

Memo

Date: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

To: Council

From: Craig Shanks, Director of Community Services

Re: Kirkfield Free Little Pantry Food Security Request

Kirkfield Free Little Pantry Food Security Request

At the City of Kawartha Lakes June 1st Committee of the Whole meeting the following resolutions were endorsed;

CW2021-149

That the deputation of Maggie Upton and Marina Hodson, regarding the Placement of a Little Food Pantry at the Kirkfield Library, be received; and,
That the Placement of a Little Food Pantry at the Kirkfield Library be referred to staff for review and report back, through a Memorandum, at the June 15, 2021 Regular Council Meeting; and,
That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council.

The following is a brief synopsis of the request. The City of Kawartha Lakes has been requested to join their collaborative community partnership to help feed hungry people in Kawartha Lakes. They have chosen Kirkfield and surrounding communities to initiate a pilot project and they are asking the City to provide the space that will allow the placement of a Free Little Food Pantry at the Kirkfield Library.

There are successful examples of Public Libraries hosting free Little Food Pantry's in Ontario. One at the Kirkfield Library would be an opportunity to reach out, and help feed seniors, adults and children who live in poverty and are currently hungry in this northern region. Transportation to acquire even the most basic food is often a barrier, as is availability. It is evident there is a greater need in the more rural areas for such an outreach program, as they do not have the same resources that larger centers enjoy. The privacy and flexibility provided by a Free Little Food Pantry set up after hours, allows those in need to maintain a level of dignity, along with anonymity, not offered when using social services. This is an important element to consider, when a large majority of potential patrons will be seniors, who through social conditioning, find it harder to ask for help when it comes to their personal basic needs. Their goal is to enhance the work already being done by area foodbanks, and local senior services, by providing a more user-friendly method of sharing food and personal care items, to increase food security.



The Free Little Food Pantry would also create an opportunity for local residents to actively and safely, socially engage in kindness and sharing by donating/stocking the pantry. Those of us who can do this are always looking for ways to participate in positive social change in our communities. This is true even more so, with Covid-19 and the reality of increased poverty and hunger this virus has brought to us here locally and around the world.

Kirkfield Library has a proud history of supporting food security initiatives, including public education through the *Plant a Row, Grow a Row* program, supporting food collection for the *Woodville Eldon Food Bank*, the *Kirkfield Library Food Culture Garden*, etc.

The proposal is a space for an outdoor Free Little Food Pantry that could be up against the west wall, providing a well-lit but dignified space for people to have the safe option of picking up food after hours, providing privacy and dignity. Partnership discussions will be continually built into the work plan to collectively assess outcomes.

They bring long standing coordination experience of leading programs that feed local residents who live in poverty and are hungry. They work collaboratively with private sector, multi-sector non-profit agencies and Kawartha Lakes municipal partners, creating capacity building service provision to help the City of Kawartha Lakes meet some of the goals of its Poverty Reduction Strategies, and as citizens residing in this area. All costs and maintenance for the project would be assumed by the Food Security Group. This initiative will further enhance all of those goals.

The City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County Poverty Reduction Roundtable and the Food Security Working Group of the Kawartha Lakes Food Coalition support this proposal. The Kawartha Lakes Library Board has already endorsed this proposal and the use of the Kirkfield Library site.

With this in mind staff support the concept for this use and partnership and recommend the following;

- That** the memorandum from Director Shanks, dated June 15, 2021, regarding a request to establish a free outdoor food pantry in Kirkfield, be received; and
- That** the Placement of a Little Food Pantry on the Kirkfield Library property be endorsed; and,
- That** staff work with the Food Security Group of Kawartha Lakes to implement this project for the summer of 2021.