



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018





## Chair of Board Report



Over a quarter of a century has passed for our organization and for many food banks across Canada. Through the tireless effort of a dedicated staff, hundreds of caring volunteers, donors, and community partners. Our organization was able to remain steady in our efforts to keep Hatter's and area residents fed when they needed it the most.

...and here we are 25+ years in the making and 10% of our community remains in need. As an organization we averaged 55,000lbs in monthly food distribution to families this past year.

So where do we go from here? We believe there is a better way.

Alongside our partners in Thrive we are serious about delivering on priorities that are focused on ending poverty and increasing wellbeing. This past year we seen the needle on these priorities move in the right direction with continued progress on bringing our dream of a Community Food and Wellness Centre to life. An inclusive space that will use food and education to bring people together and build a thriving community. In the year ahead, I look forward to the strong support from community as our organization shares the story of what the Community Food & Wellness Centre could mean for Medicine Hat and area residents.

In closing, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity I have had to work with such wide range of caring individuals and organizations. Although this will be my last annual report as chair, I will remain dedicated and forever grateful to this organization and the people that make it all possible.

Collectively, with the ongoing support of our staff, donors, partners, board and volunteers, our goal of delivering a strong and sustainable food security platform that aims to reduce poverty and increase wellbeing within our community...is attainable.

All the best,

Steven St Peter  
*Chair, Board of Directors*

## The Heart & Root of the Community

### Heart

The apple is shaped like a heart because food sustainability is one of the foundations of our organization.



### Root

By your support of our programs we are able to be the first point of growth to conquer food sustainability.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed it's the only thing that ever has.  
Margaret Mead*

## *Executive Director Report*

An organization is only as strong as the people within it and this year I would like to celebrate those people.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. Without you we don't exist! From the folks who join us from Redi every week and help us keep our building clean, those who carefully sort food and package in the warehouse, make Brown bag lunches every day, keep the gardens weed free, mentor and support our participants and help members get their grocery items, to those who volunteer by sitting on the board, speaking about us in the community and working third party events, we can not thank you enough for all you do .

The second group is those who often sit in the background quietly doing their work, showing up everyday for all of us... the team of people I have the distinct pleasure of working with. They are the other heroes of this organization, the ones who ensure that we always look our best in the community! They work too many hours and they lay up at night to try and make the foodbank the best place to be a volunteer, a donor and of course the place where we fight hunger everyday with compassion, dignity and respect.

The third group is donors! Our organization is one of the few that does not receive any ongoing operational funding from the Provincial or Federal government, we rely completely on the community to keep our doors open. It always amazes me how people dig deeply into their hearts and wallets to give when we ask.

Our organization only exists because of the kindness of community, whether you donate money, grocery items, or time you allow us to do our work. You are the reason children in our community never have to worry about being hungry.

Through the Medicine Hat and District Foodbank and the role I play here I have learned that Making the world a better place isn't always about the big things sometimes it is about looking around and truly seeing your own gifts and how they may help another human being.

Thank you for being a gift to me everyday and reminding me why I am so passionate about this organization and this community!

Celina Symmonds  
*Executive Director*





## Mission

The Medicine Hat & District Food Bank works collaboratively in the community of Medicine Hat and Surrounding area to ensure an adequate and accessible food support system is available to individuals and families in need. This is achieved through support in:

- Emergency Crisis: Providing food to individuals and families in a life crisis or in need of temporary assistance
- Security: Offering innovative food support programs to clients that are focused on skill development, coaching and mentorship to help empower positive change/ improvement in their lives
- Sustainability: Innovative programming and leadership to proactively address hunger and food needs in the community

## Vision

The Medicine Hat & District Food Bank is the trusted source in the community of Medicine Hat and surrounding area for food related resources, innovative programs and collaborative approaches to food security and stability

## Summer Student's Take Away

I believe there is one aspect more predominant and bares more power and true value than anything else. . . . It's not any one moment, one experience, or tangible object. In fact, it's the intangible features. The pure feelings and emotions that are created in the Food Bank environment.

My greatest take away this past summer is the intangible feeling of "REWARD." I am not speaking on the rewards of paychecks or giant thanking's from my colleagues or superiors. When I speak of the feeling of reward that I have gained from working at the Food Bank this summer I refer it to the emotional well-being that no matter how large or small, I have made an impact and help redirect towards a positive change in my own community.

***"There certainly is no limit to the extent of learning experiences, inspirational moments, or joyous memories"***

The task may change from day-to-day but the feeling that was transferred and instilled within me from my work environment is constant and everlasting. That rewarding feeling sparks my morning and energy to bring my best me to work no matter the circumstance because I know that other people in our world, in our community, or even our members are having to struggle to start their day.

Because of my work, I can try and create a worthwhile impact and positive change in someone's life. I utilize that rewarding feeling to fuel my mindset and understand I can do something today that can change someone's life forever, consciously or unconsciously. That mindset of wanting to create a change no matter what size of impact, it really does work.

