



**Annual Report
2002/2003**

More than a food bank

The Year in Review

Message from the Board President & Executive Director

THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IN THE MARKETING world is that you should never offer people a statistic without a story or a story without a statistic. As you will see in The Stop's 2003 annual report, we've heeded this good advice because if there's one thing we know well, it's that there are real live people behind the staggering statistics on poverty and hunger. Every day we see the toll it takes on our neighbourhood. And yet, once again this year our incredible community—staff, funders, volunteers, partner organizations, participants—pulled together to make amazing things happen.

The building of a bake oven brought cooking, sweet smells and big crowds to the great outdoors.

ple, we were forced to reduce services in the Healthy Beginnings program because we didn't have the resources to cope with the large number of women who wanted to attend. No one here was happy to have to limit the number of visits women and their new babies could make to The Stop post-natally—since most families require significant support in the first few months after birth—but there was no choice given our funding constraints.

Of course, The Stop and the community spoke out about these growing holes in our social infrastructure through press conferences (linking hunger and health), letter-writing campaigns (welfare reform), community forums (homelessness) and depu-



ABOVE:
Board President
Celia Harte
and Executive
Director
Nick Saul

The new program manager position resulted in a much-needed overhaul of job descriptions, a review of our anti-discrimination policy, an improved program evaluation system and greater one-on-one support for staff. Our Morning Drop-in expanded to four days a week. We reconfigured our hours in order to strike a better balance between direct programming, administration and planning. And we just finished building a commercial kitchen that will enhance all our cooking programs and open the door for new initiatives.

Driving these improvements was the unrelenting demand on our services. The fraying of our once acclaimed social safety net is not a pretty sight and, increasingly, front-line organizations like The Stop are being asked to deal with the fallout. Not surprisingly, we're not always able to keep pace. For exam-



tations to government on a range of policy issues. We are proud of the work we've done with various coalitions to ensure that the concerns of low-income people are reflected in public debate.

Leadership development and planning were also key themes at The Stop this year. A training session and debate about board roles and responsibilities assisted members to better understand the board's position on governance and policy development, as well as clarify future work, including reviewing the mission statement, developing a governance manual and revisiting our strategic plan of 2000. At the staff level, we initiated a process to allow us to step back from the daily grind and reflect on what we do, how we do it and the impact this work makes in the community. We considered such questions as what criteria to use when making choices about allocating

scarce resources and how best to involve community members in policy and program development.

Trying to reach a collective vision about what The Stop is about and where it's going is what strong, healthy organizations do. Such processes help bring meaning to the work we do (after all, we are more than the sum of good intentions) and also ensures the organization continues to provide responsive, flexible programs that meet the needs of the community.

This reflective work will set the stage for a new round of organizational planning over the coming year. The timing couldn't be better as there are lots of options to consider. The new kitchen is about to swing into action, we continue to dream of hiring a full-time cook and strengthening our volunteer program, and we'll have a new commercial walk-in fridge by the end of December. We're also planning to ramp up our community gar-



PHOTO (RIGHT) BY JOHN LAI

dening work and hoping to build new partnerships with local supermarkets to ensure the food needs of our community are better met. As with all such plans, it is essential that we remain clear about who we are so we can chart a smooth future—one that strengthens our ability to deliver on our core mandate of increasing people's access to nutritious food in a manner that maintains dignity, builds community and challenges inequality.

We have our work cut out for us again this year and, as the following stories and numbers illustrate, there's much at stake. A sincere thanks to the many people who go out of their way to make The Stop such a unique community resource.

What we do

The Stop's Core Programs

Emergency Food Bank—community members may access a three-day supply of food once per month

Healthy Beginnings—a perinatal support program for low-income pregnant women

Family Support Program—one-on-one peer support for families with newborns

Community Gardening—food growing and environmental education initiative

Community Kitchens—communal cooking groups that bring people together to cook, eat and socialize

Morning Drop-in—nutritious breakfasts and activities that reduce social isolation

The Stop Café—healthy lunches in a relaxed, respectful atmosphere

Afternoon Drop-in—connecting people to community resources and opportunities for civic engagement

OUR MISSION

The Stop is a non-profit organization committed to:

- **meeting the needs of low-income people by providing access to healthy, nutritious food;**
- **implementing services and programs that address the problems of food insecurity;**
- **participating in initiatives that address the causes of—and solutions to—hunger.**

The Stop's community

Kiet Trinh, who is blind and partially deaf, has been volunteering at The Stop with Peter, his friend and helper, for almost eight years. Throughout this time, Kiet has become instrumental in the running of The Stop's food bank, sorting and distributing food to community members every Monday and Friday. Kiet's handyman skills have also been a great help—he built the shelving units in The Stop's main food storeroom and was part of the team that dug the original fence post holes for our garden. Kiet never ceases to amaze people and is an inspiration to everyone who knows him.

