



Freedom 90 commits to raising its voice to demand an end to poverty and an end to the need for food banks and emergency meal programs in Ontario.

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April 8, 2015

Nagara Falls Review - Ray Spiteri - Reporter

What's the best way to feed the hungry?

Instead of food banks, where food is collected and kept in warehouses, Woodstock has moved to a program where customers can donate cash at grocery stores. The money is used to fund food cards given to recipients. The cards are only good for non-taxable staple items and allows people to shop for themselves.



Supporters say it's a more efficient way to help those in need. There would be no need to ship food to food banks, no need for staff to sort through countless donations and no expenses associated with maintaining warehouses.

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April 10, 2015

The Homeless Hub - Erma Woolley

Are grocery cards a better approach than food banks in solving food insecurity?

The Foods for Friends program offers some agency and dignity to card recipients, who get to choose what they want to buy and shop like everyone else. Shirley Merry, a resident of Woodstock and recipient of Foods for Friends, appears in a CBC video and an article from the Woodstock Sentinel Review commenting on the change the program has made in her life: "With food cards, we can go into grocery stores and get whatever we want and be able to shop with dignity...we deserve to shop where everybody else does."

1.7 million
Canadian households
experienced food insecurity

This is incredibly valuable, especially for people who have faced the stigma of poverty for a long time. But Food for Friends is designed as an emergency food service only: the denominations are small, first-time users and families get priority, and repeat use is discouraged. Part of what is needed is a committed, long-term vision of equal food access and poverty reduction in Canada (and worldwide).

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April 22, 2015

The Evidence Network of Canadian Health Policy - Carolyn Shirmin

Backgrounder: The impact of poverty on health

Substantial and robust evidence confirms a direct link between socioeconomic status and health status - meaning people in the lowest socioeconomic group carry the greatest burden of illness. Research demonstrates that there is a "social gradient" in health that runs from top to bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum.



Income provides the prerequisites for health - including housing, food, clothing, education, safety and the ability to participate in society in a meaningful way. Low income limits an individual's opportunity to achieve their full health potential because it limits choices. This is why, in order to capture the true multi-

dimensional and dynamic nature of poverty, it is more accurately recognized as social and economic exclusion ...

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April 21, 2015

The Hamilton Spectator - Tom Cooper and Laura Cattari - Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

Budgets must grapple with poverty issues

It's a Tale of Two Budgets. This week, both the federal and provincial budgets will be released.



Like the opening lines of Charles Dickens classic, "A Tale of Two Cities," for some it may continue to be "the best of times": Perhaps for corporations who pay some of the lowest taxation rates in the world or for the 11 per cent of families who will benefit from income splitting?

For many Canadians however, including more than three million people living in poverty, it's been "the worst of times."

Inequality continues to fragment our society while families seeking affordable housing and child care struggle; stable income supports and living wage jobs elude many others.

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April 23, 2015

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Hugh Mackenzie - Research associate

Ontario Budget 2015 throws everything but infrastructure under the bus

The budget makes reference to its poverty reduction strategy. But the only concrete measure is social assistance benefits are being increased - by 1%, less than the rate of inflation. The numbers say that social assistance benefits - both Ontario Works and ODSP - are still lower by 5-7%, after accounting for inflation, than they were at the end of the Harris era.



On the way to budget balance, expenditures on children and social services will increase by less than one third of the rate of inflation.

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April 23, 2015

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Sheila Block and Kaylie Tiessen - CCPA-Ontario economists

Ontario Budget 2015: Kicks the can on fixing Ontario's real problems

We were promised an activist government, but Ontario has not yet met the target of its first poverty reduction strategy: to reduce child poverty by 25 per cent. Nor has the government set a concrete target or timeline to reach the commitment of the second poverty reduction strategy, already a year old, which includes the laudable policy goal of ending homelessness.



This budget did continue the annual one per cent increases in ODSP and OW rates. And provided another top-up to single people without children who are receiving OW. However, these rates remain woefully inadequate.

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