

PRESENTATION OF AAA PROJECT TO FOOD BANK COORDINATORS IN YR

As most of you know, we've been involved in the **PUT FOOD IN THE BUDGET CAMPAIGN FOR 2 YEARS NOW**

\$100 Healthy Food Supplement for all Adults on Social Assistance in Ontario who receive 60% of what they received in 1995.

First step in addressing inadequate rates – next is to index them to cost of living and also maintain the Healthy Food Supplement

In past 2 years over 45 MPPs have been met with. All 7 in YR; many have completed the DO THE MATH SURVEY and average total is \$1350. Which is far above \$592 Or \$1062 on ODSP

The awareness is there but the Political Will is not and MPPs say it is due to the fact that even though 1000 took the Do the Math Challenge, over 10,000 people completed the surveys and 30 communities have voiced their interest in the HFS, they still have not heard enough from their constituents the voting Public.

YR Council endorsed the Healthy Food Supplement as one recommendation that came from the YR ISARC Social Audit Report in 2010, and have passed along their endorsement to the Minister of C and Social Services and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario

So what's next – getting the public to make it clear to their MPP that this is an important issue and an investment they want the government to make.

That is where the **ADVOCACY – AWARENESS TO ACTION PROJECT** COMES IN

Heart and Stroke has provided us funding for this year, and potentially next year, to develop these action steps, to mobilize the community to make this a voting issue and in turn increase the pressure on our MPPs to make this an issue in the election and in the house.

Various pieces to this include:

A video to demonstrate the impact of poverty/hunger in York region and what our community could be like if we eradicated poverty and focused on building a healthy community

Advocacy and Letter Writing Toolkit for individuals and organizations

Advocates groups of low-income individuals who are working together to spread the word, bring others on board, encourage civic engagements and write letters to MPPs

Teams to visit MPPs to be developed over the summer.

An advocacy plan that organizations, groups, programs and individuals can plug into that will involve letter writing campaigns, social marketing strategies, presentations to groups/boards and a media strategy.

Focus on public awareness and action campaigns in coordination with the Ontario Coordinating Committee for the PFIB - Valentines for Dwight Duncan, Municipal Endorsements of the HFS, Volunteer Recruitment around the Food Drive in April – making people aware that there are other things they can do in addition to donations – stickers on bags – pfib url on the bags

Which brings me to why I want to speak to you today

In terms of Constituent Groups that the Government is more likely to listen to and feel the pressure from, it is the Volunteer Sector in this case, primarily the Volunteer Sector responsible for emergency food in the food banks and meal programs. 25% increase in the provision of meal programs across Ontario alone in 2010 and that is only meal programs associated with known foodbanks.

Volunteers have been exploited and dumped on and relied on in a way that is unfair and cannot meet the basic needs of growing numbers of people. This is what I hear from volunteers at numerous programs

Volunteers are facing an increased burden as the demand for emergency food increases and donations don't. How is it that the government has reduced their responsibility for individuals and families – it's because they have downloaded so much of this responsibility on food banks and meal programs.

Mr. McGuinty will stand proudly by at the launch of the next provincial food drive and talk about the generosity of donors sharing the bounty with the less fortunate and somehow convince himself, not us, that this is OKAY. And GOOD ENOUGH!

I ask you as volunteers, coordinators and programs that stand between those who rely on you daily, and the government who is reducing its' responsibility, to SPEAK TO THIS ISSUE, ENDORSE THE \$100/Healthy food supplement, reduce some reliance on your own programs and speak to the need for the government to increase their support of individuals so food banks don't need to build an even bigger infrastructure to meet the needs of the hungry in this province.

You will see an ENDORSEMENT PAGE, a CALL TO ACTION PAGE, and a BACKGROUNDER

Please take the steps we've outlined, share this with other volunteers, visit the www.poorinthebudget.ca site in about a week's time and add your comments or take the survey that we're posting there specifically for volunteer and charitable organizations that are holding this whole system together.

OTHER PLANS WE HAVE FOR INCREASING OUR ADVOCACY CAPACITY

Screening the POOR NO MORE VIDEO on Hunger Awareness Day on May 31, 2011 – Location TBD; additional screenings to be arranged in north and south YR from June onward

Inviting the SPNO to come and present their blueprint for a Poverty Free Ontario on June 7th – likely will be at the YR Council Chambers 9-12:00 Tuesday June 7th