

## Spring food drive sets 80,000-pound goal

By Chris Traber

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The York Region Food Network's spring drive hopes to collect 40 tons of non-perishable food by April 8.

Food bank use among the region's nine centres is increasing steadily, network executive director Joan Stonehocker said.

"The Christmas drive was excellent, but food is going out faster than usual," she said, citing January's 4,430 clients, 40 per cent of whom are children.

In the next three weeks you can help reach the 80,000-pound goal by donating items at regional fire stations and at Loblaws and other participating grocery stores. The network is looking for dried or canned foods, particularly proteins such as canned meats, fish and peanut butter, Ms Stonehocker said. All other similar foods, including pastas and sauces, are welcome.

You can also donate funds through the network's website, which allows donors to specify the food back to which they would like to donate. You can also drop a cheque off to your local food bank.

Since 2001, the number of clients fed by York food banks has almost doubled to 54,000 a year. From 2008 to 2009, usage increased 27 per cent.

Help the hungry by visiting [www.yrfn.ca](http://www.yrfn.ca) for food bank locations and donation information.