



## Acadia Food Pantry

8516 Athabasca St. SE

12 to 12:45 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday

**What do we do?** The Acadia Food Pantry (AFP) collects and distributes food on a monthly basis to people experiencing food insecurity. It was set up to primarily serve vulnerable people in our community, but it does not turn anyone away.

**Who are the organizers?** As part of the Acadia Network & Action Group (ANAG), this program is organized and staffed by volunteers including local residents, neighbourhood Lutheran, Moravian and United churches as well as community service providers. Volunteers are key to making this program work. To get involved, place contact: [acadiapantry@gmail.com](mailto:acadiapantry@gmail.com).

**How is it funded?** The AFP is funded primarily through the actions of the three churches and the Chinook Rotary Club, with some help from City of Calgary Neighbourhoods. During the pandemic, the AFP was able to access two government grants directed at food insecurity.

**Why is a food pantry program needed?** Acadia and surrounding communities have a high proportion of residents living near or under the poverty line. Many families on low or limited income live with food insecurity as part of their daily lives. Food is a basic need to which everyone should have access, regardless of income or financial situation. During the first six months of 2022, the AFP served an average of 150 individuals per month, many of them children and mostly residents living in Acadia and surrounding communities.

### Who experiences food insecurity?

- 1 in 8 households in Canada (over 4 million people) and 1 in 6 children under the age of 18 in Canada experience food insecurity.
- Low-waged jobs and precarious work means people in the workforce often don't have enough to be food-secure.
- 45% of the minimum wage earners are not teenagers, but are parents themselves.
- One third of households with food insecurity are led by a lone female parent.

### Is there enough help with food?

- There are a large number of seniors and families in Acadia & Fairview who access the Food Bank yet still experience food insecurity.
- The Calgary Food Bank provides limited fresh fruits & vegetables.
- Families do not have choice in what is provided, so it may not meet family needs.
- Families are limited to the number of hampers they can get through self-referral, and many low wage earners are reluctant to seek referrals for help.

### What are the consequences of chronic food insecurity?

- Causes nutrient deficiencies
- Increased vulnerability to physical and mental health problems such as disease, chronic conditions, anxiety, depression
- Hunger in childhood may lead to hyperactivity and inattention as well as an increased risk of asthma, depression and suicidal tendencies.
- Takes a toll on the health care system.

**How does the food pantry program work?** The AFP receives some food from, Spinz-A-Round a division of Community Kitchens. Spinz is a food rescue program that provides fresh produce and other perishable and non-perishable items that might otherwise be thrown away by local merchants. Bread is provided by the Italian Market and COBS. Some churches collect non-perishable canned and dry goods. On the third Tuesday of the month, patrons are invited to pick up hampers between noon and 12:45 pm. Food items are laid out on tables and patrons pick out what they need for their families, with limitations on quantities. Pre-registration is not required and delivery is offered on a limited basis to those with mobility issues or other needs that prevent them from attending in person.

**How can volunteers help?** Volunteers are required for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of each month. There are tasks for every ability level. Please contact [acadiapantry@gmail.com](mailto:acadiapantry@gmail.com) for more information.

**Pick-up and Delivery:** Drivers with medium to large vehicles are required for both days to do Spinz runs and pick up pre-ordered PC Express items. On the third Tuesday, drivers are needed to pick up bread, pick up produce, dispose of recycling; make hamper deliveries and deliver leftover fresh items to the Mustard Seed. Some heavy lifting may be involved, but not always. Drivers will be paired with another volunteer as needed.

**Hamper Packing Day – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays, 10:30 am – noon:** Along with pick-up and delivery, volunteers are needed to unload food items delivered from Spinz and PC Express, move food items to storage room in church basement, organize food items and check best before dates, fill hampers with non-perishable items for delivery the following Tuesday.

**Pantry Day - 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, 10:00 am – 1:30 pm:** Along with pick-up and delivery, volunteers are needed to unload fresh items and organize them for distribution, bring non-perishable items up from the storage room and set them out, register patrons, supervise food distribution, clean tables and return items to the storage room.