

Food Bank accepting monetary donations

By **Mark Pavilons**

The King Township Food Bank is accepting financial donations at this time. According to director Carol Ann Trabert, they are grateful for the spontaneous donations that have been coming in, but they are not encouraging food donations at this time. All the food that's being packed has been in the depot long enough to not be contaminated in any way. Donations through the button on their website are most welcome. They are also happy to receive cheques by mail. It's impossible to really know what's ahead, Trabert said. She said they may find themselves purchasing food at normal retail. As well, they may be restricted in how much they can purchase. Until those supply lines normalize to catch up with demand, quantities will likely be restricted. Cash, not cans, seems to be the directive at this time. The King Township Food Bank is a totally volunteer organization, which means 94% of donations go to the kitchen tables of over 200 people in King. Currently, they are well stocked with food even after a record increase in numbers this month. Changes in the economy could even double demand in the coming weeks, but they will not be turning anyone away, thanks to the generous community that is King, and beyond. For more, visit ktfb.ca. The federal government has pledged support for food banks and local food organizations across the country. These organizations are facing an increased demand for their services, and added pressure from shortages in donations and volunteers. Now more than ever, they need our support to continue offering the services Canadians rely on to feel safe and healthy. Ottawa announced an investment of \$100 million to improve access to food for Canadians facing social, economic, and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Canada will provide funding to national, regional, and local organizations across Canada that are able to reach people and communities experiencing food insecurity. This funding will be used to purchase food and other basic necessities. It will help these organizations find new, creative ways to reach people in need, so they can continue to carry out their important work while respecting physical distancing guidelines. They will be able to use the funding to buy or rent equipment and other materials to help address the unique needs of the communities they serve and the health-related challenges presented by COVID-19. In 2019, there were 1.1 million visits to food banks and 5.6 million meals served on average each month. It is expected that visits to food banks will increase significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the funding, \$30 million is earmarked for local-level organizations who serve people experiencing food insecurity. Funding will be delivered through the Government of Canada's Local Food Infrastructure Fund. The Fund, launched in the summer of 2019, aims to strengthen food systems and facilitate access to safe and nutritious food for at-risk populations. Currently, more than 360 projects are receiving funding to increase accessibility of healthy, local foods within their communities, including through urban gardens, community kitchens, food banks, and greenhouses. Eligible activities for this new funding include the purchase of food, support for the transportation and distribution of food, hiring temporary help to fill volunteer shortages, and activities to implement biosecurity measures, such as the purchase of personal protective equipment, to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among volunteers and clients. The Local Food Infrastructure Fund is part of the Food Policy for Canada, the Government's roadmap for a healthier and more sustainable food system in Canada. The Food Policy's goal is to ensure that all people in Canada are able to access a sufficient amount of safe, nutritious, and culturally diverse food. It is focused on ensuring that our food system is resilient and innovative, sustains our environment, and supports our economy.