

## FROM OUR CEO

#### Making a difference today. Creating change for tomorrow.

There is no doubt that the last year has been difficult for everyone. The economic challenges caused by rising inflation rates and housing costs have put pressure on almost every household in the province. For people living in poverty, these pressures have been felt even more acutely.

In the last year alone, more than 800,000 children, adults, and seniors walked through the doors of their local food bank, many for the very first time. While this is both heart wrenching and concerning, we do have cause for hope.

With the incredible support of our partners, donors, and friends, Feed Ontario is providing more food, funding, and opportunities than ever before. We are exceeding food distribution targets, supporting capacity building projects, and expanding our reach through new partnerships and initiatives that are keeping food banks open and shelves stocked for those who need it most.

Your generosity is having a direct impact on food banks across the province and, in turn, people who would otherwise not have the same access to nutritious food or supportive programming to help make ends meet or get back on their feet.

The impact of your support also extends far beyond today. Driven by your generosity, we are advocating tirelessly for solutions that will address the root causes of food insecurity and poverty in our province. We are actively engaging with policymakers, community leaders, and fellow advocates for systemic change and a future where no one goes hungry.

Our work and progress would not have been possible without you. Your generosity and dedication allow us to continue the critical work we are doing today, while helping us build a better tomorrow.

On behalf of our organization and the provincial food bank network, thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. We are hopeful and determined and know that with your partnership we can FeedON, Feed Possibility, and Feed Change.

With gratitude,

Carolyn Stewart, CEO

## **ABOUT US**

Feed Ontario represents a network of **more than 1,200 food banks and hunger-relief organizations** across Ontario. Through our network, we deliver millions of pounds of food across the province, serving more than 800,000 people each year. While we work to strengthen and grow the capacity of the provincial food bank network, to realize our vision of an Ontario where everyone is food secure, Feed Ontario continues to advocate for evidence-based programs and solutions to make ending hunger and poverty a priority in our province. Our work is focused on three pillars:



#### **FeedON**

We distribute nutritious and fresh food to food banks across Ontario



# Feed Possibility

We provide food banks with training, support, and resources



#### Feed Change

We work to eliminate poverty through research and advocacy

#### **Land Acknowledgment**

Feed Ontario <u>acknowledges</u> that we are situated on the traditional and ancestral territory of many nations and that the land we call Ontario is located on the home of many diverse Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge the historical impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples, including the historical and ongoing intersection of food insecurity with the legacy of colonialism.

We wish to emphasize our commitment beyond rhetorical gestures of inclusion and commit to continually work to build strong relationships and community resilience together, with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike. We invite you to reflect on the unique connection that Indigenous peoples have had with this land for thousands of years, and on the relationship with the ecology that provides all we need for life.

### HIGHLIGHTS of 2023-24

#### **FeedON**



800,822

and children served in Ontario, an increase of 38% over 2023

visits made to food banks in our network, a 35% increase over 2023

### \$44 million

in food, funding, and support provided to food banks across Ontario, an increase of **\$7 million**. This includes 10.6 million pounds of food

#### **Feed Possibility**



direct members including 3 new members - and over 1,100 affiliate food banks and agencies

\$650,000

invested into 32 capacity building projects and community initiatives, including \$100,000 invested through the Innovation Lab to improve food access in Northern Ontario

workshops held to provide food banks with training on client care, operational efficiency, Truth and Reconciliation, and advocacy

#### **Feed Change**



17,000+ postcards distributed by food banks to Members of Provincial Parliament calling for action to reduce hunger

meetings held during our **Day of Action** at Queen's Park with Ministers and MPPs from every political party

30+

TV, radio, and print interviews to raise awareness of food insecurity and poverty in Ontario, and 8 local events co-hosted in all corners of the province

Through these programs, Feed Ontario provided food banks across Ontario with pantry staples and fresh foods.



#### **FEED COLLABORATION** 2.4 million pounds of food



**FULL SHELVES** 1.8 million pounds of food



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#### **METRO ONE MORE BITE** 1.7 million





**MILK PROGRAM** 1.2 million litres of milk



**CHICKEN PROGRAM** 329,569

pounds of chicken



**EGG PROGRAM** 110,070 dozen eggs



**BEEF PROGRAM** 60,606 pounds of beef



**PORK PROGRAM** 21,434 pounds of pork



**TURKEY PROGRAM** pounds of turkey

# **BUILDING MOMENTUM:**Year One of Our Strategic Plan











## With Your Support, We Are Exceeding Our Strategic Goals

Food banks are facing the highest demand on record as more Ontario families turn to our network for support. To help address this growing need, Feed Ontario launched its most ambitious strategic plan to date.

