

Local food banks need healthy food

BY NICOLE MACINTYRE

Everyone is trying to be healthier these days, including the food bank.

But it's a challenge for local charities that depend on nonperishable donations to stock their shelves. Often people donate what they

don't want to eat from their own cupboards or buy cheap processed food.

"Our first priority is feeding people, closely behind that is feeding them well," says Joanne Santucci, executive director of Hamilton Food Share. "We want them to feel healthy."

While some local food banks have refrigeration to store fresh food, many can only supply non-perishables, which makes healthy donations even more critical.

Here's her list of healthy products to consider next time you donate to a food drive.

■ Tuna or salmon packed in water

- Peanut butter
- Low-sodium canned vegetables
- Beans and legumes
- Juice from 100 per cent fruit
- Healthy dry cereals or cream of wheat
- Fruit packed in water
- Nutribars and healthy snack bars

- Ensure
- Whole-wheat bread
- Make a financial donation to your local food bank and ask that it be designated for food purchases of fresh fruit and vegetables
- If you have a vegetable garden, grow a row for the food bank and donate it.