

The
**Community Share
Food Bank**

33 Overland Drive, Don Mills, ON M3C 2C3

May 1, 2013

Honourable Kathleen O Wynne
Premier of Ontario
Minister of Agriculture and Food
MPP, Don Valley West
Room 281
111 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne

Re: Need for Food Knowledge and Skills Training in Ontario schools –
In support of Ontario Federation of Agriculture President, Mark Wales' call to
"...Bring Back Home Economics..." – Toronto Star - April 24, 2013

Yes, the time for increased food education in our schools is now!

On front-line contact with some of the province's most vulnerable people, I see endless examples that reinforce the need for reliable food knowledge and skills. Twice weekly, our food bank has distributed food for about 10 years. As President since its inception, I have seen the Community Share Food Bank grow to become the second largest (a dubious claim to fame) food bank in Metro Toronto – serving over 21,000 recipient food units in the past year alone.

With food bank users' limited resources to allot to food purchases, education to maximize food dollars through smart food choices and greater food preparation skills is essential.

Many recipients turn down good quality produce donated from the Second Harvest's central depot delivery to us each week because they do not know how to prepare that food. When the cooking steps are outlined, there is much greater acceptance and confidence is boosted. A simple cookbook of recipes with commonly donated foods, edited by a Professional Home Economist, was eagerly received.

When we received turkeys, donated as a holiday treat, we learned that many recipients had no idea how to cook a turkey - let alone, cook it safely. My background as a microbiologist led us to distribute the turkeys with very detailed preparation directions!



Evidence of lack of basic nutrition knowledge is also common. Food baskets are assembled for recipients but they are allowed to trade up to five items. Often, recipients trade nutritious food for more tempting choices, such as puddings or potato chips. Others with diabetes or celiac disease are seen making poor choices, too. With all good intention of looking out for their families, nutrition facts and labels can be puzzling to those without basic knowledge.

At the opening ceremony of the food bank, Premier Wynne, then as MPP for our riding, you wished us success, along with a hope that the food bank would soon not exist. It is astonishing to see such continued need for food banks all across our province! Good reliable food knowledge and skills would alleviate this unfortunate reliance!

Let's come together now to implement the necessary changes in the Ontario school curriculum so we can equip all of our young people with the know-how to put healthy, safe, and dollar-stretching meals on the table!

Yours truly



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President
Community Share Food Bank Inc.

c.c. Mark Wales, President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Joan Ttooulias, P.H.Ec., President, Ontario Home Economics Association