills, the Army’s director of community and family services.



Salvation Army director Abby Mills, left, and food services coordinator Brenda Post stand in the charity’s kitchen with Belleville lawyer Ruth Roberts Monday, February 11, 2019 in Belleville, Ont. Roberts has organized the Brunch Bunch, a group of justice officials who starting March 23 will serve free meals one

Saturday per month. Luke Hendry/Belleville Intelligencer/Postmedia Network Luke Hendry / Luke Hendry/The Intelligencer

The Bunch is still expanding the menu and in April served pastries donated by Loyalist College's culinary students, she said, and there will be colouring books for children.

Lawyer Lee St. Aubin is the group's cook; law association librarian Judith Dale is the administrator.

Roberts said donations of food or money are welcome. Cheques should be made payable to "Salvation Army for Hastings County Law Association."

To donate, call Roberts at 613-392-9207.

The next meal is Saturday, May 25 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the Salvation Army, 295 Pinnacle St., Belleville and Roberts said plans for June's meal are underway.



Articling law student and Belleville native Sam Clements measures a portion of scrambled eggs Saturday, March 23, 2019 in Belleville, Ont. Luke Hendry/Belleville Intelligencer/Postmedia Network Luke Hendry / Luke Hendry/The Intelligencer