I used to always think and express that change people speak of wanting is just talk, that they never actually walk the walk. At the Food Bank I routinely see people who talk the talk really do walk the walk and it works! Seeing the support and care for our members has helped them climb back up a seemingly endless rising mountain.

Because of all my experiences I have taken in I have created a sense of value. Happiness can be created by helping one another and those in need and in return the greatest gift is the sense of "REWARD."

*Collin Ralko*



# Household Food Insecurity in Alberta

1/10

households in Alberta experience **food insecurity**



Food insecurity is about **income...**

>**60%** of households that rely on social assistance are food insecure

**80%** of food insecure households receive income through employment, but it is not enough to cover basic living expenses



"lack of money to buy enough healthy food"

Food insecure households experience many struggles...

- Ongoing stress about getting enough healthy food
- Difficult choices about which essentials to 'go without'

**\$1089**

A modest estimate of the cost of a basic healthy diet for an Albertan family of 4



Adults living in severely food insecure households are...

- **3x** more likely to suffer from **chronic conditions**
- **4x** more susceptible to **heart disease**
- Up to **4x** more likely to have **diabetes**



## Programs

Our programs target the immediate food needs of individuals and families in Medicine Hat by supplying food and support to a large network of members. We are continuously working to continue this innovative spirit in our organizations by working with local agencies to develop new programming which affords us the opportunity to offer a multitude of services right at the Food Bank.

*"Just one program  
kind of creates a  
domino effect in  
people's lives that is  
absolutely priceless"*

## In Our Brown Bag Lunch Program

The Food Bank serves 500-700 nutritional lunches to hungry children within 32 schools in Medicine Hat and surrounding area every school day. In the lunches, each child will receive: the choice of a meat and cheese sandwich or pea butter sandwich, a serving of fruit, vegetable, and a dairy product, as well as a snack item.

**\$1**

Lunch for a day

**Sponsor One Child**

**\$200**

Lunch for a year



## In Our Community Gardens

This community initiative creates an opportunity for families to learn about: where food comes from and how to garden, all while enjoying the peacefulness and sanctity of the garden. All children that attend the Food Bank with their parents go out and pick fresh fruits and vegetables. This 24 hour a day community garden is accessible to all members of the community and is one of our four community gardens.



# In Our Food First Culinary Experience

## Q&A

This community kitchen program not only addresses poverty with innovation and long-term solutions, but teaches families the skills needed to prepare healthy, nutritious meals and snacks. We work directly with the families to solve food sustainability and provide the opportunity for them to learn a variety of cooking skills.

**Q Tell me about your experience with this program.**

**A** It has been an amazing change in my life in how I prepare my meals to how much time I have for me in my life. I am not spending so much time worrying about what I am going to make for dinner. The deep freezer full of food has been absolutely amazing, like I can't even describe how much that helped. It has allowed us to save enough money so that I could buy a bicycle for myself to get to and from work, which is helping me save more money because I am not taking bus rides and cabs all the time.

**Q Do you feel more valued in your community since participating in this program?**

**A** I do feel more valued in my community, especially because the Food First program actually got me out into my community and talking to people that I normally wouldn't interact with, people outside my bubble. So, I met a lot of good people and made a lot of good connections and I do feel valued in my new family of people.

**Q Are you more likely to access programs in your community because of your involvement with this program?**

**A** This program was totally different than I originally thought it would be but when I actually got there and started interacting with people I found a huge boost in my own confidence. A lot of my quality of life really increased as well through this program. I got out of my hermit hole and started interacting with the community. Now I am definitely more likely to put myself out there into the community more and access different programs and even help out with those programs when I can.

**Q Would you recommend this program to your friends and family?**

**A** I would definitely recommend the food bank and the programs to other people. It has been such a huge change in my life, that every person I come across who is suffering from any sort of food security, I tell them about the food bank and the programs available here.

