

Emergency Food Response Update

April 6, 2021 @ 9am

Hosted by: Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy

Present (23 organizations)

- Courtney Strutt - TBAFS
- Rachel Globensky - LU
- Albert Brule – United Way
- Allison Hill - TB Food Bank
- Anita Jean– NorWest CHCs
- Brendan Carlin - RFDA
- Dianne Matson – RPC Food Bank
- Elisio Muchano – Elevate NWO
- Erin Waddington – Feed Ontario
- Erin Beagle – R2H
- Farren Tropea - Matawa Health Co-Op
- Gwen O'Reilly– GFB/Women's centre
- Jamie Evanyk - OAHAS
- Jocelyn Kloosterhuis - OKC
- Julie Fair- FWFN
- Kathryn Hughes - OKC
- Kaitlin Prezio - YIP
- Kim McGibbin - R2H
- Lee-Ann Chevrette – City of Thunder Bay
- Lynne Savela - SUCCI
- Marilyn Junilla – Shkoday
- Melinda Sault Coates - NAN
- Michael Hull - Shkoday
- Michael Quibell - DDI
- Nicole Croes - TBMA
- Sarah Kaukinen - OAHAS
- Tammy Boyd – Beendigen
- Jay Arjune - CMHA

Update Overview

- » Public Health Update re: vaccinations for frontline workers
- » Arising Discussion – Post-pandemic landscape
- » Resource & Information Sharing
- » Updates by Type of Service
 - Food banks
 - Meal + snack services
 - School nutrition
 - First Nation communities & organizations
 - Community health organizations
 - Community food supports

Next Meeting is TUESDAY MAY 4th @ 9:00am

See calendar link for Zoom address.

Public Health Update

re: vaccinations for frontline workers

- TBDHU staff has been largely redirected for the vaccination effort so we were not able to have anyone give a live update, however the below information was shared via email by Ivan Ho:
 - TBDHU mass vaccination clinic is currently vaccinating approx. 700+ people a day, with the goal of reaching the max capacity of 800.
 - The Health Unit's vaccination clinic follows the provincial guidelines strictly. They anticipate the upcoming start of the [second phase of the provincial plan](#) and they will continue to follow these guidelines.
 - In regards to unused vaccines at the end of the day, TBDHU provides these to those on a waiting list that fits with the priority population that their clinic is open to and they take an objective systemic approach; they do not hand out vaccines to those that have not yet been provincially approved.
 - There have been a number of organizations reaching out regarding vaccinations for emergency food workers. The concerns of frontline food workers have been brought forward to the senior management team and this is on the radar to prioritize these groups
 - There are other vaccination clinics in town that TBDHU supports via staff time; it is up to those community clinics to decide who they have on their waiting lists.
- There were still a number of organizations on the call today who have not seen their frontline staff vaccinated.

Arising Discussion – Post-pandemic landscape

Post-pandemic landscape considerations

- Point was raised that if we were not facing COVID would we be doing the work that we are? COVID is bringing to the forefront challenges of the most vulnerable members in our society. If we want to survive challenges like this, we need to make sure that everyone is taken care of. We need to make sure that the populations we are trying to serve will stay at the forefront, even after COVID.
- This is important to keep in mind as we begin to shift away from increased emergency supports, understanding the ongoing and chronic need for food (and other) supports in our community beyond emergency times. What will it mean and look like for people who have come to rely on these emergency solutions as a part of their regular food security as we transition into a post-pandemic world?
- One way we can think about this further is to look at the work on health equity and COVID from Dr. Tam in the 2020 Annual public health report entitled "[From risk to resilience: An equity approach to COVID-19](#)".

