



Annual Report 2021-2022

Fighting hunger, feeding hope
and building healthy futures for kids
in our community.

Land Acknowledgement

Food4Kids Waterloo Region acknowledges that our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our work is situated on the Haldimand Tract, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. We recognize that 950,000 acres of this land was promised by Treaty in 1784 to Six Nations, and we acknowledge that only 48,000 acres is in the rightful care of Six Nations.

We will endeavor to be accountable to this reality in ways that go beyond an apology or acknowledgement. We will strive to continue to learn the truth, support calls to action, and aim to be aware of the ways that we are connected to all living beings as well as to the land. We will do our part to protect this land and learn the impacts of our Indigenous community members as we continue to reconciliation.

Our Mission

Food4Kids Waterloo Region provides packages of healthy food to children ages 1-14 living with severe food insecurity during weekend periods and school breaks.

Our Values

Child-Centered

The well-being of children is the centre of our focus. We ensure accessibility and inclusiveness, while advocating for the elimination of food insecurity.

Collaborative

We engage and share with our community without bias or prejudice. Collaboration allows us to be resourceful, creatively leveraging our partners to improve effectiveness.

Caring

We practice compassionate caring in our concern for others and our respectfulness in word and deed.

Accountable

The children we serve, and the greater community we work alongside, can count on us to deliver our program with integrity and accountability.

Outcome-Focused

The impact we make on outcomes for children today, matter as much as ensured sustainability of our program in the future.

Our Pillars

Food4Kids Waterloo Region is based on three distinct pillars:

Food Content and Quality

All food provided will be healthy, culturally-sensitive, and accommodate dietary restrictions and allergies.

Access

We deliver weekend food directly to children at their school during the school year, and to their homes during school breaks, ensuring a non-stigmatizing model of delivery.

Children

Each child, 14 years and under in a family, will receive their own food package, to ensure nourishment of all children living within severely food insecure homes.

Message From the Executive Director



I am honoured to share Food4Kids Waterloo Region's 2021-2022 Annual Report report with you – our friends and supporters. We are grateful to our donors, volunteers, Board and staff who have made this organization what

it is today – since its inception only 5 years ago. We are grateful to Kelly-Sue Oberle, who had the foresight and courage to start this incredible organization to tackle childhood hunger, after retiring from Nutrition for Learning, where she witnessed the children living with chronic hunger on weekends and school breaks.

When I reflect on Food4Kids Waterloo Region's accomplishments over the last year, I am amazed at how much our family of staff, volunteers and donors have achieved, thanks to your unrelenting support. For most of this year, the work of Food4Kids Waterloo Region continued to be driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact. Because of your unprecedented contributions of money and time, we were able to rise to the challenges presented by the pandemic and accomplish more than we ever imagined.

From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, we distributed the equivalent of 395,000 meals to an average of 800-950 children living with severe food insecurity each week, more than any previous year. Although challenging, positive outcomes of this year have been the opportunities to collaborate with businesses, individuals and other non-profit organizations, and the generosity and creativity of our donors and funders. We are grateful to for the spirit of cooperation as

we worked together to meet the tremendous needs of children in our community.

At June 30, 2022, Food4Kids Waterloo Region has been able to increase the program to 1,000 children in 56 schools. Although this is a great accomplishment, we are only in 33% of schools in Waterloo Region, due to funding limitations. We also have seen an increased need within the schools we already support, due to increased inflation and housing costs faced by families already living in extreme poverty. The struggle isn't over, and sadly, it may get worse. Now, more than ever before, we need to work together to continue to support children at risk in our community.

We will come together, like never before, to join in ensuring that despite the challenges, children living with severe food insecurity are getting the nutrition they need. Please continue to stand with us – to lend us your hands, your time, your resources – to provide for our most vulnerable children to ensure that more have access to healthy food on weekends and school breaks, or the 170 days when kids are not in school and can't access the school nutrition program.

It takes a community to feed a child; a community of amazing donors, volunteers, Board members and staff. On behalf of the Food4Kids Waterloo Region's Board of Directors and staff, we thank you for your continued support for our mission. Please know that you, and the children we support, are at the heart of all we do.

Lorri Detta
Executive Director

Message From the President



Many years ago, one of the things that I studied was Business Administration at Wilfrid Laurier, and this included the different stages that an organization or business goes through. I thought

about these different stages many times as they related to Food4Kids Waterloo Region and, of course, how critical the first 5 years were to the success of an organization. In one model, there are 5 different stages: Inception, Survival, Growth, Expansion and Maturity.

