

The Calgary Interfaith Food Bank & St. Pius X Parish

In the winter of 1982 volunteer initiative, with the assistance of the Calgary Inter-Faith Community Action Association, created the Food Bank to aide Calgarians suffering financial strain due to the fallout in the Oil & Gas industry.

Over the 24 years, Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank has grown from a small charity in a church basement with four volunteers, to a million dollar organization in a 60,000 square foot building, with a volunteer base of 4,000 strong.

The Food Bank has had to continually move as it keeps outgrowing its accommodations. Its original location was located at the First Lutheran Church, on Fairmount Drive South. Not long after, the food bank moved to the Baker House on 4th Ave and Macleod Trail SE where they had access to a refrigeration unit. In 1983 a further move, necessitated by the ever-expanding need for space, was made to the basement of the Ross Kerr Building at the Corner of Kensington and 10th Street NW.

During this time the Food Bank was already delivering up to 40 hampers a day through their depots, while at the same time, supplying their agencies with bulk food. The food bank again outgrew its accommodations and another move was made in 1984 to an old Supermarket in Downtown Calgary where Safeway agreed to pay the rent and utilities. The downtown location had to

receive essential repairs causing another move to be made to 7475 Flint Road SE in 1989.

It was in 1989 when the Food Bank decided to apply for incorporation under the Societies Act as the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank.

A final move was recently to the current location 5000 11 - St SE. The Food Bank today is a facility with space to sort food, create hampers and distribute food.

St. Pius X Parish began to actively support the Food Bank in 1983. Many volunteers became personally involved with the Food Bank and the parish response to our appeal for non-perishable food and monetary donations has been outstanding even if it is relatively low-key. Year

round, the baskets for food donations and the envelopes for cash donations are located in the church vestibule and pamphlet racks respectively.

We have a special food drive at Thanksgiving and our Advent Food tree. Children's Liturgy and the Sacramental Preparation Programs actively promote the Food Bank. The CWL, in 1983, challenged parishioners to bring a 500gm jar of Peanut Butter for the Food Bank because peanut butter is one of the essential items included in their food hampers. That

challenge was re-issued in 2005 during our Jubilee Year celebrations.

Providing Hope for the Future

The Calgary Inter-Faith believes they are giving a "hand up" rather than a "hand out" to those in need. Elimination of the stress that can be caused by the worry of where their next meal will come from, clients can use their energy to recover from their emergency situation.

The Calgary Food Bank is a crisis facility to feed Calgarians in need. Individuals and families receive hampers containing enough food for approximately one week to a maximum of six hampers per year.

In support of their mission, the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank believes:

- All people seeking our help should be treated with compassion, dignity and understanding.

- Our clients deserve the highest quality foods that are possible for us

to provide.

- The best way to meet hunger needs is in collaboration with others who share our common purpose.
- The spirit of volunteerism is our strength and our primary resource.
- We are accountable to our community for the

Giving a "hand up" rather than a "hand out" to those in need.

programs and services we deliver.

FAST FACTS

- 94,686 Calgarians came to the Calgary Food Bank in 2005 (42% were children).
- The Calgary Food Bank is supported solely by the generosity of the community through donations of food, funds and time. We are neither a government nor a United Way agency.
- Last year we required \$3.5 million in fund donations and \$13 million in food donations to meet the need in our community.
- We are a crisis facility; our mandate is to provide people with emergency food. Clients are screened and limited to six hampers per year. 10,908 clients were referred to us by partner client agencies.
- 85 % of Calgary Food Bank clients receive a hamper three times or less per year.
- The majority of the clients the Food Bank serves are the working poor. When making minimum wage most clients have to have at least two jobs and still cannot make ends meet.
- Every day over 80 people volunteer their time.
- Last year more than 4,200 individual and group volunteers gave an incredible 95,800 hours to help us feed the hungry (that is the equivalent of 49 full time jobs!). The 29 staff members are used to manage the warehouse and administration
- Our volunteer and staff drivers make 102 food pickups each week from donors.
- We distribute an average of 165 hampers per day. Our hampers are designed to provide approximately one week's worth of nutritious

food based on Canada's Food Guide.

- Through our BP Food Link Program we distribute food to over 100 Calgary not-for-profit agencies that assist those in need. Food equivalent to 4.8 million meals is distributed annually.
- We created and distributed 11,322 Hampers for the Homeless to our partner agencies.
- 37,246 Litres of milk was distributed to 11 community partner agencies. 3,792 containers of milk and 1,467 containers of infant formula were delivered to over 500 households.
- The Food Bank will only distribute quality food. Our volunteers feel that if they would not eat the food, they will not give it to clients. Often best before codes have expired before we receive the product. This is either given to farmers, composted or as a last resort destroyed.

You can become a volunteer by attending one of their regularly scheduled Volunteer Orientations. They provide you with information about the Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank, their volunteer program and include a tour of their facility. At their main address (5000 11 St. SE), volunteers are active Monday to Friday, mornings, afternoons and evenings. Some special projects take place on weekends.

Did you know that during November and

December, up to 80% of their annual food donations are made? That means that the need for volunteers also increases during that time.

Volunteers are active in three distinct areas at ClFB. You can volunteer in the warehouse (Operations), work with the general public (Client Services) and out in the community with special events (Public Affairs). Volunteer projects can accommodate groups (your family, and school or youth group) of various sizes as well, although advance bookings are required. Volunteering is a great way to teach children about helping those in need and supporting the community. The minimum age to volunteer at the warehouse is 12, therefore if volunteering in the warehouse; an adult must accompany youth between the ages of 12 and 15.

Most volunteers come for shifts that range from 2-4 hours in length (this time is negotiable depending on your area of activity).

Who are the People who are helped by the Food Bank?

They are people you know.

- The working poor (people working at minimum wage-sometimes more than one job at less than full time hours).
- Children, seniors and persons with disabilities.
- People who are receiving social assistance or living on a fixed income.
- Newcomers to Calgary
- People who have experienced increases in rent & utilities.



NON PERISHABLE FOOD

SUGGESTIONS:

PEANUT BUTTER - 500 gm

Canned Fish

Canned Meat

Canned Soup

Canned Beans

Pasta

Spaghetti Sauce

Canned Stew

Canned Tomatoes

Canned Vegetables

Canned Fruit

Juices

Macaroni & Cheese

Processed Cheese Spread

Baby / Junior Food

Baby Formula (Isomil, Similac -
Liquid or Powder)

CASH is always a good choice for a donation. The Food Bank has contacts and opportunities to purchase food in bulk, at great prices. They also need to pay for the administration of their operation (utility bills, maintenance of their building, gas for their vehicles, full-time staff, etc.).

WHAT ST. Pius CANNOT GIVE TO THE FOOD BANK:

- Perishable food (mandarin oranges, potatoes, etc.)
- Opened food items
- Home baking, canning, etc. This is due to Health Regulations only
- Toys, clothing (this is not part of their mandate, these are usually given to St. Vincent de Paul)

For more information on the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank check out their website at www.calgaryfoodbank.com .