Funding considerations

- With increased emergency programs, a lot of groups are applying for funds; this will mean competition for the usual sources of funds that have been relied on to offer regular food related support programs.
- There is a need to lobby for more funding to cover all those services, due to increased need. A lot of that need was already there and organizations need to be able to address ongoing concerns as well as those arising from the crisis of COVID with a long-term view. This allows for maintaining good new programs but also those that were already in place.
- We need to be considering the stretching of funding dollars and that one program getting funds may be at the cost of another program not.
- This links to concerns about the post pandemic landscape; when emergency funding is exhausted, where will other funding come from? We need to think about how this is going to look in the future.
- Is there a helpful way that this conversation could be had?
 - o In November of 2019 United Way and the Chamber of Commerce held a community consultation where over 60 organizations got together and came up with what they thought were the best recommendations around funding.
 - o If we pull together and look at the opportunities and changes we have and work on a joint plan, just like this table but community wide, to think community-wide and what we can do community wide that gets the input from those on the ground.
- Response by Albert @ United Way:
 - o United Way had planned to do a follow up to the cross-sector collaboration forum in April of last year, which got scrapped. Now as they are looking at 2021 and the expectation that most activities will need to be planned virtually, to try and recreate a forum. They can certainly use an online platform to bring together the same kinds of players at that session.
 - o Hasn't had a chance to consult with the Chamber or Lakehead Social Planning Council, but he will make a note to look into that. This is something they would have anticipated happening, but this is a push to get that moving forward more quickly.

Support Letter for the Care Bus from the Emergency Food Response Table

- A suggestion was made that the group write a support letter for the Care Bus. Anita will check-in with the CEO and let him know of this groups interest to support the Care Bus and where a letter of support would be best sent to.

Resource & Information Sharing

- Facing Forward Masks still available via United Way for free for agencies who are able to give them out to vulnerable populations.
 - o Contact Albert Brule for more information abrule@uwaytbay.ca
- Beendigen will be offering pre-paid cell phone and tablets for youth who need them.
 - o Follow their Facebook page for more information about when this will be available.
- [21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#) via Food Solutions New England mentioned by the Redwood Park Church food bank

Updates by Type of Service

Food Banks

- RFDA is still supporting food banks with food and deliveries for those that need them, including taking over deliveries from the Health Unit for people who need to isolate at home. They have seen lower numbers the last few weeks, especially with the isolation deliveries (down from approx. 40 a week to below 20). They are financially stable for the next little bit.
- Thunder Bay Food Bank things are going well; steady numbers and they have enough volunteers.
- Redwood Park Church has once again begun allowing people to pick up for others who can't make it (relieving some pressure off of delivery). Feels that things have begun to normalize, with numbers increasing steadily. They just received a \$14,000 grant (which they don't normally apply for) and that combined with support from the RFDA has them in a good position to continue offering food support.
 - o They have signed up as a group and begun taking a 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge regarding the food system.
- SUCCI (Confederation College) student food bank continues to operate daily from 11:00 – 4:00 for students, by contactless pick-up. They are seeing steady use, especially when promoted on social media.
- Elevate continues to offer food bank deliveries every Wednesday. They ran out of additional funds and are relying strictly on the RFDA, so their numbers have dropped. Now giving out about 50 – 60 bags every week.
- FEED Ontario is ending its emergency food hamper program and will be returning to the usual regular pallet shipments; this change will effect the RFDA and those food banks supported by them.

Meal & Snack Services

- Dew Drop Inn continues to see steadily increasing numbers each month. In March, they served close to 10,000 meals. They have received some funding from the United Way to cover the extra costs of take away containers (approx. \$3,000 - \$4,000 a month). R2H continues to provide weekly seniors bags, which are popular and people line up for.
 - o DDI also put on an Easter Dinner that served 375 people. Big thanks to the RFDA for stepping up and helping to cook 500 lbs of turkey to make this happen.

School Nutrition

- Family Food Bags continue to be offered via a partnership between R2H, Red Cross, and the school boards. They are now up to 360 bags a week.
 - o Bags are available to anyone with school age children who needs them with no registration necessary.
 - o They include healthy snack items such as cereal, milk, fruits & vegetables, cheese, yogurt, etc.
 - o Pick-ups are on Thursday's from 3:00 – 4:30pm at five locations around town:
 - Our Lady of Loretto Church (Grenville Ave); Oliver Road Community centre; Evergreen Community Hub (Heron St.); St. Agnes Church (Brown St.); and Limbrick Resource Centre.
 - o This is advertised via social media weekly beginning on Tuesdays. See R2H Facebook page for more information.

First Nation Communities/Organizations

- Beendigen has a number of programs coming up, including launching school age lunch boxes, containing school snacks and juice boxes. They will also be offering pre-paid cell phones and tablets to youth in need; watch their Facebook page for more information about when that will happen.