Since January 2017, when Kelly-Sue Oberle began this mission by putting together 19 food packages, at her dining room table for children at one school to where we will be growing to serve 1,000 children in 56 schools every week. Obviously, the Inception stage was successful.

This past two years certainly gave us the ultimate test in passing or not passing through the survival stage. When it became clear by last September 2021, that our founder, Kelly-Sue Oberle, would not be able to return as Executive Director, the Board of Directors was faced with the reality and the challenge of finding a new Executive Director. The board spent hours and hours, in many meetings, on this most important of tasks. It was a lengthy process, from start to finish, and I must say that the Board, and I am including every single one of the directors when I say this, gave of their time, their expertise and their commitment to Food4Kids to select the best possible new Executive Director, offering Lorri Detta the position, delighted that she accepted.

This past year, Food4Kids Waterloo Region faced the survival challenge of a less than desirable financial situation, and used temporary measures, including putting a

moratorium on increasing the number of children enrolled in the program. From a financial situation that was a cause for concern, plus continuing COVID restrictions and putting into place strong Operational Leadership, our current financial situation is now much stable and stronger, with more children than ever enrolled in the program. This could not have been achieved without the commitment of our donors, funders, staff, volunteers and our community. Food4Kids Waterloo Region is now, I believe, in a more sustainable and promising position than ever.

So, the First Five Years benchmark and Survival stage passed and now Food4Kids Waterloo Region is onto the Growth stage. The organization continues to explore and cultivate new ways to connect with community partners, with new sources of funding and new ways to increase community awareness of our mission, and reach more children living with chronic hunger in the Region of Waterloo.

The second ever Food4Kids Waterloo Region Strategic Planning session took place. The new 3 year plan that is developing as a result of this day-long think tank with staff and Board members looks exciting and promising for more growth and expansion. Not only was it enjoyable to actually be working together in person, it felt very much like a team building experience. A team of staff members and Board members.

We look forward to working with our community of as we continue to develop our Strategic Plan and work towards incorporating them into Food4Kids Waterloo Region's future.

I can't help but wonder how long it will be before the door to the Expansion stage starts opening!

Carla Waites
President

Message From the Founder



I have been asked many times what inspired me to begin Food4Kids Waterloo Region.

Inspired?

When we, as human beings living in the greater community, recognize a need, there are two actions we can take: ignore it and for many valid reasons, or, act on it.

So many people pointed me in this direction. Other compassionate leaders doing good works for children across our province and country, educators who identified children coming to school after weekends without nourishment, and the children themselves.

Blessed with an entrepreneurial spirit, years of building skills with the guidance of other leaders, and more importantly, working with people who believed in what we could do together, I, along with many, created Food4Kids Waterloo Region.

We started with humility, and hopefully kept that value instilled in our every action.

Food4Kids Waterloo Region has come a long way from the days of packing bags in my dining room. Four professional women helped me form our Founding Governance Board: Diane Williamson, Bev Gay-Krukowski, Debbie Versteeg and Christine Seifried. It was imperative that we form the foundation of a strong organization with our mission, mandates, values, policies,

procedures, and an operational plan for quick growth - to benefit our kids. We had much to do and a rapid plan of action.

I remember the first Principal who called me, before I even began the organization. She had a catch in her voice. There were three children in her school between five and seven years old. They were coming to school hungry, if they came to school at all. Holding back tears, her quivering voice will never leave me. She said, "Kelly, they are losing weight." We know that so many families struggle with providing enough, but, when a five-year-old isn't thriving, but instead losing weight, something is very wrong in our society. So if there was any inspiration that created Food4Kids Waterloo Region it started with that first story and the many, many, many stories that followed.

I have missed my work with this incredible organization, with the very good people who put their hearts and souls into making this happen in our community. Volunteers, staff, suppliers, funders, and foundations. They all give on an ongoing and constant basis.

We are blessed to live in a community like Waterloo region where people care for one another and act on it. I thank our community for allowing me to serve, for believing in the mission and sharing the passion for a very positive future for our children.

There is much work to do.

Kelly-Sue Oberle
Founder of Food4Kids Waterloo Region

Message From the Past President



For the past 5 years I have had the privilege of being part of the Board of Directors for Food4Kids Waterloo Region. I was one of the early board members - which means I have been part of the organization from its

beginning stages. Developing a charity from the ground up has at times been daunting, but more often it's been exciting.

