



Hunger in the University Community

2/4/04

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What Is the Campus Food Bank?

Registered non-profit organization that provides several services to University of Alberta Community

- ◆ Emergency food hampers & toiletries to individuals experiencing financial difficulties
- ◆ Volunteer opportunities
- ◆ Referrals to other organizations that will further alleviate hunger
- ◆ Information about the causes and consequences of poverty

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The CFB is a registered non-profit organization that provides several services to the University of Alberta Community. We are governed by a board of directors made up of representatives from the surrounding university community.

•Typically our food and monetary donations come from within the Campus Community. Student groups, faculty and staff have all been top supporters of the food bank.

•Monetary donations are used to purchase food when donations are low or to purchase food items that aren't typically donated...like soy beverages, gluten free pasta/bread and fresh produce.

According to a Student Survey, the Campus Food Bank is considered to be the 3rd most valued service on the U of A campus.

We provide emergency food hampers & toiletries to students, staff and their families. We employ a staff of over 75 dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure that we provide an excellent service.... Gaining valuable work related experience while making a remarkable difference in the community. We also realize that our commitment to eliminating hunger is not necessarily addressed by our emergency hamper program. Therefore, we provide our clients with information about other resources and services in the community that may further alleviate their poverty. Lastly, we are committed to eliminating hunger by educating the public about the causes and effects of (student) hunger.

and referrals to the students and staff of the University of Alberta Community.

History of the CFB

- The first post secondary food bank to open in Canada
- Began as media student protested the decision to double international student tuition and intended to provide one-time emergency food assistance
- The long line outside the GSA office prompted the creation of a permanent service in 1991
- By 1993 became a joint service of the SU & GSA
- In its first year, distributed enough food to feed over 250 individuals. In 2002/2003, this number had risen to 1700.

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The CFB was originally an initiative of the Graduate's Students Association. They used the creation of a 'one time' food bank as a media stunt to protest rising tuition fees, particularly the decision to double international tuition. The executives were shocked by the long line outside their office. The need for a permanent service was obvious. In 1991, the first Post Secondary Food Bank in Canada opened in 1991 and by 1993, the Campus Food Bank became a joint service provided by the Students' Union and the GSA. In our first year of operation we, distributed enough food to feed over 250 individuals. Last year, this number had risen to over 1700. We can expect, as in previous years, to see another rise in food bank usage, a reflection of the levels of poverty amongst those in our community.

Who Uses CFB Service?



Anyone from the University of Alberta Community can access the food bank, however, primary recipients are students and their families.

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Poverty - On Campus

University, a place where one should
hunger for knowledge, not food.



for help, or to help out...

Lower level 118A (402) 492-8677
Foodbank@uwaterloo.ca
www.uwaterloo.ca/foodbank

Confidentiality respected

HUNGER 101

The course you never intended to take

Prerequisite:
None...hunger can affect anyone at anytime.
You may not have received adequate student
funding, experienced a sudden illness, a job loss,
or an unanticipated expense.



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Food Insecurity-- aka Hunger

- Food security exists when all people at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate foods that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy diet.

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Poverty

- What causes Poverty?
- How is poverty **Measured**?
- What are the **Effects** of poverty?
- What are some **Solutions**?

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What causes **Poverty**?

How is poverty **Measured**?

What are the **Effects** of poverty?

What are some **Solutions**?

Causes of Student Poverty



- Living Allowances for single students are low (\$730)and don't reflect the cost of living.
- Over 61% of CFB undergraduate users have indicated student loans as their primary source of income.

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I have broken down the causes of poverty into categories that reflect our typical users. About 75% of registered household accessed our service 1-4 times per year. These emergency users tend to be single undergrads whose primary source of income is a student loan. Unanticipated expenses, like a medical expense, roommate problems, death in the family or theft can deplete their extremely limited resources and leave them in a situation where they risk go hungry for a short period of time. For them, an emergency food hamper will prevent them from going hungry for a short period of time. In many cases, (over 28%), these clients were working one or more part-time jobs while studying full time to make ends meet.

Let's imagine the following scenario:

o The living allowance currently allows 730\$ in living expenses (for a single student based on shared accomodation). Assuming that students are eligible to receive this minimum amount (forced parental contributions)—they may be able to get by.

Rent—typical prices for shared accommodation range from 300-450\$. Utilities may be additional expense and could set a typical student back by about 30-65\$ (basic utilities only), and a bus pass (53\$). In this scenario—this leaves the typical student about \$162 to 347 to cover the remainder of their costs—groceries, clothing entertainment and personal care items. Students who are skilled grocery shoppers and who have reliable accesss to discount grocery shopping might have enough money to afford a healthy diet. However, factor in a unexpected expense—medication (antibiotics for an infection—\$10-60), dental work (100\$ or more), a stolen wallet, a roommate leaving (300-500\$) lost bus pass and the student could face hunger.