“

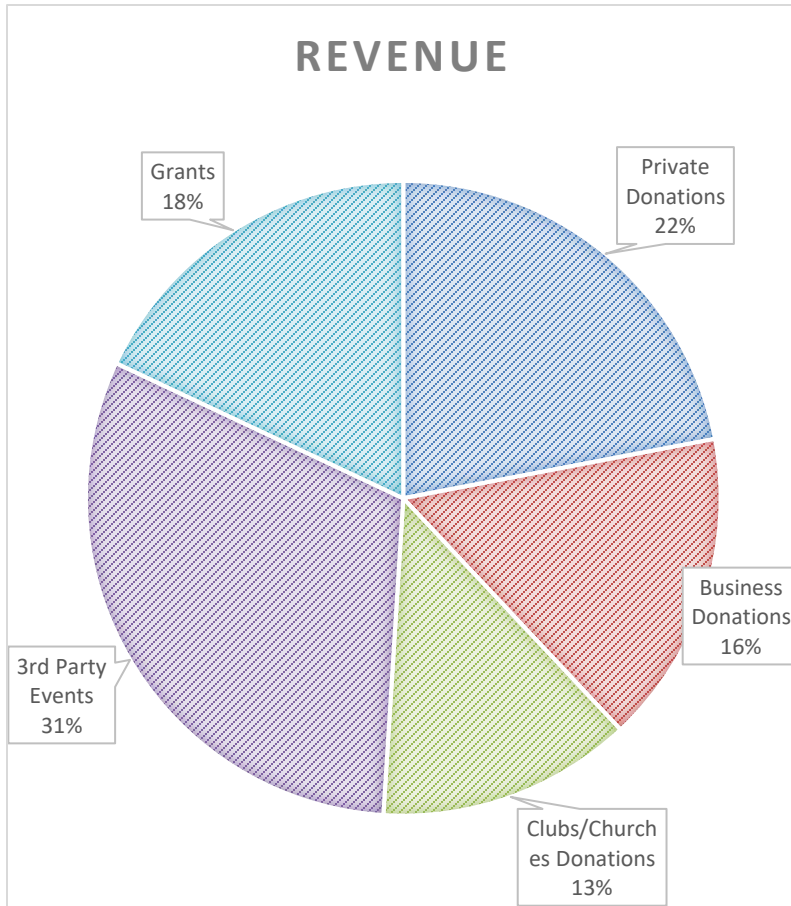
*We've gone from just surviving to thriving and it's all thanks to you.*

”



# Financial Snapshot

July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018



**740,210**



**582,116**



**90,224**

## Our Member Services

The Food Bank Program allows an opportunity for the community to access food during emergencies. Families and individuals can access our many programs that target their immediate food needs. When a new member comes to the Food Bank we provide them with food by giving them a "1-2-Go" which is enough food for a few days until an appointment is scheduled.





## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

***“ It's a lot of team building amongst ourselves as well as building with the members. ”***

Interview with long time volunteer Norm Whitford

### **What has it meant to you to be able to volunteer?**

Well, pretty well my life and careers have been based around helping people. But I was retired and needed something to do and what better way to spend my time than being with people while volunteering with the Food Bank. The staff and volunteers are great to work with and the members are appreciative. I am very proud to work here. I am able to use a lot of my previous skills in cooking and social work to make people feel comfortable.

### **Do you volunteer to remain active in your previous field, as well as in the community?**

It is beneficial for everybody. It is not about handing out groceries, it's about building your community so that it feels good and everyone succeeds.

### **Do you find that volunteering is helpful for your wellbeing?**

I still think of it as work and look forward to coming every day. I love giving back to our community and I hope that our members will take the same thing from it and give back also.

### **What would you say to a potential donor?**

They have to feel good that they are helping the same way that you would want if receiving a donation. It doesn't matter the size of the donation. It just matters that they can walk away with a sincere feeling of thanks.

**When You Volunteer  
We All Grow!**

Our volunteers have donated  
over 15,000 hours last year!





# Our Generous Sponsors

July 1, 2017 to  
June 30, 2018

The following lists those who have made contributions of \$5,000 or more. We would like to also acknowledge, with gratitude, the significant contributions made by all donors who contribute to us directly or through one of our many community held events.

## *Leadership Circle*

*\$50,000 +/year*

CHAT 94.5  
Costco  
Superstore  
Sobeys Cornerstone  
South Country Co-op  
Safeway  
RedHat Co-operative Ltd  
Walmart  
Foodland IGA  
Methanex

Canadian Pacific Railway  
Badlands Harley-Davidson  
Elkwater Colony  
Giant Tiger  
Winifred Colony  
Mr Lube  
Food Banks Canada  
Short Grass Ranches Ltd  
The Link Church  
Big M Ford  
Medicine Hat Motor Dealers Association

## *Food Sustainability*

*Champion*

*\$25,000 - \$49,999 /year*

Cypress County  
United Way South Eastern Alberta  
Anonymous

## *School of Knowledge Sponsor*

*\$5,000 - \$9,999 /year*

Cenovus Energy Inc  
Hilcrest Church  
Holy Family Church  
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Mervin & Lauren Boychuk  
Trevor Linden Foundation  
TELUS  
Step Energy Services Ltd  
Medicine Hat College  
Food Banks Alberta  
Raymond James Canada Foundation  
Brost Land & Cattle Co  
Pat's Off-Road Transportation Ltd

## *Garden of Health*

*Advocate*

*\$10,000 - \$24,999 /year*

Canadian Fertilizers  
Ken & Brenda Lea  
MacPhail  
RBC Foundation  
Gerald & Elaine  
Freedman  
Waste Connections of Canada  
Jenner Colony  
Hydraco Industries Ltd  
Rose Glen Colony  
Davis GMC Buick Ltd  
London Drugs

*Thank  
you!*

*For  
Helping  
Us*



We receive no federal or provincial funding





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#### Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Closed 12:00 pm – 12:30 pm

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Charitable Registration #886574599RR0001