

# Food Rescue needs volunteers



Volunteer Theresa Molnar stands by boxes of food that just arrived. On the right side on the floor are blue bins and boxes that will be loaded into Food Rescue's van and delivered to various organizations. Photo courtesy of Eve Erasmus



The full van just came from picking up food at stores. The cargo be unloaded, weighed, sorted and put into boxes for various organizations. Photo courtesy of Roy Erasmus



The Food Rescue van, ready to go out to collect donations and deliver food to those in need. Photo courtesy of Eve Erasmus

## Northern News Services

Have you thought about the cost of food lately? Have you noticed how much it costs to feed yourself and your family? I have.

I was amazed to find that it cost \$35 for an economy pack of hamburger.

Imagine what it's like if you're unemployed, if you're in a shelter or

you have a low-paying job and you can't afford to shop at the grocery stores. Then your options

include getting food from the shelters, YWCA, the food bank and other such places.

And where do those places get a lot of their food from? They get it from Food Rescue Yellowknife, a charitable organization.

### Food Rescue Yellowknife

Why is it called Food Rescue Yellowknife? Because they redistribute food to over 30 agencies. The food is still good and may have some bruising or the packaging is dented or it comes from excess bulk items that would be thrown out. Get it? They rescue food that would normally go to the dump. Food Rescue. Woohoo!

They pick up food Monday to Friday from the Co-op, both Your Independent Grocer locations, Shoppers Drug Mart, KFC and Taste of the North. The organization usually gathers and processes up to 1,200 kg of food per day.

A driver and driver's helper pick up the food by truck and bring it to the central building, where it is unloaded, weighed and sorted. It will also be washed, if it's fresh food. The stuff that's good is put into boxes, reloaded onto the truck and then unloaded again, box by box, at the various places that utilize the food.

Dave is a volunteer driver's helper with over a year's experience. He said one time they picked up 1,200

kg on a Monday. They unloaded it, then reloaded it after it was sorted and packed into boxes. Then unloaded it again at the sites that wanted the food. They had to load and unload four times in one day. So that was basically moving 5,000 kg by hand. That's a lot of work. I told him he's a "bugger for punishment." Eschia, take it easy eh!

Food Rescue has been operating since 2008 and is currently looking for volunteers to support its operation. Many of the volunteers have left

Yellowknife or have become too old and are unable to continue.

The site coordinator and driver are paid positions. Why? Because you need a coordinator to oversee things, and you need a driver every day. Sometimes volunteers do not show up, and everything would stop if there was no driver.

Everybody else is a volunteer who comes in once a week for up to four hours, depending on what they do. The centre operates on weekday mornings with the support of five to seven volunteers per day, so that is up to 35 volunteers needed in total. Since there is no pickup on the weekend, Monday is the busiest day.

### Where does the food go?

Food Rescue picks up a lot of food every day. So where does it all go? Places receiving food include the Salvation Army, the Yellowknife Women's Society, Home Base, YWCA, the seniors centre, the shelters and the schools.

They also send food to Ndilo, Detah and Behechoko, and they make deliveries to the Yellowknife Food Bank twice a month.

There is a daily recipient list, meaning each day there is a list of organizations that receive food. Volunteers put the donations into boxes according to the organizations' needs, and the van is used to deliver

## WHEN THE HEART says NO

Roy Erasmus Sr. is a certified wellness counsellor and coach who survived heart disease.



Volunteer Eve Erasmus records boxes of food that have been donated. Driver Nathaniel Bumhira sets a box of food on the scale to weigh it. Photo courtesy of Eve Erasmus

a bunch of boxes to each place on that day's list.

Food from Food Rescue does not go directly to individuals, although some organizations will put it into boxes/baskets and deliver it, or have people come pick it up. For instance, YWCA has approximately 100 families that come to get food. The food bank provides 100-115 food baskets to people every two weeks.

Other places will serve food. For instance, schools will provide a lunch every school day to any student that wants to eat. The Yellowknife Women's Centre provides three meals a day to clients, as well as bags of food to some.

The Salvation Army also feeds 100 individuals in-house twice a day and up to 80 a day at the shel-

ter. Food not used by the kitchen goes to their food bank. The food received from Food Rescue helps these organizations to provide this service.

Tony Brushett, executive director of Salvation Army says, "Without assistance from the organizations like Food Rescue, we could not do what we do. Food Rescue is a huge part of ensuring that everybody that comes through our doors gets a hot meal. And we truly appreciate it."

Some of the food goes into compost, but less than 10 per cent. It would normally go to the dump because packaged foods should not go into compost as the city does not remove things from plastic packaging.

### Volunteers needed

Food Rescue operates every morning from Monday to Friday.

Each day they need a kitchen manager, kitchen manager helper, driver, driver helper and two to three kitchen helpers. But new volunteers are needed.

As you can see, Food Rescue helps so many people; and now they need our help. They need volunteers to work one day a week for less than four hours. So, if you're looking for a rewarding morning routine once a week, please contact Food Rescue by email at [info@foodrescueyellowknife.ca](mailto:info@foodrescueyellowknife.ca).

While you're thinking about volunteering, I'll leave you with what Joanne Teed from the food bank said: "The service Food Rescue provides is greatly appreciated. Without it, the food baskets we give out would not be as full. It's a great service they provide."