Developed in partnership with food banks across the province, our strategic plan sets a bold vision for the future and key objectives that will help to strengthen the provincial food bank network. Key priorities include strengthening our impact through innovation, efficiency, and network alignment; improving network access and the sustainability of food resources; and increasing the impact of our network advocacy efforts.

With the first year of this three-year plan now behind us, we are pleased to share that we have already started to meet and exceed targets. This would not have been possible without your support.

### We are delivering more food than ever before

by more than 34 per cent, delivering over 10 million pounds of fresh and non-perishable food to food banks across the province. Through our Feed Collaboration pilot, industry partnerships, and Full Shelves campaign, we helped food bank shelves stay stocked for the people and families needing support.

Alongside this work, Feed Ontario developed its first Network Equity Strategy to help support and improve equitable access to food programs and resources. Through networkwide engagement, we gathered feedback from across the province on how Feed Ontario and food banks could work collaboratively to address current challenges and strengthen partnerships within and between communities.

# We are demonstrating excellence through national accreditation

Food Banks Canada has launched a national accreditation program: The National Standards of Excellence. Through this program, food banking organizations are provided with a framework to strive for and achieve excellence in all areas of operation, including governance, financial management, client service and care, and food quality and safety.

In 2023, Feed Ontario became one of the first organizations to be accredited under this program. While we have always set a high bar for our organization, accreditation under the National Standards of Excellence helps to support a culture of continuous improvement and demonstrates our longstanding commitment to operational excellence.

# We are "walking the talk" and helping to build a healthier province

When income does not keep pace with the cost of living, people and families are forced to make impossible choices between basic necessities, like keeping the roof over your head or having enough food to eat. Feed Ontario advocates for quality employment, strong social supports, and public policies to help address the rising cost of living.

While we work with all levels of government on moving these policies forward, we believe that everyone has a role to play in creating opportunities that contribute to a healthy province. In 2023, Feed Ontario became a certified living wage employer. As leaders in the poverty reduction and food insecurity sector, we are leading by example through progressive employment practices and workplace culture.

### **FeedON**



#### **Feeding Ontario Today and Every Day**

Feed Ontario's FeedON Pillar supports the work that we do to help address the immediate and urgent need that food insecure same products as those in more populated people and families are facing today. The programs that we operate under FeedON include the fresh food programs that we run in subsidy program, helping food banks access partnership with Ontario's agricultural sector, grocery retail recovery partnerships, and bulk purchasing programs that leverage our provincial buying power.

With the support of donors and partners, we were able to provide **over 10 million pounds** of fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food to food banks in all corners of the province last year alone. This included fresh food essentials, like milk, eggs, meat, and produce, as well as pantry staples, like tuna, rice, and pasta.

In addition to our fresh and non-perishable food programs, FeedON includes innovative programs that help ensure food banks in remote and rural communities can access the areas of the province. With donor support, Feed Ontario was able to expand its milk more than 2,000 litres that they would have otherwise gone without, as well as expand its partnership with the Ontario Federations of Indigenous Friendship Centres, providing more than 245,000 lbs (112,000 kg) to 18 locations across the province, including Ininew (Cochrane), Nishnawbe Gamik (Sioux Lookout), Atikokan, Fort Frances, and Kapuskasing.

With more Ontarians turning to food banks for help than ever before, Feed Ontario is working hard to ensure that food bank shelves remain full for the people that need help today.



**FEEDON** 



#### Full Shelves at Food Banks Mean Full Shelves at Home

Feed Ontario's <u>Full Shelves</u> program leverages provincial buying power through bulk purchasing, helping to make sure that every dollar is stretched to its fullest potential. Through this program, Feed Ontario purchases and provides much needed fresh food and pantry staples that could otherwise not be fulfilled through donations to Ontario food banks. This year marked the seventh consecutive year that food bank use increased, putting unprecedented pressure on food banks across the province. To help ensure food banks could continue to meet this need, Feed Ontario launched a new fundraising campaign to raise urgent support for the network. Our incredible partners answered this call, providing more than \$700,000 in funding to help keep shelves full. Thanks to their support, and the support of our longstanding program partners, we provided more than 1.8 million pounds of food, valued at almost \$6.7 million, to food banks across the province through our Full Shelves Program.

