

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO - DO THE MATH IN YORK REGION??

As hard as it is to believe, many people in York Region are suffering chronic food insecurity.(*). For some, choosing between eating and paying bills is an ongoing daily struggle.

- There is a growing gap between those who have and those who don't have the means to live in York Region. Although the median income York Region in 2006 was reported at \$89,099 the 5th highest in Canada, the proportion of people living below the Poverty Line increased from 10-13% from 2001 – 2006¹
- In 2006, 15% of York Region children under 18 (32,477) lived in low income households – an increase of 62% over 2001²
- Food bank use increased 29% in January to April 2009, over the same period in 2008 (**York Region Food Network – Foodbank Statistics 2008-2009**)
- Monthly Caseload for OW recipients in York Region rose to over 5,000 in Jan-April 2009, an 11% increase over Dec. /08. (**Report #5 Community Services and Housing Committee- York Region Council Meeting June 25, 2009**)
- Monthly Caseload for ODSP recipients in York Region in June /08 was 7,667. This represents a cumulative increase of 52.4% from June /02, outpacing all other GTA municipalities and the provincial average for this same period. (**Peel Region ODSP- 2009 Budget Document**)

THE HIGH COST OF HOUSING AND THE LIMITED SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR TO POVERTY IN YORK REGION.

- Households are considered to have affordability problems if more than 30% of household income is spent on housing costs. (**Health Status Indicators Report – Public Health, York Region Community and Health Services Dept. 2007**) In York Region, 48% of renters (15,482) and 27% of homeowners spend 30% or more of their total income on housing costs – the highest in the GTA³
- If you spend more than 50% of your gross income on housing (rent, electricity, heat and municipal services), then you are at a higher risk of homelessness. You are also at significant risk of experiencing chronic illness, depression, heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. Over 22% of tenants in York, spend more than half of their income on rent.⁴
- People who access food banks spend on average, 60% of their total income on housing (**Hunger in the Midst of Prosperity Report, YRFN 2008**)
- In a review of 22 rental markets in Ontario, the highest rent increases over the last 10 years took place in York Region. Rents increased by a rate of 60% the rate of inflation⁵

¹ Statistics Canada 2006 Census

² Statistics Canada 2006 Census

³ 2006 Census: *Where's Home?2008 Ontario Non Profit Housing Association(ONPHA) and Cooperative Housing Federation (CHF)*

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

(*) Food Security: Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (**Agriculture and Agrifood Canada. Canada's Action Plan for Food Security: A Response to the World Food Summit**)

THE RESULTS:

- INSUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR FOOD, CLOTHING, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER BASIC NECESSITIES.
- SIGNIFICANT HEALTH RISKS AND THE COSTS THAT ACCOMPANY THEM.

It's definitely time to - DO THE MATH IN YORK REGION

"Do the Math" is a survey tool developed with input by The Stop Community Food Centre in Toronto and is being done across the province by the Social Planning Network of Ontario. By doing the math you can see that eating healthily or at all, can be an extreme challenge for someone on social assistance. To address this disparity we are encouraging support for a \$100 monthly Healthy Food Supplement for individuals on social assistance.

So *Do the Math* with us, and see for yourself. www.putfoodinthebudget.ca