



FAIRLAWN

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Tuesday Lunch Crowd on Zoom April 14, 2020

Neil Hetherington, the CEO of the Daily Bread Food Bank, spoke to Tuesday Lunch Crowd on Tuesday, April 14 from the main warehouse at 191 New Toronto Street in Etobicoke. Twenty-two people attended via Zoom to hear Neil's presentation. Neil perched his laptop on top of a skid of crates, and we could see staff in the background moving skids of food to be divided up and placed in hampers for distribution.

The number of people relying on food banks is increasing dramatically. In 2019 the number of people using food banks increased by 7%. However, by the end of March 2020, the number of people using food banks in Toronto increased by **53%** due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the shutdown of many businesses.

The advent of COVID-19 presented serious operational challenges for the Daily Bread Food Bank. Volunteers were restricted. Staff working in the warehouses were reduced. Drivers were reluctant to make deliveries to many different sites where they make contact with many people. Daily Bread Food Bank worked very quickly and creatively with staff and partners to address these challenges. Drivers reduced the number of drop-offs and left packages outside. Personnel in the warehouse were reduced from 200 to 20 at a time. Staff are organized into Team A of 20 people who work Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and Team B of 20 who work Thursday, Friday and Saturday. This reduces the number of face-to-face contacts.

Unfortunately, Daily Bread Food Bank had to close their kitchen which served meals to people every day. People can no longer enter the building to pick up their hampers. The number of people lining up for hampers increased from around 150 per day to 450 per day. Global Medic volunteered to help them set up safe distribution, with proper distancing, in the parking lot.

To address the issue of shut-ins, the Canadian Red Cross stepped up to deliver food packages to shut-ins.

One-third of local food banks in Toronto have shut down. A.M.J. Campbell trucking company offered their drivers and trucks to do deliveries to local food banks. The Toronto Public Library offered to receive, package and distribute food packages at local branches across the city.

For Question & Answer period at online Tuesday Lunch Crowd, people used the "Chat" function on Zoom to type and submit their questions. Neil read the questions aloud and answered them. Neil was asked about Daily Bread Food Bank plans in case the situation worsened. Various plans are under consideration. If it comes to the point when the entire operation has to shut down, they could supply grocery gift cards.

Tuesday Lunch Crowd sent a cheque for \$200 to Daily Bread Food Bank. Neil thanked us and said that \$200 provides 200 meals for individuals. People are invited to go to their website dailybread.ca to read more or make a donation.

The Daily Bread Food Bank is making a difference to Torontonians who no longer have enough disposable income to buy food. There is a need for immediate assistance for people struggling today, and for systemic changes to reduce the demand for such assistance. Neil ended with a message of hope for greater understanding and compassion.

Login details for the next Tuesday Lunch Crowd Online ~ Watch for the link in [Greetings](#) and on our website fairlawnchurch.ca/tuesday. Our May 12 1:00 pm meeting features Jocelyn Bell, editor of *Broadview* (formerly the *United Church Observer*).

Suggested readings from participants:

Scarcity: How having too little means so much, by Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir

[Hear the authors discuss the book](#)

CBC The Sunday Edition March 28, 2020 - Amidst a global pandemic, Hugh Segal's call for a guaranteed annual income is even more timely

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