# Feed Collaboration: Doing more together than we could alone



We know that it is only by working together that we will be able to address hunger and poverty. This year, Feed Ontario expanded its Feed Collaboration pilot to a second region of the province. Now operating in partnership with The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and Food Banks Mississauga, this innovative program leverages local resources and expertise for the benefit of a region and beyond. The goal of this pilot is to build relationships, reduce duplication of effort, increase sustainability, and provide more food to all food banks within the region. With the addition of the second pilot location, Feed Collaboration's procurement was almost **15 times greater** than the previous year's food procurement total with more than 2.4 million **pounds** of food distributed to food banks through the program.















# Feed Possibility

#### **Building Resiliency for Today and Tomorrow**

The Feed Possibility pillar represents programs and funding opportunities that are instrumental to maintaining a resilient network and enhancing our collective impact. As food banks continue to face unprecedented pressure, the programs we operate under this pillar are intended to help food banks best serve the unique needs of their communities and get more food to those who need it most. Ensuring food banks have the resources and capacity they need to provide quality care and service today, while providing training and opportunities to prepare and plan for the future, is a vital aspect of our work.

Made possible by the generosity of donors and supporters, we developed a training program to help food banks obtain their National Standards of Excellence accreditation, a framework that helps food banks demonstrate their commitment to client service and care, resource management, operations, safe food handling, and more. This program has been shared with provincial food bank networks across the country and is helping support food bank accreditation in other provinces too.

We also developed and launched an emergency preparedness portal to ensure

food banks can effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from various types of emergencies, including natural disasters, unexpected local, national, or worldwide events, and changing environmental factors. This system has been presented at several emergency preparedness events and is being recognized as an innovative approach to helping community agencies build their emergency response knowledge and plans.

In our work to ensure that food banks not only have what they need to operate today, but are resilient for the future, we also offered numerous webinars, training resources, and hosted an annual conference to provide essential skill building and learning opportunities for the volunteers, staff, and board members who work tirelessly to help those in need and in service of their community.

It's important to know that this isn't a oneway support system. It's a collaborative effort that is supported by knowledgeable and passionate leaders in food banking who participate on food bank-led committees and share tools, resources, and best practices to enhance the collective work of our entire network.



# **Investing in Growth, Community, and Capacity**

The Feeding Possibility! Grant is designed to improve the overall resilience and capacity of the provincial food bank network. Through this grant program, food banks are provided with essential financial resources to implement projects intended to increase their capacity, support their sustainability, and expand their infrastructure, allowing them to better meet the needs of their community.

This year, Feeding Possibility! Grant Program provided \$650,000 in funding to support the daily operating needs of food banks by funding new equipment and programming opportunities and assisted in the establishment and enhancement of research and advocacy work within their communities. These projects and activities mean that food banks have the tools and support they need to reach beyond day-to-day service, open doors for collaboration, and ultimately provide quality care and service. This year, your contribution supported 32 capacity building projects across Ontario.

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#### Innovation Lab: Uplifting a Ground Breaking Project

Feed Ontario was grateful to be able to offer the Innovation Lab, a new grant stream intended to provide up to \$100,000 to support one highly innovative project that a food bank would otherwise be unable to pursue. The Regional Food Distribution Association (RFDA) which services an area that extends from Thunder Bay to the Manitoba border and north into remote and Indigenous communities was awarded the Innovation Lab funding for their Rural and Remote Community Food Hub project.

Northern Ontario faces many challenges including high rates of food insecurity and food availability, elevated transportation costs, and complex logistics that has often resulted in increased food waste. Their initiative to develop three food hubs along the Northwest corridor intends to support food distribution efforts by creating drop off points to allow for more frequent deliveries throughout the North. The Innovation Lab funding supported the first hub in the project, the Ignace Food Hub, and will consist of two electrically powered containers for refrigerated food access and a food packaging area.