Constanza* is the mother of three children aged 12, eight and six months. Her Family Support Worker at The Stop taught her how to prepare baby food by boiling and grinding fresh vegetables and



fruit into a puree and then storing it in icecube trays in the freezer. When she compared the taste of her homemade food with commercially prepared baby food, she was astonished at the difference. She wishes she knew this years ago when her other two children were infants.

Gordon Bowes, chair of the Garden Advisory Committee, has been a volunteer in the garden since its inception. As the “behind the scenes” man, he now spends most of his time promoting the garden and building partnerships with initiatives such as Plant a Row, Grow a Row, a program that encourages people to grow extra food in their garden for their local food bank. Gordon likes the garden because it means community involvement—where everyone develops a feeling of ownership. The only challenge, he says, is having enough volunteers at the right time. So Gordon encourages one and all to participate as much as possible.

Isobel* is a retiree who lives on a small pension in subsidized housing. After leaving the work force she found life extremely lonely. The television became her companion. Isobel found The Stop when she ran out of food and needed help. She came to The Stop's food bank and learned about the drop-in. She was glad to have a nutritious breakfast and meet new people. Now Isobel isn't as lonely because she has a place to go and be with others.

Pierre* is a recent refugee in Canada. When he first came to the Morning Drop-in, he was on social assistance. Not long afterward he found work in the construction industry. The only problem was he couldn't

230 WOMEN GAVE BIRTH TO HEALTHY BABIES THROUGH HEALTHY EATING
2,100 POUNDS OF FRESH ORGANIC VEGETABLES WERE HARVESTED
11,000 HOURS OF WORK WERE DONATED BY VOLUNTEERS **22,000 NUTRITIOUS MEALS SERVED**
OUR COMMUNITY KITCHENS AND MEAL PROGRAMS **190,000 MEALS SERVED**
7,700 PEOPLE USED OUR CENTRE TO ACCESS FOOD, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

afford the safety equipment he needed to start work. Pierre mentioned this to a Stop staff member and was referred to the Scott Mission where he received help purchasing the required equipment. Three months later, his job came to an end. Pierre was unaware that he could reapply for social assistance and soon fell behind on his rent payments. He eventually received an eviction notice from his landlord and not long after, his door was locked shut by the Sheriff's office. He again talked with a Stop staffer who contacted his landlord to explain Pierre's situation and got in touch with social services. His social assistance was soon reinstated and his landlord had the Sheriff's office remove the lock on his door. Pierre is now back in his apartment and working in the construction industry.

Things fell apart for **Thomas*** three years ago when he went to jail and lost his job as a result. When he was released, he tried to find employment in the food service industry, but it was difficult because of the time gap in his résumé. He began to despair and drink heavily. Last winter he started to attend our Meals Made Easy program, picking up the chef's

Hector* lost his wife in February, and then, due to changes in his pension income, lost his housing a couple of weeks later. Since he is illiterate, drop-in staff helped him apply for social housing. Hector



knife again. This rekindled his passion for cooking and he soon became a kitchen volunteer helping prepare and serve food at the Stop Café twice a week. His spirit and enthusiasm grew. He started to drink less and take pride in the food he created. When he told staff his story, he was referred to the local employment resource centre where he was told about a food service training program. He is now enrolled in that program, has a good letter of reference and can put his volunteer work experience on his résumé.

indicated to staff he would have been very depressed if not for the drop-in; thanks to the understanding staff and other program participants it was the only place where he found comfort.

Like many of the faith groups that support The Stop, **The Church of St. Timothy** has been involved in a number of initiatives, ranging from collecting food for our food bank to growing and nurturing seedlings for our community garden. Many members of the church like the programs at The Stop because they are about people helping themselves and developing community together. One story people at the church still laugh at is when kids in a Sunday school class were given broccoli seeds to plant. The children, however, weren't keen because they thought they would have to eat the broccoli. Their excitement level increased dramatically when they learned that someone else would be eating it!

During a bread-making workshop, food brings women from various cultures together. **Hu-Lin*** takes on a mentor role, asking the other women "What kind of bread do you have in your country?" As the conversation wanders from bread to pregnancy to parenting, the women laugh and encourage one another with kind words. As one woman participant says, "I didn't just learn how to make bread, I made new friends!"

