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In the spirit of Volunteer Week

Hilary Green: One way to make a difference

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Correspondent

Reacting to the ever-growing reality of a devastating recession, Hilary Green is turning her sense of civic duty into relief for families facing the bleak prospect of empty pantries.

Hilary, who was born in England, and moved to Stouffville from Agincourt eight years ago, is the co-ordinator of the volunteer program at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank (WSF).

Network

But despite her title, she refuses to see herself as any more than just one of the network of people who have helped make the emergency food distribution station the success it has become.

The WSF came into being this past January, the result of a cry for help of an Uxbridge resident who had run out of capacity in her home-run food assistance operation.

According to Hilary, the opportunity to help was tailor-made for her and the church of which she is a member.

Praying

"We had been praying for an outreach opportunity at Churchill Baptist. Robyn Magee (the founder and director of the WSF) got together with us and we set up the food bank in the basement of our church."

Within a short time, the food was rolling in, shelves had been donated on which to store it, and a fridge and freezer were also contributed.

Hilary, who also serves as a volunteer reader at Christian Blind Mission International on Stouffville Road, now has 30 volunteers working with her.

Workshops

She arranged workshops for training the volunteers, and organizes the scheduling of the help. The WSF is open Tuesdays from 9:30-11:30 a.m.; Thursdays from 7-9 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

Hilary assigns two volunteers per shift, with a third person assigned to the Thursday night slot.

She often ends up on shift herself, covering for volunteers unable to be there.

"That's the thrilling part. I like to be involved, to meet the people," she said.

And when she's not arranging the schedule for the volunteers and arranging food packages herself, Hilary is in the church basement, putting groceries on the shelves, breaking up bulk foods, or running around collecting food from Stouffville area businesses or contributors like Parkview Home for The Aged.

Magic

Hilary contends the magic of the foodbank lies in its success in bringing out the heart of the community.

"Stouffville is a very caring community," she said while going over the foodbank inventory recently.

"You can see the need just by looking at the newspaper. A lot of people, especially young people, have nothing to fall back on when they lose their

jobs. It sometimes takes weeks for Unemployment Insurance benefits, or welfare, to start coming in."

Very supportive

"Stouffville has been very supportive. It's touching when you see people come in with food. We had a 12-year-old come in recently with food she had collected.

Kids see their parents responding and they are influenced in a positive way.

Hilary has been delighted at how people in the community

"You tell them that it's for the foodbank when you're soliciting food, and they say, 'Oh, yes, of course.' There's been such a good response."

that you are doing some good. It's when you get involved serving the community that you feel the joy in your life."

Tonic

Hilary, who has three children and two grandchildren, suggests that volunteer work is like a tonic for her.

And whether it's the foodbank or any other volunteer organization, there is always a need.

"Wherever you live, no matter how small the community, you can always find volunteer work. It gives my life purpose and meaning."

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have so readily adopted the foodbank as a priority cause.

terms of satisfaction. "We love to do it. You feel



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