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## Feed Change



#### **Advocating for a Future Without Hunger**

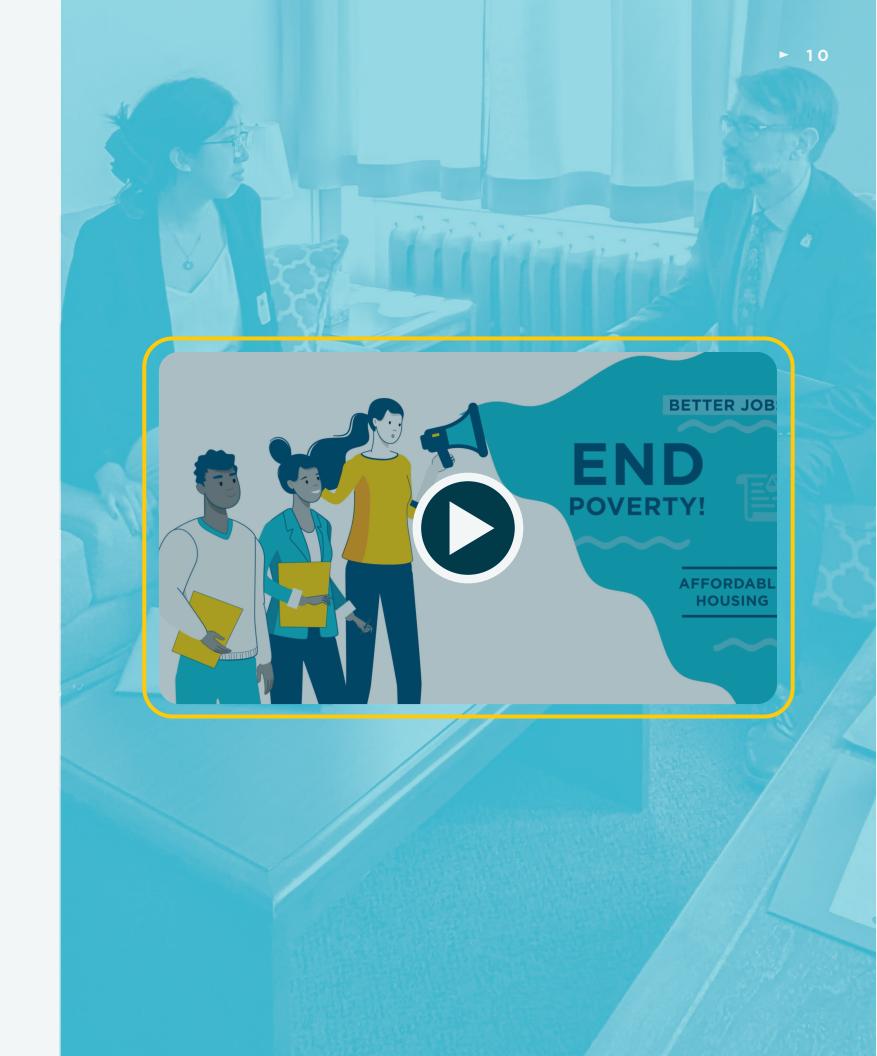
The Feeding Change pillar focuses on advocating for poverty reduction solutions that we believe will alleviate food insecurity in Ontario. As more Ontarians have no choice but to rely on food banks to get by, your support helped Feed Ontario increase awareness on the issues of food insecurity and poverty, provided opportunities for researching solutions, and gave us the ability to advocate for meaningful change.

In our work to raise awareness of food insecurity and poverty in Ontario, Feed Ontario once again executed two key annual activities: Hunger Action Month and the launch of our Hunger Report. These advocacy initiatives provided opportunities to amplify and share our important research and recommendations. We also launched a brand new interactive digital tool, Fork in the Road, to invite Ontarians to take a walk in someone else shoes as they navigate some of the tough

budgetary choices and sacrifices that people accessing a food bank face every day.

With the help of valuable partners, Feed Ontario provided ongoing food bank use data to the Government of Ontario, met with Members of Provincial Parliament through "Day of Action" events at Queen's Park, presented at government consultation committees and roundtables including the provincial budget consultation, and collaborated with like-minded groups and coalitions to advocate for improvements to Ontario's social assistance programs and for affordable housing solutions.

