



Freedom 90 commits to raising its voice to demand an end to poverty and an end to the need for food banks and emergency meal programs in Ontario.

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November 26, 2015

The Star - Desmond Cole

Queen's Park is failing hungry Ontarians

Kathleen Wynne pledged that if elected, she would become the "social justice premier." But Ontarians surviving on low incomes are still going hungry, writes Desmond Cole.



"Social assistance is simply too low," says Mike Balkwill ... He points out that half of the people on welfare or disability supports rely on food banks. "People are being as generous as they can be," Balkwill says, "but the government is relying on the goodwill and generosity of volunteers to do what the government needs to do."

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November 17, 2015

Kenora Online - Grace Protopapas

Food costs rising faster than minimum wage, social assistance

The struggle to put food on the table is still a reality for many people and families in northwestern Ontario.

The Northwestern Health Unit has just completed their 2015 survey of healthy food costs. Unfortunately, things have not improved. Here's Therese Niznowski, a public health dietitian.



"The survey for 2015 shows that the cost of feeding a family of four is \$1,060.50 a month. So that's up 15.7 per cent since 2010," she said.

A common misconception is that employment will allow individuals or families to break the cycle of food insecurity. However, that is not the case. Over half of Ontario families struggling to put food on the table are part of the labour force.

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November 18, 2015

The Nugget - PJ Wilson

Food banks 'no longer temporary'

It's "a little scary" that almost one million Canadians used a food bank in March of this year, according to the manager of the North Bay Food Bank.



Food, she said, is "usually the last thing on a person's budget," especially when money is tight.

"People are more concerned about keeping a roof over their heads," she said, and after shelter is paid for, there is often little left for food.

"And various things always come up."

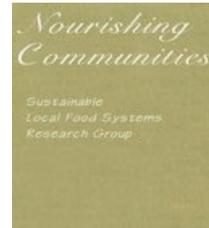
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November 13, 2015

Nourishing Communities - Kathy Dobson

Are food banks an effective response to addressing food insecurity and poverty?

A panel discussion surrounding issues of poverty and food insecurity, 'From Hunger to Health' was recently held in Ottawa, as part of the second annual Spur festival. The discussion explored some of the root causes - and potential solutions - to the 75,000 people in Ottawa who go hungry each day.



Panel member Dr. Elaine Power, an associate professor in the School of Kinesiology & Health Studies at Queen's University, said outright that food banks aren't working. "Only 20 to 30 percent of food insecure households ever go to food banks." One of the problems with food banks, explained Power, is that they provide a comforting illusion of people not being hungry.

"Food banks show that we care," said Power, "but they have never gone away, though they were never intended to be permanent." The danger, said Power, is that food banks can give us a false sense of having dealt with the issue of hungry Canadians. "We forget about hunger because we think food banks are solving the problem."

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October 15, 2015

Open Policy Ontario - John Stapleton

Hunter Gatherers in Toronto

A hunter-gatherer is defined as follows by dictionary.com:

"A member of a group of people who subsist by hunting, fishing, or foraging in the wild."

Single welfare recipients in the city of Toronto have become modern hunter-gatherers that subsist for up to three weeks per month foraging in the 'wilds' of Toronto's soup kitchens, food banks and clothes exchanges.



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November 17, 2015

The Vancouver Sun - Randy Shore

Edible waste tax break campaign gaining traction with cities

A national campaign in support of federal tax incentives for companies that donate edible surplus food to charities for the poor is gaining traction with municipalities in B.C. and across Canada.



But the plan is suffering from significant blowback from an unlikely quarter: anti-poverty groups who worry that incentivizing charity further entrenches a system of giving that robs the poor of the dignity of choosing and buying their own food.

The anti-poverty group Put Food in the Budget condemned the tax incentive plan as "morally repugnant" and misguided.

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November 2, 2015

The Globe and Mail - Valerie Tarasuk

Donating 'edible waste' to food banks in exchange for tax credit? Now that's a rubbish idea

The National Zero Waste Council has launched a campaign to reduce food waste by advocating federal tax credits for food companies that donate edible food waste to food charities. They are asking Canadian municipalities to support the campaign, suggesting that reducing food insecurity through corporate food donations to food banks will lead to better health and education outcomes.



Central to the National Zero Waste Council's argument is the claim that food banks reduce their clients' food insecurity.

It is encouraging that governments are recognizing the importance of food insecurity. However, recommending millions of dollars in tax credits to encourage multinational food corporations to dump their waste on food charities is indefensible.

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November 13, 2015

The Tyee - Andrew MacLeod

Don't Reward Corporations for Donating Food Waste, Critic Says

The federal government should refuse to give a tax break to corporations that donate waste food to charity, says retired University of British Columbia social work professor Graham Riches.



The National Zero Waste Council -- an organization whose membership includes local governments, businesses and non-profits -- wants municipal governments to pass motions urging the Canadian government to create a tax incentive "for food producers, suppliers and retailers to donate unsold edible food."

Riches, however, said a tax incentive for food donations would fix neither the problem with food waste nor the problem with hunger.

"It's a solution to both problems that seems like a win-win to both sides, but it's deceptively simple," he said.

Surplus food is the result of overproduction, and helping companies financially when they produce too much is the wrong approach, he said.

"I can't understand how that gives them an incentive to deal with the food waste, particularly if they're receiving a benefit for it," he said.

Nor is increased food charity what people who are hungry need, Riches said. "The people who are poor, what they really need is money in their pockets so they can go into a store and purchase food like anybody else."

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