It sometimes feels surreal when I think about all the growth and change that has happened at Food4Kids Waterloo Region in just 5 short years! We have gone from being an organization that people had never heard of, to being a recognizable charity. By June 30, 2022, Food4Kids Waterloo Region is on track to feed 1,000 children in Waterloo Region - who would have imagined that 5 years ago! As a Board of a non-profit still in its infancy, we developed policies and procedures, and put strategic plans in place for our growing organization. We outgrew locations and moved to bigger quarters; we fundraised to ensure we could continue to meet our mandate. And yes - we hit some speed

bumps along the way including encountering a pandemic, and the loss of the Founder, Executive Director and Chief Passion Officer of Food4Kids Waterloo Region - Kelly-Sue Oberle - when she suddenly became ill and had to step down.

To quote Kelly Clarkson, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger! And, I believe that's the case with Food4Kids Waterloo Region. The strength of this organization has always been its people, and their passion and belief in what they're doing. Food4Kids truly has the best staff and volunteers! Their passion is packed into every weekend food bag that's given out - and I believe every child who receives one of our food bags can feel that passion like a warm hug. The children in our program have a community supporting them who are focused on fighting their hunger, feeding their hope, and helping to build their futures.

It's been an exciting and successful first 5 years for Food4Kids Waterloo Region. I wish the Board, staff and volunteers all the best as they continue this good work on behalf of children in our Region.

Susan Cook-Scheerer
Past-President

“ I just wanted to let you know that the family we most recently helped (father had passed away in April) are definitely appreciating the support. The little girl left her food bag at school yesterday and the older brother made the trek from home, knocked on my classroom door around 4:30 pm with his bike and asked me to get it for him. ”

- Teacher from Southridge PS

Staff

Lorri Detta
Executive Director

Cali Dubois
Program
Coordinator

Kim Mervyn
Volunteer
Coordinator

Chris White
Giving &
Engagement
Manager

Board Members

Carla Waites
President

Colin Woodworth
Treasurer

**Susan Cook-
Sheerer**
Past-President

Martin Mahlstedt

Jessica Nurse

Cameron Redmond

Jessie White

Founder

Kelly-Sue Oberle

Volunteers

Volunteers are critical to our program delivery. Dedicated volunteers give freely of their time to ensure that children living with severe food insecurity receive food packages during weekends and school breaks from Food4Kids Waterloo Region. Food4Kids Waterloo Region relies on individuals, families, service club members, community and corporate volunteers to keep our programs operational.

We hear that volunteering with Food4Kids Waterloo Region is very rewarding, because the work has a direct impact on the daily lives of at-risk children. Together we fight childhood hunger today, for a better tomorrow for these vulnerable children.

800 Volunteers

Packing, and much more!

9,500 Volunteer Hours

**Inspecting, sorting, and packaging food
Equivalent of one staff member for 5 years**

17,250 km Driven

**Traveling from our location to schools or homes of
the children we serve. Equivalent of driving from
Kitchener to Vancouver return twice.**



