

# LOCAL

## Healthy diet too expensive for low income families: report



PHOTO BY WADE BRENNAN

**Cost of eating:** David Alexander, Anne Adair and Deb O'Connor released The Price of Eating Well in Northumberland County report to help understand how expensive eating healthy can be, at the health unit Friday morning.

**BY WADE BRENNAN**  
STAFF WRITER

Social service experts have been telling the government that low income people can't afford to feed themselves on what welfare provides.

Friday afternoon they proved it in Port Hope.

The Price of Eating Well in Northumberland report was released by the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPR) in conjunction with the Northumberland Coalition Against Poverty (NCAP) and the Salvation Army

Family Services to show how hard it is for low income families to eat proper food.

"The information is now in black and white what people living with this problem have known all along," said Deb O'Connor, spokesperson for the NCAP. "People can't afford to eat properly."

The report examined the cost of eating well for various-sized families and individuals focusing on food expenditures in comparison to low-income levels.

Data was based on average food prices collected from four grocery stores located within the county on

66 different items necessary for a nutritious diet.

The data was recorded for basic items, Anne Adair, Public Health Nutritionist with the HKPR.

"We are talking about hamburger and chicken, not steak and lobster," she added, giving the most accurate information.

The report revealed that it costs a family of four, a man and a woman 25 to 49, a boy 13 to 15 and a girl 7 to 9, approximately \$115.99 per week to eat a healthy diet based on food in Canada's Health Guide.

After paying for their rent, utilities and their food basket the family is left with \$116.77 from their income of \$1,475.94.

Without taking into account other necessities such as toiletries, transportation and the odd slice of pizza, the family doesn't have enough to live off, she added.

"It is clear that when local housing costs and expenses are factored in, there is not enough money left over for low-income families to afford to buy the nutritious food needed to maintain their health."

David Alexander, Family Services Director for the Salvation Army endorsed the findings of the report.

He said that it is hard on families just to be able to eat rather than eat nutritiously with community organizations picking up the slack.

"It's obvious

that our physical, mental, emotional and spirited well being are effected by the way we eat," Mr. Alexander pointed out. "Low income families need help in order to sustain a healthy lifestyle."

Mrs. O'Connor look at other areas which can be effected if a person tries to eat healthy because they are not able to purchase essentials that will assist them in looking for a job.

She also focused on the importance of children needing a healthy meal adding that, "(they) don't learn as well in school if they are hungry."

The report is expected to be a useful tool for assisting individuals and groups in determining the cost of eating nutritiously or for documenting the difficulty of affording a nutritious diet for those with limited incomes.

PATTERSON, MINNIE EVELYN  
(NAISH)

On January 9, 1999 in her 81st year at the Cobourg Health Care Unit. Lovingly remembered by son Jack Naish & wife Patricia. 4 granddaughters. 4 great-granddaughters and 1 great-great-granddaughter. Sisters Mrs. Mildred Taylor, Mrs. Doug Chatterton, Mrs. Ron Chapman and families. sister-in-law Ms. Lena Patterson. Predeceased by sister Helen Baptist. At Minnie's request, there was no service.

CORBORNE-CHARRVILLE  
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