Research and advocacy are essential to building a future without hunger. It is only through collective action and partnership that we will be able to feed change and build a future where no one goes hungry.



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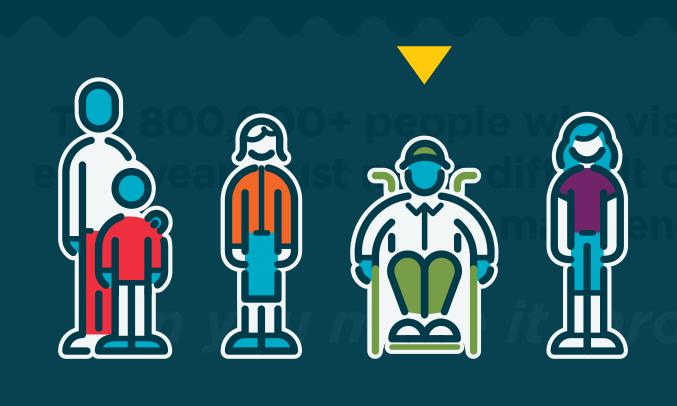
#### Fork in the Road



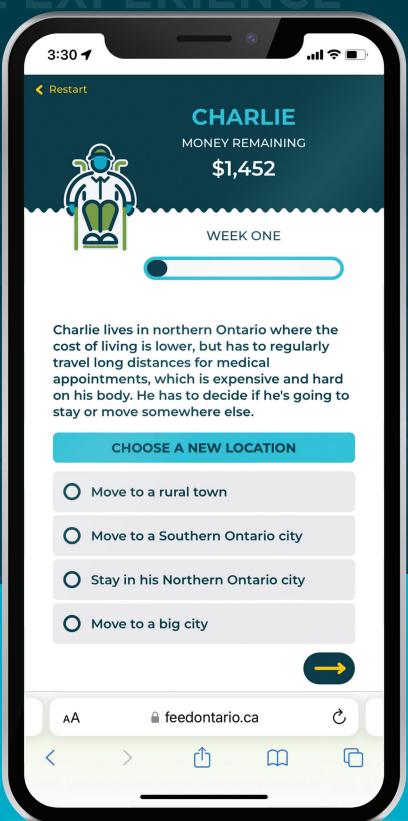
I was in a grade 6 class on Monday to speak about food banks. I used the Fork in the Road scenario with Dan and his son. At first the class was excited that they could make great choices for this family. They had solid answers for each choice they made. The first time that they could choose healthy groceries or not so healthy groceries that talked to me about 'thinking ahead' and 'long term consequences' for not eating healthy. By week three they chose to eat unhealthy food and really understood how difficult the choices were to make. At one point a student mentioned how the father must be depressed having to make these choices, so we discussed the implications of having a depressed father. The exercise took an hour to get through with all their comments. The students listened attentively every time the father spoke. Hearing his perspective validated their choices."

- Cathy Ashby, House of Lazarath, Mountain Ontario

INTERACTIVE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE



Feed Ontario launched Fork in the Road, an interactive digital experience intended to help build a greater understanding of the challenges that individuals and families are facing across Ontario as a result of incomes not keeping pace with the cost of living. The tool allows users to experience a month of decisions including navigating where to live, how they will get around, what bills they can afford to pay each month, and what, if any, little pleasures may be in the budget. Fork in the Road was launched along side the Hunger Report and has been featured in news stories, showcased at meetings and events, and used by educators within their classrooms.



## **Hunger Report 2023:**Why Ontarian's Can't Get Ahead

Hunger is often an unseen problem in a classroom, workplace, or community, making raising awareness of the issue of hunger essential to solving it. This year's <a href="Hunger Report">Hunger Report</a> revealed the largest single increase on record with **more than 800,000**Ontarians accessing a food bank last year.

The report provided detailed information on food bank use in Ontario and resulting policy recommendations to ensure that all Ontarians have access to the income they need to afford their basic necessities. This year's report was released during a press conference at Queen's Park where 15 food bankers from across the province joined in a show of solidarity to highlight the pressure facing food banks. The release of the report generated over 30 media interviews including this one: Number of people using Ontario food banks rose 38 per cent last year.



