



For immediate release

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The Face of Hunger Will Surprise You

Many Working Canadians resort to food banks for essential food

Thursday June 5, 2008 is National Hunger Awareness Day; Canadian Association of Food Banks calling for increased awareness of hunger in Canada, public engagement, and government action on 4-step plan to reduce need for food banks.

Toronto, June 4 /CNW/ -- The Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB) is calling on all Canadians to learn about and act on hunger in Canada. On June 5, 2008, National Hunger Awareness Day (NHAD) will provide an opportunity for Canadians to get involved through activities at their local food bank, and by signing the CAFB Hunger Awareness Day petition. The CAFB is also putting forward a 4-step plan that, if implemented, will reduce the need for food banks in Canada.

More than 720,000 Canadians are assisted by community food banks every month. 39% of those helped are children under age 18, and 51% of assisted households are families with at least one child.

It is a discouraging reality that, of the more than 720,000 individuals assisted each month, 19% - more than 133,000 people – live in households where the primary source of income is from employment or Employment Insurance.

“I’ve been working all my life,” says Glenn Kitchener, a food bank client and volunteer living in Toronto. “But I had some bad luck with my health, and worked for an employer that didn’t support me while I got better. I was able to find a food bank that provided me with much-needed food, and also an opportunity to volunteer and contribute to the community. Now that I’ve started working again, the food bank is continuing to help me until I’m up to full-time hours.”

“Most people likely know someone in their community who uses a food bank, even if they don’t realize it,” says Katharine Schmidt, Executive Director, CAFB. “Working people, seniors, families with children, people with disabilities can all face barriers to earning sufficient income to provide food for themselves and their families. This has been a problem for over 20 years, and we need support from all Canadians – and all Canadian governments – to solve it.”

The CAFB Hunger Awareness Day petition provides 4 steps the federal government can take to reduce the need for food banks:

- Develop a National Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Reform the Employment Insurance system to make it more fair
- Move forward on a \$5,000 Canada Child Tax Benefit
- Invest in affordable housing and child care

More information on Hunger Awareness Day

Local Walls of Hunger

Food banks in towns and cities across the country will create Walls of Hunger representing the number of people assisted with essential food in their community. Those assisted by food banks will have an opportunity to contribute messages to the walls.

CAFB *Hunger Facts* and NHAD Petition

For more information on hunger in Canada, please download *CAFB Hunger Facts* at <http://www.cafb-acba.ca/documents/HungerFacts2007.pdf> .

To sign the CAFB Hunger Awareness Day petition, go to <http://www.hungerawarenessday.ca/en/petition.php> .

CAFB Corporate Hunger Heroes

National Hunger Awareness Day would not be possible without the support of some of Canada's leading corporate citizens. CAFB Corporate Hunger Heroes are vital to raising awareness for the cause.

Our Corporate Hunger Heroes include: Sodexo, Campbell Company of Canada, ING Real Estate Canada, Investors Group Inc., Kraft Canada Inc., McCain Foods (Canada), Nestlé Canada Inc., Purolator Courier Ltd., and Pepsi QTG.

Their National Hunger Awareness Day activities include:

- Sodexo: posters in 12,000 magazines, e-bulletins, link to NHAD website and web banner on www.sodexoCA.com, lunch and learn sessions
- Campbell Company of Canada: *Help Hunger Disappear*[™] campaign with national in-store POS and retail displays, online information at www.help hunger disappear.ca, public installation of the word "HUNGER" constructed from 12,000 Campbell's soup cans in Toronto, and a 100,000 can donation to CAFB national food sharing network
- ING Real Estate Canada through its No Space for Hunger program: community charity BBQs in Toronto and Halifax offices with proceeds to local food banks plus employee awareness with NHAD posters and stickers and public promotion through NHAD email banner
- Investors Group Inc.: media conference, canned good collection/jean day, NHAD posters, corporate match to Winnipeg Harvest for every dollar spent in cafeteria June 5, 2008
- Kraft Canada Inc.: Internal employee awareness and poster program
- McCain Foods (Canada): employee fundraising events in all Canadian locations and food donations to local food banks
- Nestlé Canada Inc.: internal employee awareness and poster program (internal flyer announcing hunger statistics and employee donation locations, link to the NHAD website and posters in all Ontario offices and factories)
- Purolator: NHAD posters in all retail centres across Canada, NHAD articles on Intranet, Casual day at head office on June 5 with donations going to NHAD
- Pepsi QTG: head office and plant food drive on June 5, 2008.

About the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB)

The CAFB is a national charitable organization representing the food bank community across Canada. More than 720,000 people access food banks each month - 39% are children. CAFB conducts research, engages in public education and advocates for public policy change to eliminate the causes of hunger and poverty in Canada. In 2007, the CAFB acquired and shared 8 million pounds of food industry donations through its National Food Sharing System for hungry Canadians.

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