

Food bank encourages healthier eating, giving

Shelves depleted for Thanksgiving

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Some food banks may be getting pickier with regards to the type of items they will accept, in particular only "healthy" food. But not so in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"People want the Kraft Dinner, the tinned spaghetti. It's terrible but that's what they want," according to Joan Doble, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank's treasurer.

"It's a whole different culture. We try to encourage them," said Marion Wells, the food bank's co-ordinator.

About one to two per cent of the food bank users do, however, refuse junk food, according to Doble.

In August, an Ottawa-area food bank co-ordinator publically asked people to stop contributing "bad" food like Kraft Dinner and hot dogs.

The co-ordinator claimed these types of donations sent the message that the health of food bank users wasn't as valued as that of the donor's.

Clients of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank receive a list they choose items from, which include macaroni and cheese, instant noodles, cookies, cake mix and a multitude of canned goods – tomatoes, chili/stew, chicken/ham, pasta, gravy and fruit.

But, they also get, if they want, eggs, yogurt, frozen meat, peanut butter, jam/honey, fresh veggies and bread.

"We have to keep it in perspective and try to cut back on the processed food ... all of us do," said Bonnie Cronyn, a food bank board member and its statistician.

She also noted the food bank is not their only source of nutrition, but a supplement.

A mid-year food drive was not held this year, as has been the in case the past few years, so right now, the shelves are getting somewhat bare.



STAFF PHOTOS/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Jean Nauta and Charlotte Chesham sort through donated items at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank inside Churchill Baptist church, north of Ballantrae. You can donate food at grocery stores and fire halls.

"It's not that we're out of food. ... We're buying a lot now," Doble said.

The food bank is spending between \$1,500 and \$1,600 a month on cookies, crackers, cake mixes, canned spaghetti and stews, along with the items they always purchase – meat, margarine, yogurt and eggs.

Local farmers also often donate from their crops.

There is no specific food drive taking place this year. Volunteers just want to remind residents they can drop non-perishable food items off in the bins at the fire halls, Giant Tiger, NoFrills and Metro.

The food bank is in need of virtu-

ally all types of food, except dried pasta and assorted beans.

"We try to give (the assorted beans) away to other food banks, but they don't want it either," Doble said.

Financial donations are also always accepted. Donations over \$10 receive a tax receipt.

In 2013, the food bank fed 2,147 people. There is no total available for 2014, but Cronyn said it is comparable. She also noted that is not 2,147 separate people, as users are able to visit the food bank twice a month.

The majority of Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank users are sin-

gle mothers with school-aged children, according to Cronyn.

In the winter, the demographic and number of users shifts to include more single men, as they are typically seasonal workers.

A new trend, however, is families with adult children.

"People can't find jobs. People can't move away from home because they can't pay rent," Cronyn said.

For more information on client services or donations, call 905-640-4704 or 905-640-3640.

See video from the food bank on yorkregion.com



STUART WALKER

Juvenile 'had courage to leave and come to police'

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offences including living off the avails of a juvenile, possession of child pornography and trafficking cocaine.

"We consider him quite violent," said Det. Sgt. Peter Casey. "In this case he exhibited extreme violence until she had the courage to leave and come to the police. It was a bad situation."

Police said during the bust,

animal control was used to clear the expansive property of six dogs, some of which Det. Sgt. Casey said were violent and others kept in cages.

The investigation began after a victim came forward to police looking for assistance Oct. 1, according to police.

Det. Sgt. Casey said the probe is ongoing and he believes the accused may be involved with other sex trade workers.

"We're hoping more come forward," he added.

So far this year, York police's vice squad has charged 27 alleged pimps, laid 86 charges in relation to pimping and 18 in relation to human trafficking.

The numbers exceed those of the last three years.

"It's a testament to the hard work of vice, but also indicative of what's going on out there," he said.

Walker, 32, is also charged with:

two counts of procuring to become a prostitute; procure to have sex; assault causing bodily harm; assault with a weapon; mischief; possession of MDMA and methamphetamine, as well as possession of prohibited device.

Anyone with information about this matter is asked to contact the York Regional Police Drugs and Vice Unit at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7817, or anonymously at Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-TIPS.