

Food Security in KFL&A

Since the start of the pandemic the need for meal and food programs has grown exponentially. Almost **1 in 7** Canadians indicated that they lived in a household where there was food insecurity. In addition, **1 in 3** children in Canada are at risk of going to school hungry (up from 1 in 4 pre-pandemic).

United Way is working closely with agencies and programs to respond to this increase, working collaboratively on ways to best address this increasing need and help people in the local region.

Solutions: How United Way KFL&A Helps

Here are some of the solutions that are supporting people who need a helping hand:

Food Reclamation and Redistribution

Community Food Redistribution Warehouse (CFRW) – Together, the City of Kingston, the United Way, Lionhearts, Kingston Community Health Centres (KCHC), and other agency partners worked collaboratively to create the CFRW. This warehouse will facilitate the efficient collection and distribution of large donations of food to frontline agencies in KFL&A who provide meals or food to their program users. With large freezers, coolers, a loading dock, forklift and washing stations the CFRW has the infrastructure to safely receive and process large scale food donations. In its first week, the CFRW was able to receive 60,000 lbs of potatoes and distribute them to agencies.

Lionhearts Inc. picks up food from restaurants, kitchens, farms etc. and redistributes it to agencies, shelters, and other community programs that serve vulnerable populations.

Loving Spoonful also collects fresh produce from area grocery stores, farms, restaurants etc. and distributes to shelters, hot meal programs and pantries and they run the Grow-A-Row program and harvesting programs for at-risk youth.

Food Boxes

Seniors' Food Box Program - Initiated and designed in response to an identified need, United Way worked with Kingston Community Health Centres to create the program. Volunteers pack and distribute hundreds of boxes of food that are then delivered to low-income seniors in need. Often this contact is the only one in weeks for an isolated senior.

Students' Food Box Program - Similar to the Seniors' Food Box, United Way was able to respond to a need identified by post-graduate students. United Way funds Students' Food Boxes, delivered through KCHC to Queen's University and St. Lawrence College students.

Good Food Box – Open to everyone in the community, the Good Food Box program is run by Kingston Community Health Centres with funding from United Way. This program distributes fresh vegetables and fruit distribution program that provides low-cost monthly access to fresh produce boxes through delivery, with the mission of increasing accessibility.

Food for children and families:

Food Sharing Project – This program works to ensure students eat a well-balanced and nutritious breakfast, lunch or snack at school or in their virtual learning environment, improving their physical, mental and social well-being and their ability to learn.

Family Hampers – During the height of the pandemic, without the option to serve food and snacks in schools, the Food Sharing Project distributed hampers to families in need. Through this, approximately **20,000 meals were served with United Way funding.**

Weekend Wellness Program: There is a need in our community for providing food to students on the weekends during the school year. In response, nutritious food boxes are provided to identified families twice a month throughout the school year through Lionhearts and the Food Sharing Project with funding from United Way and Rotary Clubs of Kingston.

Morningstar Mission is running a pilot program called Hot Meals for Students providing meals at two high schools in Lennox and Addington

Meal Programs

Daily meals are provided in KFL&A through Lunch By George, Martha's Table (also provides delivery), and St. Vincent de Paul. United Way also funds Meals on Wheels programs provided by Rural Frontenac and Southern Frontenac Community Services.

In 2021:

21,100 nutritious snacks and meals were provided to students at school or at home for virtual learning

223,482 meals were served through food programs, including takeout, food boxes and in-person meals

40,036 people were served through in-person meal programs, food programs and boxes and walk-in food programs