



Finance Minister Dwight Duncan

We are writing to you, as individuals and groups across York Region, who are part of the Ontario-wide **Put Food in the Budget Campaign**. While our letter and cards are coming to you one month past Valentines Day, we knew that you would be interested in receiving them none-the-less. Better late than never as they say, and that's what we'd also like to say to you concerning the \$100/month Healthy Food Supplement. While it is already late in coming, we won't hold that against you. We know that it will make an absolute difference in the lives of the many people on social assistance in York Region and across Ontario.

People voted with their hearts when they made out their Valentines to you over the last month. The predominant group that expressed an interest in sending you these messages, were food bank visitors and individuals who out of survival, rely on community meal programs in York Region on a daily basis. Volunteers who provide these programs, also want to pass along their plea for the \$100 Healthy Food Supplement as 45% of the people they serve are on Social Assistance. With depleting resources and a growing demand for emergency food, the volunteers at the front-line of these programs are really feeling the pinch and know that a \$100 Healthy Food Supplement would ease the very real burden being faced by many recipients and would also reduce the demand on emergency food supplies so that others on a low or fixed income can access food.

Our Valentine's message is simple and consistent with the other 30 communities across Ontario who are involved in this campaign:

Don't Fudge it. Put Food in the Budget. Include funds for a \$100 HFS in this budget.

We trust that you will hear our concerns and our pleas. We realize that your government has committed to various other poverty reduction strategies and while we applaud these measures, we must remind you that individuals on social assistance continue to exist so far below the poverty line in Ontario that it is inexcusable. Please do the right thing and provide the Healthy Food Supplement as one measure in addressing human suffering, chronic poverty, unnecessary health care costs related to inadequate nutrition and the tragic loss of human potential.

We look forward to a day when hunger does not define the landscape of communities across Ontario. Please work with us to achieve this vision.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Kelly, Chair of the Do the Math Working Group in York Region

On behalf of: Residents, Emergency Food Program Recipients, Volunteers and Community Workers in York Region

cc. Premier McGuinty, Minister Meilleur

