

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

SUPPORTING BASIC NEEDS & INDEPENDENCE | FOOD SECURITY



Together, we're changing lives.

United Way's Food Security strategy focuses on improving access to fresh, nutritious and culturally appropriate food, increasing the overall supply of healthy, sustainable food by implementing a variety of programs such as food co-ops, community gardens and community kitchens. This will be accomplished by creating new partnerships with farmers, food producers, and suppliers.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- In 2009, there were **235,000** visits to the food banks in Windsor-Essex County.
- In 2009, more than **35%** of seniors were living on a less than **\$20,000** a year income.
- There has been a **242%** increase in food bank visits from 2006-2009.
- In 2006, **13.1%** of the Windsor-Essex population was living in low income.

HOW ARE YOUR DONATIONS CHANGING LIVES?

- Last year, 19 food banks in Windsor-Essex County worked together to provide 152,643 individuals and families with nutritional food packages. That's an average of over 400 packages every day.
- In the Spring 2011, 250 high school students volunteered to prepare existing gardens and to create new Community Gardens across Windsor-Essex County
- Over 7,000 volunteer hours contributed to the success of the Food Security strategy between April 2010 and July 2011

KAREN'S STORY

Karen, a hard working local resident from our community, was laid off from her job last year. As the sole provider for her family of four, she was struggling to make ends meet and at times found that she was unable to feed her family.

She decided to visit a United Way supported food bank where she was able to obtain emergency food for her family. It was extremely difficult for Karen to ask for help and she recalls feeling very upset the first time she went to the food bank.

Over time, Karen realized that her fears were unfounded. Staff members from the local food bank were very understanding and supportive of Karen. Although Karen was receiving food items from the food bank, staff suggested she also plant and take care of a small plot in their community garden to supplement the food she received from the food bank with fresh produce. Karen decided to do just that. She planted a garden and over the summer harvested the fresh food to feed her family.

She even decided to give back to the community by donating some of the produce to the food bank so that others could benefit. During the summer, while she tended her garden, the Food Bank staff continued to support Karen and encouraged her to enhance her education. Karen did enroll in classes to upgrade her education and as a result was able to secure part-time work.



UNITED WAY FUNDED FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVES ARE AVAILABLE IN: WINDSOR, ESSEX, LEAMINGTON, KINGSVILLE, AMHERSTBURG, AND LAKESHORE.