



The Food Providers Networking Group (FPNG) and Kingston Community Roundtable on Poverty Reduction invite you to participate in **Kingston's Do the Math Challenge**, in support of the Put Food in the Budget Campaign. The Challenge will raise awareness about poverty in Kingston, encourage the provincial government to put an additional \$100 a month in the pockets of social assistance recipients for food, and in the longer term as part of their poverty reduction strategy, revise social assistance rates based on actual living costs.

Community leaders across Ontario continue to support the Put Food in the Budget (PFIB) Campaign by participating in the Do the Math Challenge. As of December 2010, 1,000 people in Ontario had taken up the challenge of living for up to one week on a diet similar to which low-income people typically receive from their local food banks.

These participants, prominent in their local communities, accepted the Challenge in solidarity with people receiving social assistance and to draw attention to their inadequate incomes. They wanted to find out for themselves whether anyone anywhere in Ontario earning a total of \$592 per month could possibly afford housing, food, transportation, and everything else. Food banks were never meant to be a permanent part of Ontario's safety net, and those who volunteer and staff food banks agree that in spite of their best efforts the amount of food they make available to clients is inadequate.

BUILD CHANGE BY BUILDING COMPASSION

People who accepted the Challenge told campaign organizers that on average they spoke to 75 to 100 people about their experience. That means from October to December 2010, 75,000 to 100,000 people in Ontario were part of a compassionate conversation about social assistance levels and the living situation of people in their communities receiving the lowest levels of income. And many more people were reached by reading about their experience on Facebook, in blogs, on numerous websites and in local news reports.

We hope that you will consider being a participant in the Challenge. Along with this invitation, we've also included additional information about the Challenge itself, outlining what your obligations would be and what we hope the outcome of this campaign will be.

Our Challenge Committee and Campaign Coordinator will be available throughout the Challenge to provide support and information as necessary.

WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS DO?

You can play your role in this vital effort by doing the following:

- living for at least three days or up to one week on some of the limited food options faced by people on social assistance
- talking about your experiences with your friends, families, co-workers, faith members, and local politicians
- speaking publicly about your experiences via social media sites, the local media, and at our Wrap-Up

HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

Step 1: Please provide answers to the questions outlined on the Participant Diet Information Sheet. Please also provide us with a photograph of yourself. These materials will be used on our website to help promote the challenge.

Step 2: Plan your diet, buy the food, and begin your experience May 13 to May 18, or for as long as you can up to May 22. Please consult the information sheet provided in a typical food hamper from a food bank.

Food hampers usually provide food for three days, but the people who receive them often have to make them stretch much longer than that. Please buy your own food and eat only what's on the list (along with five standard pantry ingredients – oil, flour, salt, coffee, and tea) for at least three full days and longer, if you can. To make your food supplies last longer and to deepen your experience, you can, however, eat at community meal programs, if you like (see list attached).

Step 3: Share your experience via social media, local media, and/or the Wrap-Up, Thursday, May 26 at 6 pm at St. George's Cathedral (Great Hall).

Should you keep a blog, post your experiences on Facebook, write an article for the local media or otherwise publicize your experiences, please send notification/copy to the Kingston Put Food in the Budget Committee of the Food Providers Networking Group. Contact information appears at the end of this letter.

Step 4: Participate in the Wrap Event, planned for May 26th.

PARTICIPANT DIET INFORMATION SHEET:

Given or preferred nickname:

Occupation:

Favourite food:

Guiltiest food pleasure:

Family size:

Estimate of how much you and your family spend on food per week:

Why are you participating in this project?

DO THE MATH CHALLENGE TIMELINE

MAY 2011

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Start you food bank diet this week, if possible During the week, document and share information regarding your progress and the challenges you face.						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Wrap up event @ 6pm at St. George's Cathedral						

Communicating your experience is the key part of this campaign. We encourage you to use social media to connect with your network and make them aware of your participation in the challenge. In addition to this, if you'd like to blog about your experience, our Challenge Coordinator can help you set this up.

The Wrap-Up will be a public meeting to provide an opportunity for you to discuss your experiences with the community and media. Some questions you may want to consider for the purposes of discussion include the following:

- How long did the food last?
- What was the hardest thing for you about the Challenge?
- How did the Challenge diet affect your physical or emotional health?
- Did you 'cheat'? Why? How?
- What kinds of conversations did you have with friends, family, co-workers, faith members, etc.?
- What do you want people in the community to remember about your experience?
- What do you want to convey to politicians about your experience?

TYPICAL FOOD HAMPER

Food hampers usually provide food for three days, but the people who receive them often have to make them stretch much longer than that. Please buy your own food and eat only what's on the list (along with five standard pantry ingredients – oil, flour, salt, coffee, and tea) for at least three full days and longer, if you can. To make your food supplies last longer and to deepen your experience, you can, however, eat at community meal programs.

Although you are being invited to participate in the Challenge as an individual, we would encourage to consider including your family, children and/partners in the Challenge as well. With this in mind, we have included Food Hamper information for a single person, two people and a family.

single person

- 2 boxes Kraft Dinner (or substitute extra rice if gluten-intolerant)
- 3 juice boxes
- 3 single-serving size scoops of rice
- 2 small cans soup
- box of dry cereal or 3 packages instant oatmeal
- standard protein sources: any TWO of 175 gram tins of tuna, chicken or turkey; small jar of peanut butter; 3 eggs
- 2 small cans tinned vegetables, or 1 tin vegetables and 1 tin fruit
- 1 potato
- 1 onion
- 1 can plain beans, or 1 can pork and beans
- 3 granola bars for 3 fruit chews
- 1 quart milk
- 1 loaf bread (or substitute extra rice)

two people

- 500 g dried pasta (or substitute extra rice)
- 1 small can tomato paste or sauce
- 6 juice boxes
- 6 scoops dry rice
- 4 small cans soup
- 2 boxes dry cereal or 6 packages instant oatmeal
- 4 small cans of tinned vegetables , or 3 vegetables and 1 fruit
- 2 potatoes
- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- standard protein sources: FOUR of 175 g tins of tuna, chicken, or turkey; small jar peanut butter; 3 eggs (e.g. you could have 2 tins of chicken and 6 eggs, or two tins of tuna, 1 jar peanut butter and 3 eggs, etc.)
- 2 cans beans or pork and beans
- 6 granola bars or fruit chews
- 2 quarts milk
- 1 loaf of bread (or substitute extra rice)

family (2 adults, 2 children)

- 900 g dried pasta (or extra rice)
- 2 small cans tomato sauce or paste
- 3 juice boxes per person
- 1 small can prepared pasta
- 3 scoops dry rice per person
- 1 box dry cereal per person or 2 packages instant oatmeal per person
- TWO per person of 175 g tins of tuna, chicken, or turkey; small jar peanut butter; 3 eggs OR 1 package chicken hot dogs, plus 1 additional standard protein source per person
- 2 small cans of vegetables per person or 2 cans tinned fruit
- 1 can beans or pork and beans per person
- 2 potatoes
- 1 onion
- 2 carrots
- 3 granola bars or fruit chews per person
- 1 quart of milk per person
- 1 loaf of bread per person (or extra rice)