**Pseudonyms have been used to maintain confidentiality.*

**THEY BEGANNINGS, OUR NUTRITION AND SUPPORT PROGRAM
 ESTED FROM OUR 8,000-SQUARE-FOOT COMMUNITY GARDEN
 NUTRITIOUS BREAKFASTS AND LUNCHESES WERE SERVED THROUGH
 MEALS WENT HOME WITH PEOPLE WHO USED OUR FOOD BANK
 AND ADVOCACY AS WELL AS SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

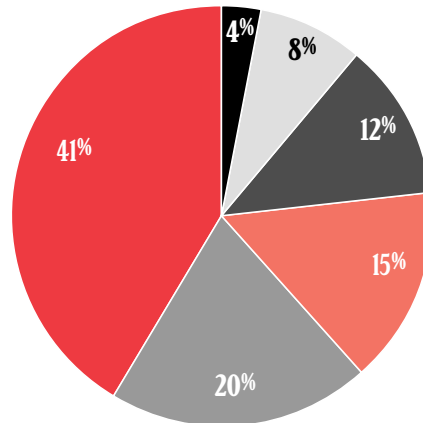
Thanks to The Stop's 20

Faith Groups

Anglican Church of Canada—Incorporated
Synod of the Diocese of Toronto
Centennial-Japanese United Church
Christ Church ACW—Coboconk
Christ Church Deer Park
Christ Church Deer Park—ACW
Church of Transfiguration—ACW
Deacon Al Fund Christchurch Anglican
Deer Park United Church
Eglinton St. George's United Church
Fairlawn Heights United Church
Grace Church-on-the-Hill—Bible Study Group
Grace Church-on-the-Hill—Brandon Group
Grace Church-on-the-Hill—Outreach
Committee
Hillcrest Women's Fellowship
Holy Cross Priory
Kingsway Lambton United Church
St. Andrew's Japanese Congregation
St. Barnabas—ACW
St. James Cathedral York Group
St. John's Church West Toronto
St. John's Norway—ACW
St. Leonard's Church—ACW
St. Margaret's Church
St. Mark and Calvary Church
St. Philips ACW—Martha Group
The Church of St. Clement—Eglinton, ACW
The Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields
The Church of St. Timothy
The Church of St. Timothy—St. Andrew's Group
The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine
Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
Trinity St. Paul's United Church—MAS
Women's Community Service Club—TEMC

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Winter Relief Grant

Organizations

Queen Street Out of the Cold
Steelworker's Humanity Fund
United Steelworker's of
America—Various locals

Government Funding

Federal

Health Canada
• Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program

Municipal

City of Toronto
• Homeless Initiatives Fund
• Community Services Grants Program
• SCPI

In Kind Support / Community Partners

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Davenport-Perth Community Church
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Delvinia
Diamond Estates
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Dufflet Pastries
Dupont Bar-B.Q. Chicken
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EZA Wear
FoodShare Metro Toronto

02/2003 Contributors

This list was compiled in October 2003 and includes those who have contributed since May 2002.

In-kind Support/Community Partners (continued)

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The Church of St. Mary the Virgin & St. Cyprian
 The Community Health Network-West Toronto
 The Composting Council of Canada
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 The Rotary Club of Toronto Charitable Foundation
 The Toronto Star
 Thomas Allen & Sons Ltd.
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 Urban Restaurant
 Verveine Restaurant
 Vision 2000 Travel Group
 West End Drop-In Network
 West Toronto Community Legal Services
 York Marble
 Yorkshire Pudding Inc.

Special Contributions

We'd also like to acknowledge the significant contributions from individuals that have come in the form of anonymous donations, bequest and estate donations, third party events and tribute gifts.

Individuals

This list includes those who gave more than \$200 in 2002/2003. Thanks also to the numerous individuals who donated under \$200, made in-kind contributions, designated their United Way donations for The Stop, and to those who prefer to remain anonymous.

Ruth Abbott
 Sheila & John Allen
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 Lou Walker
 Allan & Mabel-Anne Waters
 Gilbert Whittamore
 Keith & Leslie Whynot
 G.L. Williamson
 Sally Wolinsky
 David Young
 Aman Zafar



Values Statement

The Stop Community Food Centre is committed to building healthier communities through food programming. Our work is based on the belief that food is a basic human right. At The Stop we focus on the ways food can bring people together to break down social isolation and improve their quality of life.

THE STOP'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Allyson Collymore, Tom Currier, Rena Du, Rick Eagan, Heather Gellatly, Gillian Hewitt, Sylvia Harewood, Celia Harte, Joe MacLean, Martin Mark, May-Lin Poon, Kathryn Scharf.



THE STOP'S STAFF

FULL-TIME STAFF: *Back row, left to right:* Nadien Godkewitsch, Cliff Gayer, Tammy Décarie, Gomo George and Wanda Georgis.

Front row: Rhonda Teitel-Payne, Nick Saul and Hugh Birch.

PART-TIME STAFF: Senela Cocoli, Rita Egas, Angela Giuliana, Charmaine Gomez, Marcela Jaramillo, Sarah Kanamwang, Rumana Khalifa, Jane Kilgour, Grace Kiyaga, Charles Levkoe, Fernando Molina, Ray Peters, Erica Pinto Quintero, Luciano Porto Goncalves, Roma Szpak, Hatun Yesilkaya.



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