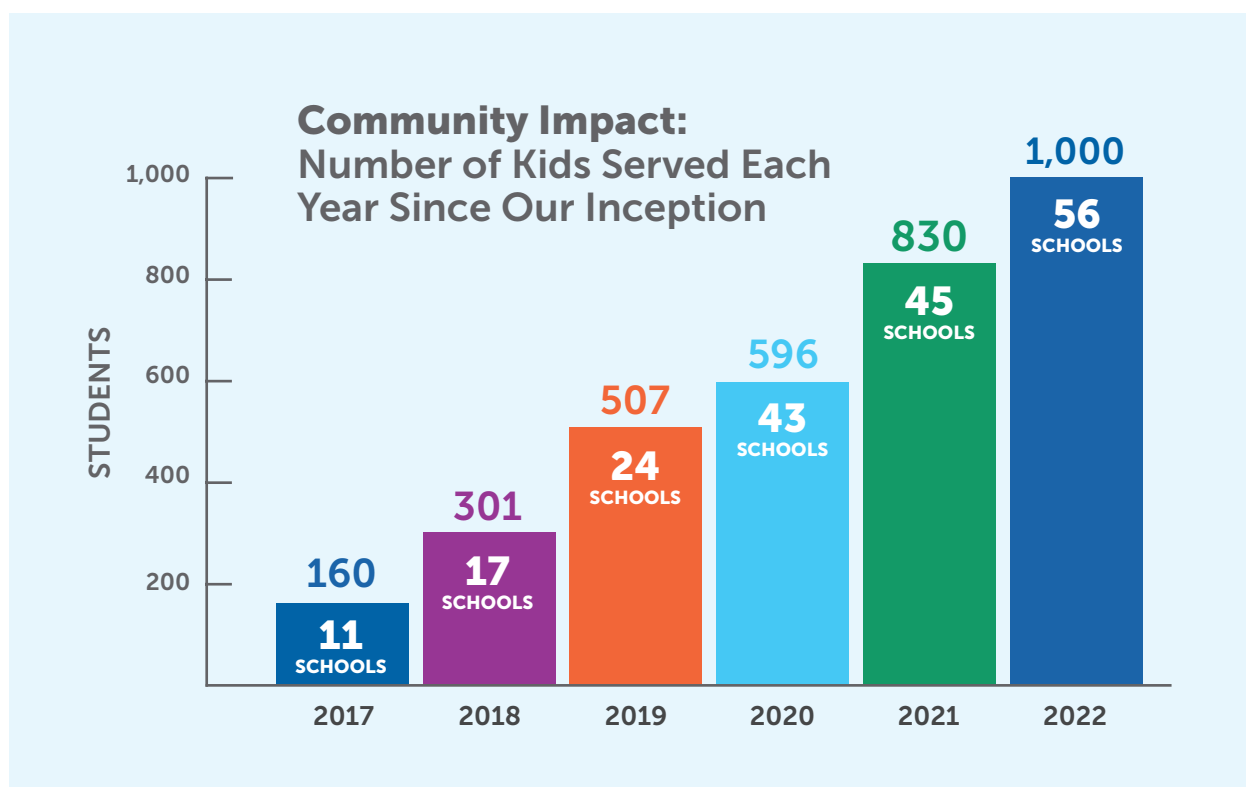
Program Delivery

Even during the second challenging year of the pandemic, we were able to deepen our work to ensure kids living with severe food insecurity had what they needed for their early childhood development, including needed nutritious food on 40 weekends and 90 days of school breaks, or the other half of the year when kids are not in school and unable to access the nutrition program.

The beginning of our year, July 2021, continued to be driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools opened in September 2021 and due to the heroic efforts of education staff, families and the community - stayed open. With the help of our suppliers,

volunteers, donors and staff, we were able to continue to provide healthy food packages including fresh vegetables, fruits, proteins, grains and dairy throughout the year. We started our 2021 year with 850 children, and in 2022, began to gradually increase the number of children we serve to a 1,000.

As we approach our 6th year anniversary in September 2022, we will continue to grow, striving to reach as many children as we can who are living with chronic hunger every day in our community - before it is too late. Early intervention is key to a child growing healthy mentally, physically and socially, and to live their best life imaginable.



395,000
meals served to
950 KIDS

56 OUT OF
151 OR
37%
KIDS IN
WATERLOO
REGION

OF SCHOOLS
in Kitchener
WATERLOO
Cambridge
WILMOT
are served



Treasurer Report



Thank you all, for your continuing support and commitment to fulfilling the Food4Kids Waterloo Region mission.

We believe that a child's foundation starts with good nutrition.

Although this year was challenging, we increased the number of children in the program and continue to provide healthy, balanced food bags every weekend and on breaks. Our children rely on this program, and we are so grateful to our supporters for allowing us to help so many families.

Our goal has always been to build a sustainable organization that the children and families we serve can count on. This year we put that goal into action and made real, tangible changes to help guarantee our sustainability. For the first time ever, Food4Kids Waterloo Region has a contingency fund that will help us weather tough times as they come, such as we experienced during COVID-19. From global economic uncertainty, to rising food prices, this organization faces many threats and risks and building an operations reserve fund will

help to ensure our children can always count on consistent nutrition. When other things in life are uncertain and unstable, our children can continue to count on us.

We also recognize the importance of building a consistent, sustainable, and diverse fundraising base. My mentors have always instilled in me the importance of building sustainability to achieve organizational mission and goals. Our ability to generate income for program delivery has increased significantly this year. Working with our donors, volunteers and the community, we have significantly increased our donations and expanded our corporate relationships. The Waterloo Region community has shown us time and time again how generous they can be and because of everyone's support, we have been able to increase the number of children we support.

Thousands of children still need our help, but we know with the support of our volunteers, local businesses, and the community as a whole, that we will continue to grow and support more children. Thank you for your support this year, and thank you for helping us help Waterloo Region's children.