Contact information for services:

 - o Beendigen Crisis Home - (807) 346-4357 or toll free 1-888-200-9997
 - o Beendigen Program Support - (807) 632-0721
 - o Talk 4 Healing - 1-855-554-4325
- Shkoday is currently in a holding pattern with their programs as students continue to learn virtually from home. They continue to try and support the food security of their families as needs arise. In the last few weeks, they have given out upwards of 50 hampers to families associated with their programs.
- FWFN continues to offer isolation support to their families, although the numbers have been lowering. The community has had their second vaccination clinic; otherwise just taking things day by day.
- Matawa is continuing to support families in isolation, but have shifted the majority of their focus to COVID support and vaccine clinic.
- NAN has a new Food Strategy Coordinator, Melinda Sault Coates. No updates to share at this time.

Community Health Organizations

- NorWest CHC still has their same funding to support the food security needs of the clients they interact with, as well as utilizing funding to provide snacks for vulnerable populations. They are also still doing COVID testing and have done some vaccinations (supplies are fluid).
 - o Care Bus Update
 - The pilot has been extended to April 16th; no word beyond that if the service will continue
 - The service runs from 9am – 9pm/7 days a week and utilizes a City of Thunder Bay transit bus. It offers temporary shelter or an island to interact with systems navigators, warm up, get snacks while connecting people from various points in the north end, to those in the south end such as NorWest, following its own 90 minute route.
 - Currently funds have been provided through a partnership of many different agencies including DSSAB and the City of Thunder Bay. At this point, NorWest has not done their own fundraising to continue this service as they don't have the time and capacity.
- CMHA (New Foundations Program) is returning to delivering a hot or frozen meal or two a week to their regular clients. They delivered over 100 Easter holiday lunches to clients last week. Their regular clubhouse model offers a hot meal five days a week to their members.
 - o If you have any questions about CMHA services, email Jason at jarjune@cmha-tb.on.ca

Community Food Supports

- Roots to Harvest (R2H) continues to provide ongoing partnership to many organizations across town including:
 - o Seniors bags to Dew Drop Inn (weekly)
 - o Sandwiches for Debwe patrol (weekly)
 - o Elders boxes for TBIFC (monthly)
 - o Easy meal bags for Elizabeth Fry (monthly)
 - o Culturally appropriate hampers for Syrian families (monthly)
 - o Healthy snacks for the isolation shelter (weekly); numbers are going down at the isolation shelter however, not sure how long this support will continue.
 - o Community Food Market, Tuesday's from 1:00 – 4:00pm @ 97 Limbrick; all are welcome!
- Good Food Box (Women's Center) ran a full program in March, packing 525 boxes over several days. Numbers for April will be similar. They are trying their best to keep up with PPE and COVID procedures to do contactless deliveries. They received word that a big piece of their operational funding they rely on did not come through for this year, with funders overstretched from emergency funding.

- Youth Inclusion Program continues to offer the same programs as previously reported from last meeting. Youth Navigators-individualized supports. Food Security Programs in all our priority neighbourhoods (Windsor, Simpson & Limbrick) partnering with Roots to Harvest, Our Kids Count and the Health Kids Food Collective.
- Thunder Bay Multicultural Association has been working with churches who are donating food and with R2H. Clients are supported with food through a program that partners with catering businesses in town to provide breakfast, lunch, and dinner to new arrivals who are in hotels, as well as through some of their youth programs.
- Our Kids Count is continues to run a number of their food related programs:
 - Virtual community kitchens (three times a week)
 - Pre/post natal support that include pre-assembled food kits and an opportunity to log on to Zoom for cooking tips and socializing
 - Kick Program for kids will resume over Zoom; offers kids recipes and ingredients an opportunity to connect over Zoom to do cooking together.
 - Food Cupboard is open every Friday, currently seeing between 40 – 60 families there a week.
 - They are still offering deliveries to those families who need it, although not as many as they were initially.
 - Last week they were able to give away 6 turkey dinners to give away.
- Evergreen has been able to continue their meal-to-go and feeding program through funding from DSSAB and United Way, with numbers rising weekly.