

Raising the political profile of hunger ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Anyone looking for evidence the recession had a significant impact on Brantford and area residents need only visit the food bank.

The number of families using the food bank has increased dramatically over the past couple of years and has remained well-above pre-recession levels, says Cindy Oliver, program manager at Community Resource Services, which operates the food bank.

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"2009-2010 was the year we saw the big increase," Oliver said. "We averaged 1,244 families a month that year.

...

Citing The Ontario Hunger Report 2010: Running on Empty -A decade of Hunger in Ontario, the associations said food banks are busier than ever. Since the recession hit in 2008, food bank usage in Ontario has increased by an unprecedented 28 per cent.

According to the report, 402,000 Ontarians, or 3.1 % of the population had to turn to a food bank for help every month in 2010, up from 374,000 in 2009. Moreover, nearly 40 % of those getting help from the food bank are children.

To help combat the problem, the food bank association is calling on all political parties to take action on three specific suggestion: a food bank donation tax credit for farmers; a housing benefit for low-income tenants and provide better access to affordable, nutritious food.

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One in every five Ontario tenant households spend more than 50 per cent of their income on rent which puts them at risk of homelessness, the association says.

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The diocese is calling on candidates to develop a policy that bridges the gap between low incomes and high rent, an action plan for affordable housing with targets and timelines and increased funding for affordable housing 2012.

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Region: Ontario ^[2]

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