To help further highlight the issue of hunger, Feed Ontario participated at eight roadshow events in partnership with local food banks in Thunder Bay, Manitoulin, Kanata, Kingston, Kawartha Lakes, Caledon, London, and Windsor, that engaged more partners, political stakeholders, donors, and community members by sharing local food bank use alongside the provincial statistics and recommendations. These events encouraged more than 20 joint media interviews and extended the media life cycle of the report through the holiday giving season.

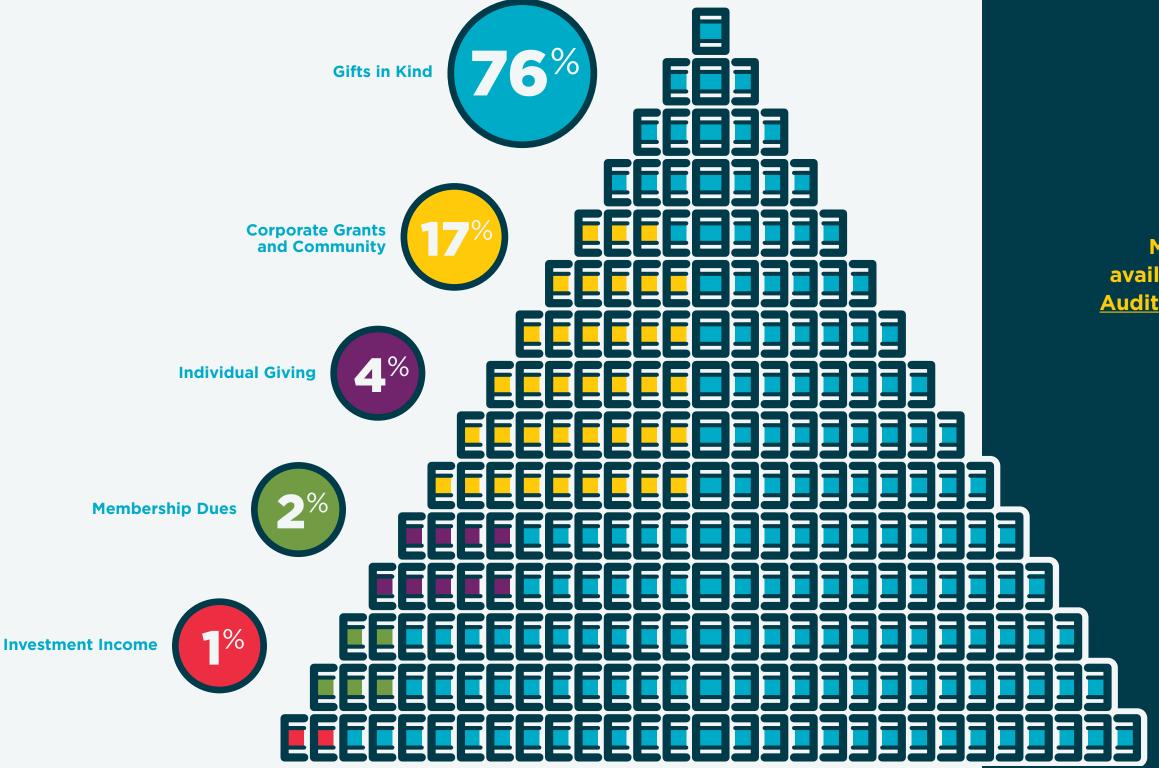
# Feeding Solutions: A panel discussion hosted by VISA



Feed Ontario knows that to reduce the need for food banks, Ontarians need to have enough income to keep a roof over their head and put food on their table. As a purpose-driven company, VISA Canada knows this too. As a valued partner of Feed Ontario, VISA Canada sponsored and hosted a panel that engaged donors and supporters in a meaningful discussion with leaders in food banking, the ODSP Action Coalition, and the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario. Panelists spoke to the challenges that food banks face in keeping up with demand and highlighted the need for improvements to Ontario's social assistance programs and the need to make housing more affordable.

# HOW WE SUPPORT OUR MISSION

2023-24



More information is available in Feed Ontario's Audited Financial Statement

# HOW WE INVEST IN OUR MISSION

2023-24



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2023-24

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**Sean McFarling** LIUNA

Wayne VanderWees Freight Managers Inc.



