



HAMILTON HUNGERCOUNT 2007

It is not by chance that poverty will be resolved—it's by good design.
Nation Council on Welfare: Solving Poverty

The HungerCount Survey is completed each year in the month of March. March was chosen as a typical month for access. The information in this hunger snapshot profiles 13 Hamilton agencies representing 10 food banks and 7 hot meal programs that constitute the major emergency food programs operating in the Hamilton area. Also represented in the meal statistics are 2 local child nutrition programs.

Hamilton is home to 502,000 people. Ninety-five thousand live in poverty. Approximately 15% of our poorest citizens live in a constant state of emergency, cobbling together whatever resources it takes just to put food on the table. The hunger count statistics represent **real people** experiencing **extreme hardship** every day in our community.

- ◆ Low income households are food insecure households that cut back on basic needs such as food in order to keep a roof over their heads.
- ◆ **53% of the people in need are families with children under the age of 18. This figure represents approximately 5,000 parents** in Hamilton who go to bed worried, not knowing if they will be able to beat poverty back from their door step again tomorrow.
- ◆ Families who live in poverty have a tenuous link to the mainstream of our community as the slightest fluctuation in their income or expenses can produce a real risk of homelessness.

Food Banks have become the last stop before families become homeless

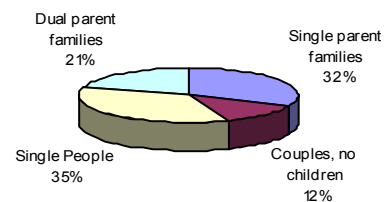
- ◆ Hunger among children is a critical issue. Children can not learn if they are hungry and they are more susceptible to illness. Often at school they are not included in social activities. Women and children are the largest group living in poverty.

- ◆ **15,748** people per month turned to a food bank
- ◆ **6,314 (40%)** are children under the age of 18
- ◆ **8,179** households relied on food banks to meet their basic food needs
- ◆ **169,230** total visits per year were recorded at the local food banks representing **71,388** households
- ◆ Approximately **8,000 Christmas hampers** are given out each year assisting 16,874 people
- ◆ **52,276 individual hot meals** were served across the city

Food Bank Income and Family Profile:

- ◆ **10.8%** are working
- ◆ **5.2%** were looking for work
- ◆ **48.9%** were on Ontario Works
- ◆ **22.8%** were on Ontario Disability Support Program
- ◆ **3.4%** had no income at all
- ◆ **5.3%** were seniors over the age of 65
- ◆ **3.4%** had other various forms of income
- ◆ **53%** were families with children (31.8% single parent families and 20.8% dual parent families)
- ◆ **12%** were couples with no children

Family Composition



Meeting the Need

Access figures submitted to the hunger count show a decline of 12% in the total number of people served at the local food banks. Despite the numbers submitted, agencies contend that the number of people in need has been unwavering and furthermore that the decline in access numbers has more to do with ability to meet the need than the need itself. Agencies cited threadbare operations referring to a lack of human resources to process long lines and lack of space and food supply shortages. A lack of resources was attributed to some local food banks closing early throughout the month of **March 2007**.

Out of 10 food banks who completed the survey :

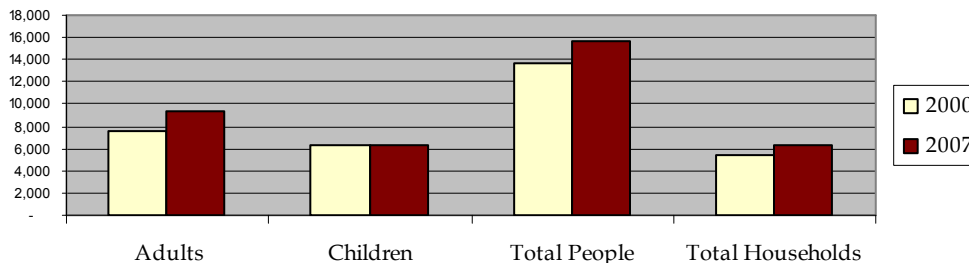
- ◆ 4 agencies struggled to provide staple food items and had to buy more food to meet the need
- ◆ 2 agencies cut back on the food hamper size
- ◆ 2 agencies served less people by reducing their food bank hours repeatedly throughout the month
- ◆ 6 cited lack of adequate space to operate and store food
- ◆ 3 agencies cited lack of staff as the resource they were lacking most
- ◆ 3 agencies cited food as the resource they were lacking most
- ◆ 3 cited volunteers as the resource they were lacking most

| <i>Food Bank Access Comparison</i> | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>March 2007 to March 2006 Statistics</i> | | |
| | March 2007 | March 2006 |
| ADULTS | 9,434 | 10,289 |
| CHILDREN | 6,314 | 7,571 |
| TOTAL PEOPLE | 15,748 | 17,860 |

4.5 million—The minimum volume of food needed per year to feed the hungry at the local food banks

2.2 million or 49%—The volume of food Hamilton Food Share's Food Recovery Program supplies to local food banks.

Food Bank Access Comparison of March 2000 to March 2007 Statistics



The depth of hunger shows a significant increase in food bank access over a 7 year period with a 25% increase in adults and a 2% increase in children lining up at the food banks. Overall a 17% increase in the number of households in need of emergency food.

Tremendous energy goes into operating food banks across the city as **3,477 paid staff hours** were logged on the "front line" during the month of March along with **4,627 hours donated** by Hamilton citizens through volunteering.

Agencies who participated in the survey:

Good Shepherd Centres
 Living Rock Ministries
 Mission Services of Hamilton
 Neighbour to Neighbour Centre
 St. Matthew's House (2 locations)
 Stoney Creek Community Food Bank
 The Salvation Army Hamilton
 The Salvation Army Dundas
 Welcome Inn Community Emergency Food Pantry
 Wesley Urban Ministries
 Hamilton Out of the Cold Program Coalition
 Beasley Area Nutrition 4 Kids
 North Hamilton Community Health Centre

- ◆ Largest food bank serves 3,324 people per month
- ◆ Smallest food bank serves 187 people per month
- ◆ Most food banks allow only one visit per month
- ◆ Most food banks give out only three days worth of food
- ◆ All but one food bank closes in the month of December to redirect all resources to Christmas hamper programs



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