



**Dear Community Partner:**

**Thank you for attending the provincial strategy day of the Put Food in the Budget Campaign.**

Or (if they didn't attend the Strategy Day)

**Thank you for your continued and valued participation in the PFIB Campaign.**

As you are aware, the campaign has the active participation of groups like yours, in thirty communities around Ontario. The campaign is growing in scope and diversity in support of our demand for an immediate \$100 a month increase for every adult in Ontario receiving social assistance as a first step towards income adequacy. Our longer term goal is for a transparent method of setting social assistance levels that reflect the real cost of housing, food and everything that enables a life of health and dignity.

Mobilizing a campaign of this magnitude and achieving the momentum we have experienced over the past two years would not have been possible without strong centralized leadership and coordination at the provincial level. But as we all know, this takes resources and these resources do not come easily. Until now, a small group of people have been primarily responsible for seeking out and securing the funding needed for the coordination piece at the centre of the campaign. Over the last two years, the campaign has successfully raised \$5,000 every month, just in time, in order to keep building and moving forward. This has been a tireless effort and one that has succeeded in bringing us this far. The campaign has been supported with generous donations from the Social Planning Network of Ontario, from many unions including CUPE, OPSEU, CAW and the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, and from faith and health organizations and individuals.

**It is apparent at this time, that we need to enlarge the circle of support and look to the communities represented in this effort, to assist in obtaining the funding necessary to maintain Mike in the pivotal role of provincial coordinator.**

Without this key staff position, we would be extremely limited in what we could achieve at the provincial campaign level. We could continue to work in our local communities but would not have the same direct and collective impact on the province that is made possible because of the ongoing coordinating and planning that the staff position makes possible. The Coordinator position and coordinating body also networks us together so that we can draw on the ideas and strengths from other communities. Even our local efforts would be compromised as so much of what we do is resourced by the coordinator and what can be achieved by the coordinating body because a staff person is resourcing that and providing strong facilitation, leadership and expertise.

Case in point, days like the recent Provincial Strategy Day simply would not happen. These opportunities allow us to pool our strengths and build our power and cohesiveness as a cross-provincial campaign. In our opinion, maintaining the staff will be key to enabling us to build our power and momentum and bring real pressure to bear on the province by utilizing the very strategies and tactics we developed together last Friday Dec 28<sup>th</sup>.

As we head into the pre-budget and pre-election campaign we want to improve the certainty of our campaign resources and feel more secure every month than having the money come 'just in time'. We estimate we need to raise \$60,000 for 2011. With 30 communities participating in the PFIB campaign, we propose that each community on average, setting a goal to raise \$1,000 from local organizations and donors, would enable us to raise half of our campaign budget for 2011. Other sources of funding would continue to be pursued but our collective support would ultimately make it realizable.

***With that in mind, we would like to issue a CHALLENGE to all communities involved in the PFIB Campaign. Please go back to your communities as we have done in Hamilton and York Region, and appeal to your supporters and communities to put their financial support behind this campaign.***

**And here is a unique suggestion that we're excited about.** For those communities who had individuals who took the Challenge, don't forget that these key supporters, new champions in their communities for the Healthy Food Supplement, would likely welcome the opportunity to support the campaign in this way. Perhaps challenging them to donate \$100 would be a great way to start the ball rolling in terms of bringing them on board and they might in turn, put the Pledge Challenge out to others. This is just another example of how we can utilize the network and power of this movement to sustain the good work.

To come this far over the past two years – to have achieved the success and momentum we've arrived at - to know what it is we need to do and not be able to push forward in this election year of 2011, would be a tremendous loss of REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE.

**LET'S GET THIS DONE TOGETHER!!**

If you accept this challenge of raising funds in your community, please make cheques payable to the Social Planning Network of Ontario, (Please put PFIB or put food in the budget on the memo line of the cheque)

And mail to: Social Planning Network of Ontario

Social Planning Network of Ontario,

c/o Community Development Halton,

860 Harrington Court

Burlington, Ontario L7N 3N4

**Thanks Everyone. We know we can do this Together!**

**Deirdre Pike, Hamilton** \_\_\_\_\_

**And**

**Yvonne Kelly, York Region Do the Math Working Group**

**\*Members of the Provincial Coordinating Team for PFIB**

Mike Balkwill

Provincial Co-ordinator,

Put Food in the Budget Campaign,

[mbalkwill@iasc.on.ca](mailto:mbalkwill@iasc.on.ca)

416 806 2401