

If You're In Need With Hungry Mouths To Feed, "You Got A Friend"

By **Jennifer Walker** - November 24, 2020



Ruby Lockhart Photo Courtesy: Wayne Lockhart

KAWARTHA LAKES- For families struggling to put regular meals on the table with hungry mouths to feed, Karen Ferguson wants you to know that "You Got A Friend".

Recently Ferguson, "You Got A Friend" Founder, decided it was her time to help and to make a difference. With a heart for others in need and husband that loves to cook enough food to feed an army, the You Got A Friend six-month pilot program began.

"We're simply feeding families with young children during a difficult time," she said. "I have friends that love to cook and want someone to cook for, it isn't anything else than you got a friend."

Since the program was launched, Ferguson recruited 20 friends as volunteers that are ready to put their aprons on and feed those in need.

"I thought there are probably so many families with young kids in need and it is very important for children to learn and eat properly," she added. "I really hope that this will help me find those people who are hungry."

Those who would like to take part in the program must live in Lindsay. Ferguson and her team

will offer participants one hot meal per month, offering up a variety of dishes from lasagna, soups, pot roasts and more. The team is unable to accommodate those with allergies at this time.

"It's an amazing experience to see the difference you're bringing, to really understand how some people are trying to survive, I wanted to do something," said Ferguson. "If I can help 20 families, that's 20 more that won't be hungry."

According to Kate Dorotheou, Community Engagement Coordinator at the Kawartha Lakes Food Source, the number of those using food banks in the Kawartha Lakes has gone up since the summer months.

The Kawartha Lakes Food Source does not serve the public but offers assistance to various schools, social service agencies as well as ten food banks, all within the Kawartha Lakes.

Generally, the ten food banks that have assistance from the Kawartha Lakes Food Source see approximately 900 to 1,000 individuals through their doors per month, added Dorotheou.

But during the summer months that number dropped significantly.

"That number had gone down through the summer months, we were excited to see the numbers go down," she said.

According to Dorotheou, the decline in numbers was verification that the various government aids that were offered through the pandemic were working.

"People were able to pay their bills and put food on the table, that was a good thing," she said. "Now over last two months with summer aids changing or no longer being available, our numbers have jumped."

During the summer months, the ten food banks saw a reduction of visitors that amounted to approximately 650 to 700 people. In October, the numbers were already on the rise, reaching 1,000, she added.

"We were really happy about it going down but we were not as excited to see the numbers jump back up but we are bracing for the future and the coming uncertainty," said Dorotheou. "We can't say the numbers will continue to jump, but we are aware of the economic factors right now, small businesses are closing, jobs have been lost and savings only last for so long. It is unfortunate but we are preparing for the future."

And as the numbers do climb with many people unsure of when their next meal will be available, there are many ways to help.

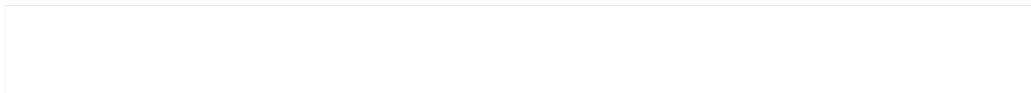
As the Community Engagement Coordinator, those looking to organize their own event, fundraiser or food drive can contact Dorotheou for assistance, 705-324-0707.

Donations are also always welcome and can be dropped off at the Kawartha Lakes Food Source distribution centre, 164 Needham St., Lindsay. Those who wish to donate can also find the Canada Helps page on the Kawartha Lakes Food Source website, kawarthalakesfoodsource.com.

"We do rely heavily on donations, when it comes to bulk purchasing, we have to have the funds needed to do that," Said Dorotheou. "Unfortunately there's a lot of people in our community that

need a helping hand to get back on their feet, especially during this unfortunate time, so if you're able I would say, it's always appreciated."

Those who would like to participate in You Got A Friend can email Ferguson at yougotafriend@yahoo.com.



Jennifer Walker

Jennifer decided to study journalism after having a life long passion for writing. She began her career as a reporter for the Uxbridge Times Journal and moved on to freelance work for various publications after her and her husband welcomed their daughters. She has been published in various Durham Region newspapers, the Durham Parent Magazine as well as Equine Wellness. Jennifer continues to follow her dreams as a wife, mother and journalist and is so excited to join the team at Kawartha411.