Additionally, students who are funded by student loans may be facing food insecurity on a more regular basis, A recent study from our department of nutrition found that unskilled shoppers, could not afford nutritionally replete diets, particularly if reliant on the local grocery store. The study also presumed that the student was using all available “food money” for food.. Which often isn't the case.

Causes of Student Poverty

- A staggering 25% of CFB clients last year were “regular users”
- They access CFB service anywhere from 5-24 times per year. For them hunger is a persistent problem.
- For them, food bank usage is a means of survival.

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International Students (about 12%) of our households are often in a desperate situation. Funding options are often limited most international graduates list an assistantship (about 60%) as their primary (and often only) source of income. Their income (800-1000/ month) must be used to cover all living expenses, their books, their tuition (up to \$10,000) per year. Because they are not citizens, they often do not have access to public health care. Furthermore, they are only allowed to work on campus, and in recent years, cut backs in many departments, have made finding on-campus employment extremely difficult. In many cases (6% of all households, but half of all international), these student have a spouse and/ or children to support on top of these other expenses.

Who is dependent and why?



- Students with dependents to support
- International Students

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Another category of students who have been hit hard, by hard times are students who return to school with dependents to support. About 40% of our household had dependents (interestingly, split nearly evenly among single and dual parent households). The students who visit us, have reported that their funding options are limited (many have maxed out their loans), the living allowances associated with living on student loans are not high enough to meet all of their basic needs. Some have reported that their spouses are unable to work, working at low paying jobs or students themselves.

Our parents are often full-time parents, full time students with part-time jobs who cannot consistently acquire the funds needed for a healthy diet. For them, a trip to the food bank is a regular occurrence and hunger is something that they continuously struggle with.

International Students, which comprise about 12 % of our households are often in a desperate situation. The reasons are complicated and include:

Limited Funding Options: Our international students (mostly graduate students) list assistantships (about 60%) as their primary (and often only) source of income. The income associated with these positions are low. In fact, as much as 20% below the LICO, a common indicator of poverty in Canada. In some cases, this income must be used to cover all living expenses & tuition.

Restricted Access to Employment: Cuts to University Funding have translated into a decrease in campus jobs. Because International students are restricted to working on campus, they may find it difficult to find part time employment on campus. Many of our international student users have dependents as well; their spouses will also face barriers to finding employment. (half of international student households had a spouse and/or dependents)

Restricted Access to Support from family/friends. In many cases, people who are

CFB Usage and Dependency- the root cause?

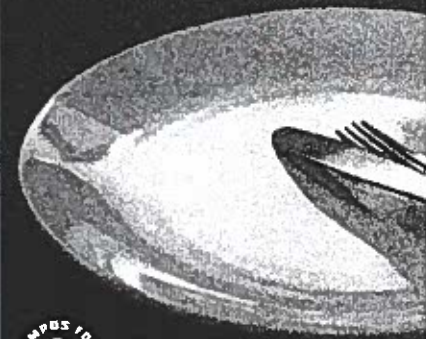
- Rising educational costs, combined with a lack of student funding , a shortage of affordable housing, the high cost of living in Edmonton are major contributors to this desperate situation

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The 25% of households (an estimated half of our individual recipients) have fallen through the social safety net. In most cases, they have exhausted all other means of funding, and desperate, to acquire an education have come to rely on our support.

When you have more on your plate than tomorrow's exam



CAMPUS FOOD BANK
California's largest
food bank. 501 E. 9th St., #1200
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.cafdbank.org

GSA

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Effects of Poverty

Effects of Poverty & Hunger- Physical

Hunger has detrimental effects on the physical health and well being of those affected by it. People who live in poverty are more likely to die from:

- Cardiovascular disease**
- Cancer**
- Respiratory diseases**
- Diabetes**

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Respiratory diseases
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Effects of Poverty & Hunger Nutritional Deficiencies

- The poor have a greater tendency to have nutritionally inadequate diets resulting in
 - ★ Compromised health
 - ★ Iron deficiencies
 - ★ Slow recovery from illnesses
 - ★ Compromised immune systems
 - ★ Long term malnutrition can lead to chronic illness

Parents, particularly mothers are more affected by these factors-- self deprivation

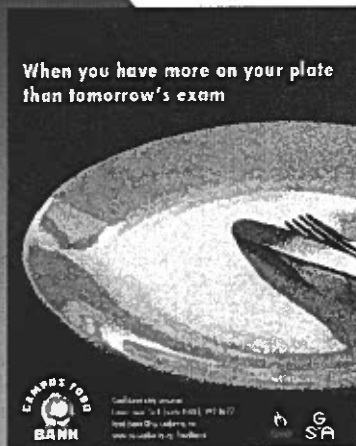
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The effects of poverty and hunger are most pronounced among children and mothers. It is estimated that 1 child in five is affected by poverty (Canadian Council on Social Development). All research indicates that parents, particularly women, will deprive themselves of food in order to provide for their children. 34% of parents reported that they had skipped meals or ate less to reduce the impact of hunger on their children (A Glimpse of Child Hunger in Canada). These children will undoubtedly suffer the ill-health of their own hunger as well as from their parents' ill-health and self-deprivation.