Colin Woodworth, CPA
Treasurer

“ The reason the teacher had brought this family to my attention was because their mom has a kidney disease and is completely bed ridden. The child appeared to have only two outfits, wore shoes with holes in them for two months, and never had a lunch when they came to school. ”

– Child and Youth Worker
From a local elementary school in the Waterloo Region

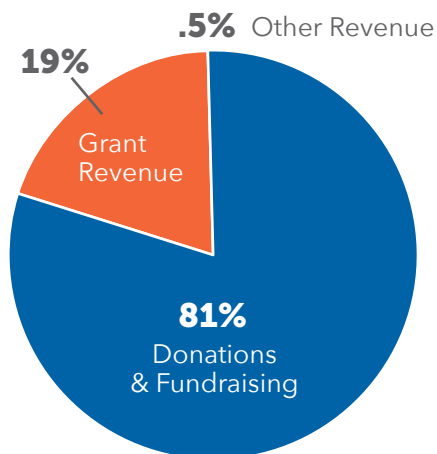
Financials

We remain deeply committed to the sustainable operational values that have been critical over the past 5+ years including service, gratitude, integrity, collaboration and fiscal responsibility. We are proud of how we steward donor dollars to help as many children as possible, by keeping our administrative and fundraising costs below 6%, which is a true achievement for an organization that receives no annualized government funding.

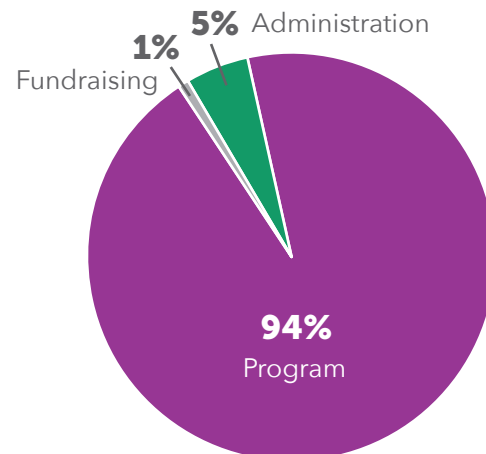
We are financially supported by individual and corporate donations, fundraising, grants and foundations, and do not rely on government funding in our mission delivery.

Our financial statements were audited by Calibre LPP.

Revenue



Expenses



Contingency Fund

The Board of Directors has created a Contingency Fund for the purpose of alleviating emergency effects such as the pandemic, rising food prices or other unforeseen circumstances. The Contingency Fund provides funds to allow the organization to help maintain service levels in the event of decreased donations, increased demand and operational changes resulting from external forces. Uses of the Contingency Fund will be restricted to cover increases in food and other operating costs required to serve vulnerable children.

When students are nourished, teachers see improvements in physical health, attention span, energy, self-esteem, academic performance, social skills.



“ I have been a teacher at Sunnyside PS in Kitchener for more than 20 years and during that time I have witnessed the dire need that some of students have in regards to food. I have had students who will go days without eating just so their younger brothers and sisters have enough to eat. I have witnessed students lash out in anger and when we get to the boom of the issue it often comes down to not having enough to eat and so not being able to focus in class and then getting into trouble or lashing out at classmates.

What Food4Kids Waterloo Region does for the students and their families in my school community is amazing. It allows kids to be kids and to be able to focus on their work and not worry about where their next meal is coming from. Thank you for everything you and your organization does for these families, it is truly appreciated. ”

- Teacher from Sunnyside PS



Thank you to our passionate community for caring about vulnerable kids living with severe food insecurity.



Appreciation

Thank you to the generous contributions of our donors, funders and grantors.

Each year, Food4Kids Waterloo Region receives financial and food donations from hundreds of individuals, families, groups, companies and organizations. Each and every one of them are our vital partners and members of the greater Food4Kids Waterloo

Region family. While the gifts that are donated range in dollar amounts from small to large, every single dollar counts! These funds directly support children living with chronic hunger in our community.

You have bettered the lives of so many children, and your support has made a huge difference. For this, we are grateful.

Future Builder



Champions of Hope

John Hamilton



AMMAR'S
HALAL BUTCHER SHOP • SPECIALTY GROCERY STORE



community food centres
CANADA good food is just the beginning



fidus
innovate • design • deliver

Champions of Hope



Fay Family Charitable Fund

Cameron Redmond

Astrid Woerner-Kropp

Cornerstone Donors



P&P Optica



Preston Knights Inc



Bev Krukowski



Flanagan Family Foundation



Len and Helen Georgiou Foundation



**Food4Kids Waterloo Region
delivers nutritious food
packages directly to
children living with
chronic hunger.**



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