

DO THE MATH YORK REGION – NEXT STEPS

In June 2009, the **DO THE MATH WORKING GROUP of York Region** was struck and we have worked diligently since that time to convince MPPs of the need for implementation of the \$100/month Healthy Food Supplement for all adults on social assistance and for rates that reflect the real costs of living. We have made progress on this front and yet the politicians still need to know that this is an issue for voters.

We were excited to receive funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation to allow us to continue our work – to bring individuals and organizations to a place where they could voice their need for the province to put hunger and poverty on the agenda in this election year. Our project **ADVOCACY: AWARENESS TO ACTION**, is intended to bridge the gap between knowledge and action. Many people are aware of the costs of poverty to everyone in our society, but are not equipped or sure how they can advocate and initiate change. We are producing a video that will inspire individuals and groups to get involved and have a voice on this issue and most importantly will speak to concrete ways in which they can actually do that.

In cooperation with several agencies and people with lived experience of poverty, we are also developing an Advocacy Plan for the year of 2011 that will enable us to our make voices heard through Media, Letter Writing Campaigns, Social Networking Tools, Individual, group and municipal endorsements of the HFS, Group Presentations and Team Meetings with MPPs across York Region. We are working with one Advocates Group in the north end of the Region preparing individuals to reach out and speak to others about how they can get involved and make a difference and are planning for another Advocates Group to begin in the south end of the Region in April.

We work closely with the Provincial **PUT FOOD IN THE BUDGET (PFIB) Campaign** which is active in 30 communities across Ontario. You can always visit www.putfoodinthebudget.ca and www.yrfn.ca to learn about current activities and ways to advocate for the \$100 HFS. We have just launched a campaign to educate people about the burden on meal programs and food banks across Ontario that are trying to keep up with the increasing demand for food. Visit the site and find out how you can support the thousands of volunteers in emergency food programs across Ontario, by asking the provincial government to increase their role.

We are excited about the AAA Project and to be addressing income inadequacy – the real cause of hunger and food insecurity. Keep posted on what we're up to by checking out both the websites above and call Yvonne at (905)967-0428 Ext. 205 for more information.