Despite the efforts of food banks, a growing number of adults and children will suffer from hunger or have inadequate food supplies.

Effects of Poverty & Hunger Emotional Health



- increased risks of mental health problems
- Undermines quality of life
- Undermines family harmony
- Reduced civic participation
- Food Bank use is stigmatized and diminishes clients' self esteem.

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Major depression in adults

Hyperactivity in children

Depression, suicidal ideation and attempted suicide in teens

Food Bank Usage is also stigmatized- although appreciative of the assistance they receive, our clients have expressed feelings of guilt, embarrassment, humiliation, shame and discomfort. Other people in need, will not use food banks even if they are in need. In many cases, individuals who are referred to the Campus Food Bank, refuse to consider us an option.

Social Costs of Poverty

- Those affected experience *social exclusion* and tend not to participate in civic life
- Health problems may reduce learning potential, contribute to losses in productivity, and absenteeism at work
- Food insecurity and hunger are associated with increased health care costs and longer hospital stays
- Erosion of Demands for Social Rights

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- Food insecure individuals describe conditions of social exclusion and loss of opportunity to participate in civic life
- Physical and mental health problems may reduce learning potential, contribute to losses in productivity, and absenteeism at work
- Food insecurity and hunger are associated with increased health care costs and longer hospital stays.
- Impact on the food system: A two-tiered food system has arisen
 - One segment is market driven and available to those who can afford it
 - The second segment is residual. A charitable market available to those excluded from the first...it is typically characterized by poorer quality and inadequate quantities.
- Erosion of Demands for Social Rights
 - Institutionalization of food banks may lead to enabling—not of individuals becoming dependent on the service. But rather by enabling the governments repeated failures to provide a lasting solution.
 - In 1987, Alberta Social Services Policy Manuals required government workers to refer clients to the Edmonton food Bank. About half of our clients are referred by SFAIC and we are listed as a service on the SU service page—basics food and shelter
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How can we address hunger?

- School lunch programs
- Food coops
- Community gardens
- Community kitchens
- Community resource centers

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- School Lunch Programs do an excellent job of providing nutritious meals (lunch and breakfast) to at risk children—where they exist.
- Food Co-ops (like the WeCan or Simple Foods Food Coop) are community initiatives that allow members to purchase fresh produce and meats at a minimal cost.
- Community Gardens- allow members of a Community to share the harvest from a garden.
- Community Kitchens—members can prepare nutritious meals in a collective settings at reduced costs

Community resources centers and programs to production education and skills to caregivers.

Government Solutions - Micro

- * Increase child tax credits**
- * Ensure that student funding reflects the actual cost of living**
Tax cuts or removal of tax for low income families
- * Invest money in affordable housing**

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Government Solutions - Macro

- **THAT IS, invest in post-secondary education (be it college, university or trade schools...)**

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Why should we do this:

Children from homes that have broken the cycle of poverty are far less likely to enter their own cycle of poverty. The number one indicator of a child's life chances is their parent's socio-economic class.

Would people support this: Fortunately.. Despite the stigma attached to food bank use, 81% of Canadians hold Government Cut-backs and inadequate social programs as reason why people may need to use food banks. Furthermore, 74% view hunger as a serious issue (30% see it as a very serious issue). People just need to be aware of the social costs of poverty.

Hunger should not be a cost of education.

- People have a right to “regular, permanent access, either directly or through financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free from anxiety”.

(UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food)

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(UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food)

- "In the context of hunger & food security, the obvious consequences of social exclusion, the right to food must be recognized and met in order for social inclusion to be realized"

(Canadian Association of Food Banks, Hunger Count 2003)

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"In the context of hunger & food security, the obvious consequences of social exclusion, the right to food must be recognized and met in order for social inclusion to be realized"

help us help students in need.



support the University of
Alberta Campus Food Bank
by donating **non-perishable food &
toiletry donations** here.

Most needed items are canned fish &
meats, canned fruits & veggies, soy
milk, pasta, spices, baby items,
shampoo & conditioner.

Thanks for your support!



For more information about the CFB or student hunger contact :

780-492-8677

foodbank@su.ualberta.ca

www.su.ualberta.ca/campusfoodbank

Thanks to the generous support of the GSA & the SU, 80% or more of all donated funds go directly to emergency food relief.

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In need poster & done!