

Freedom 90 Charter

What we witness at food banks and emergency meal programs

Every year, volunteers see more people coming to food banks and emergency meal programs in Ontario communities. (More than 400,000 households per month visit food banks.) What used to be termed a food emergency has become normal—for more than thirty years now.

Poverty is being 're-branded' as 'hunger' to mask its cause: inadequate incomes, which are due to low wages, precarious work, and social assistance levels too low to provide adequate housing and food.

Successive Ontario governments have relied on community volunteers to meet the most basic need of their neighbours—having enough to eat.

But a separate and segregated food system for people with low incomes is undignified and often humiliating.

A separate and segregated food system is also inefficient, inadequate and unsustainable. The existing food distribution system—stores and markets—is inaccessible to many people simply because they lack enough money.

The majority of volunteers at food banks and emergency meal programs are older women who have other family responsibilities and their own health and well-being to consider.

What We Believe

Food banks and emergency meal programs do not, and never will, meet the basic needs of people in our communities with low incomes.

Every resident of Ontario has the right to health and dignity, including enough income to pay the rent and buy food.

Ontario is a wealthy society and can afford to ensure that everyone has adequate housing and food.

When food banks and emergency food programs are no longer needed to meet basic needs, we'll know that poverty in Ontario has ended.

Our Commitment

Freedom 90, the Union of Food Bank and Emergency Meal Program Volunteers, commits to raising our voice to demand an end to poverty and an end to the need for food banks and emergency meal programs in Ontario.

April, 2012