

HEALTHY APPLE CAMPAIGN

What’s causing a food crisis in the North?

There are many reasons that explain the rising need for food banks, but the most important facet is a complete lack of support from the federal government to address the food crisis in the North.

Northern food prices rising twice as fast as rest of Canada

The price of groceries in Yellowknife is rising faster than anywhere else in the country and Whitehorse's food costs aren't far behind, according to Statistics Canada. Nunavut has the highest food prices in all of the country.

Children, seniors most in need

Of the nearly 5,000 people who use food banks in the North, 47% of users are children. More than 30% are senior citizens who can't make ends meet. The need continues to grow. Since just last year, another 1,100 people have turned to food banks.



How it works

Food banks across the North are facing dire food shortages, unable to keep up with the demand for families in need.

More and more Northerners are turning to food banks to sustain themselves every week, largely because food prices continue to rise exponentially in the North compared to the rest of Canada, and cuts to crucial federal assistance programs have left families high and dry.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada North has pledged to assist food banks and the families they support – both to get them back on their feet, and also to offer them the long-term tools to make sure they can remain sustainable.

That’s where the Healthy Apple Campaign – pioneered by REVP North Jack Bourassa – comes into play.

The campaign aims to first help food banks restock their shelves with much-needed donations and the help of PSAC volunteers, but then also to work with local grocery stores to label key items on the shelves that food banks need most with the iconic Healthy Apple logo, encouraging shoppers to pick up these hot-ticket foods and donate them to the food bank.



Nutrition North Canada falls short

Federal programs like Nutrition North Canada aim to address the growing crisis, but are merely floundering and don't do nearly enough to address the situation.

The new Liberal government plans to increase funding its funding by \$40 million in the North and make sure the program works.

What we can do

- ◆ Talk to local food banks and identify what services we can best assist them with
- ◆ Get Healthy Apple labels installed and periodically chafed in local grocery stores
- ◆ Advertise the the goals of Healthy Apple Campaign and encourage public support
- ◆ Install food bank donation boxes in local grocery stores
- ◆ Get grocery stores on board with Roundup and other fundraising programs

That means staple items like rice, soups and breakfast foods will have small labels next to the prices to show just what's needed.

It's a campaign PSAC North aims to introduce across the North, and eventually to regions all across Canada, to assist food banks and community freezers in all communities.

Not only that, but the Healthy Apple Campaign also reaches out to grocery stores as well for assistance, beginning programs like the Roundup system and 50/50 draws that help raise money for food banks in dire straits.

Northmart and Super A have both pledged their continuing support in Hay River, introducing a 50/50 draw and the Roundup program (which rounds up to the nearest dollar to donate to the food bank), respectively, to continue to bolster the Soup Kitchen's shelves.

It's with the help of key volunteers in communities across the north that the Healthy Apple Program can gain traction and national recognition, helping to fill the gaps the Conservative government's cuts to food programs have left gaping open.

The next step is to form a Northern Food Insecurity Coalition, linking together good banks and not-for-profit organizations across the North to share common goals, combine decades of experience and discover ways to alleviate food insecurity and ensure we lobby municipal, territorial and federal governments to protect Northern families.

With many families in the North struggling to make ends meet, the need for food banks continues to grow and the time to take definitive action is now.

In March 2014 alone, 4,649 Northerners asked for a donation from their local food bank. Some will only visit the food bank once. Others will be weekly visitors. And while food bank use is rising quickly all across Canada, the situation is most dire in the three Northern territories, with 246.8% more people using food banks in 2014 than they did in 2008, a jump that's more than five times as steep as anywhere else in Canada.



Needed item

Help your community:
donate this item to
your local food bank