As someone who experienced periods of food insecurity as a child, relying on food banks at various times, it is truly an honour and privilege for me to now serve on the Board of Directors of Feed Ontario. Although we experienced food insecurity, my mother always stressed to me and my brother the importance of giving back and helping others, including donating what little we had to our school's canned food drives.

I am now very privileged to donate my time and resources to Feed Ontario, and I do so with gratitude for those who donated many years ago to help my family. I am also thankful that I could connect Feed Ontario with the organization where I serve as General Counsel, the Labourers International Union of North America, which also values the importance of giving back to our community and generously supports Feed Ontario.

I remain optimistic that our work at Feed Ontario will lead to systemic changes to ensure that all Ontarians have access to affordable food and housing."

 Sean McFarling, Feed Ontario Board Member & General Counsel, LiUNA

# THANK YOU To Our Individual Donors

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I really believe that no one should ever have to worry about going hungry, and that everyone should have access to healthy food. I decided to donate when I read that with every dollar Feed Ontario can provide two meals to people and families in need.

I think that's amazing, and that the work that Feed Ontario does to bring food to our local communities across the province is so important. Because of Feed Ontario, my donation made a real difference in someone's life."

- Victor H., monthly donor



#### **Every Dollar Adds Up and Makes a Big Impact!**

Feed Ontario was able to leverage our buying power to turn every **\$1 donated into 2 meals**, thanks to our relationships with producer groups, manufacturers, and transportation partners. This means every donation, no matter how small, is having a tremendous impact in communities across Ontario.

When combined, the donations made by more than **4,000 individuals** who support Feed Ontario's work reached **over \$1 million dollars,** providing the equivalent of 2 million meals to food banks to support their communities.

305 = 36,000 monthly donors

Feed Ontario is tremendously proud to be supported by monthly donors. When people decide to donate on a regular basis, it is a testament to their trust in the work being done and commitment to ending hunger and poverty in Ontario.

28 = 365,000 meals events

When individual supporters hosted fundraisers and events in support of Feed Ontario last year, they **collectively raised over \$180,000**. We are grateful to the Ontario Public Services employees for their annual campaign that **raised over \$70,000**.

3 = 215,000
atching meals

matching campaigns meals

Thanks to the generous support from corporate partners who matched donations in fundraising campaigns throughout the year, every dollar donated by individuals allowed Feed Ontario to provide 4 meals to those in need in our province.

Sabrina Martha Barbara Meghan Oriana Cheryl Jeff Sandra Ayesha Anna Frankie Paula Leigh Olarc Judi Natalia Ryan Cheryl Syed Lisa Nick Amy Ira Jung Ariel Matthew Meredith Vivian Violan Robert Josee Jennifer Greg Tracie Emily Natalia Mayu Joanna Rasesh Cali Penelope Joanna San Cody William Thomas Caitlin Kumanathasan Grace Anthony Hina Stephen Alexander Bernie Benie Blehul Meri Eileen Elaine Dela Andra Andra Michael Kenneth Kineta Nash Maureen Nash Heather Kathleen Tristan Rachel Sandra Andra Fill Maya Alisa Janelle Roy Ronald Lauren Katabana Shealyn Patricia John Rachel Pat Kenneth Ada Alisa Jessica David Joseph Stephen Sheila Jenny Anthon Meals Plate Kenneth Martin Janelle Roy Matthew Annie Mean Amanda Kimberly Adelina Elizabeth Hugh Sharmelee Sarah Shibli Tatjana Matthew Annie Mea Elizabeth Sujatha Mark Kelsey Andrew Thomas Stephanie Raj Judith Felix Thomas Evan Kyoa

• Amy • Margaret • Christopher • Michael • Mohammed • Celeste • Alan • Sau • Dan • Halima • Aatina • Robin • Rayı

### **THANK YOU** To Our Partners



Our work would not be possible without the incredible people and organizations who give their time, products, services, and financial support to help ensure an Ontario where everyone is food secure.

We couldn't do this without you!

#### **\$100,000+ PARTNERS**











#### **\$50,000+ PARTNERS**











#### **\$25,000+ PARTNERS**





















### & LOGISTICS PARTNERS

**TRANSPORTATION** 

















#### **FRESH FOOD PARTNERS**





















#### **PARTNERS UNDER \$25,000**

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#### **FOOD PARTNERS**





















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