



Leah Dyck

July 25, 2022 · 🌐



So about a month ago, I met this single mom. She told me she's 41 and has two boys; 7 and 3, and that she's going through a divorce. She was clearly pretty upset and being mindful of her feelings, I asked her if she wanted to talk about it.

She went on to explain what a douche her ex is, and how he never did anything throughout the marriage. He never even picked out her birthday gifts - his mom would do it for him.

Just listening to her talk about her marriage made me feel so bad for her... not only did she have to take care of two young boys, she was also responsible for a grown man who never pulled his weight in any way, shape or form.

She said she finally had enough and moved out, and she's taken a sick leave off work because mentally, she's just overwhelmed with life right now. Her ex doesn't pay a cent of child support and she can't afford a lawyer to make him pay. Legal Aid doesn't see this as an emergency either. Her sick leave pay covers just enough for rent and as she was telling me all this, I could see it in her eyes, and hear it in her voice how exhausted she was.

... if she hadn't already had a break down, it was only a matter of time.

So I told her I run a food charity and that she'll be getting a July meal box, which would include milk, eggs, meat, butter, cheese, and a bunch of other great things.

Immediately she burst into tears.

The reason I'm telling you all this is because when women finally get the courage to leave, the reality is, many of them cannot afford to live on their own... whether they're working or not.

I would like to keep giving this woman a meal box every month, and I would like to keep giving meal boxes out to many other families who are struggling right now and need to know that someone cares.

If you are in a position to sponsor a low-income family in Barrie with an August meal box, please send me a PM.

Now, more then ever, the struggle is real.





Leah Dyck

August 11, 2022 · 🌐

2



Yesterday I sent out an email blast to all the current and past recipients of the [Fresh Food Weekly](#) meal box delivery program and asked if anyone would be interested in talking to me about some of the struggles they're facing, and if so, I would share their story on social media, to help people become more aware of what life is actually like for thousands of Canadians.

I'm starting to realize that most of us are simply not aware of what is going on in our own backyards. I just got off the phone with a 74-year-old woman who left me in tears. Her husband died 11 years ago and he owned a successful glass window installation company in Mississauga. Their son ended up taking advantage of her financially after her husband passed and this is not the first time I've heard of adult children taking advantage of a vulnerable parent. He left her with nothing and now she's living on a pension that doesn't give her enough to eat or pay for necessary medical expenses.

In her response to my email blast, this is what she had to say:

"Life is a struggle and being 74, I wonder some days even why? It's so sad when you need a pneumonia shot - which is \$150 because you're over 70 (if I were 70 or under, the shot would be covered), and to get a shingles shot is \$185 and I need two of those. But I can't afford to get any. How can one protect themselves?

To feel that you have to go to a food bank just so you can eat. I try so hard and pay my rent and pay so I can have TV. It's sad because I don't let anyone know how bad things get. I try and smile and say everything is okay. I don't go out anywhere and I don't drink - I just live from day to day. And when I can get to the food bank, I'm so thankful to get some food but it's never enough. My one thing that gives me joy is my pup. She is nine-years-old and I cannot bare to part with her, even though I know it would save me a bit more money but I love her so much. I rescued her eight years ago but when you're this lonely, I believe she's the one who's rescued me. I know there are so many who are worse off than me and I wish I could help them out.

I wish everyone well and some joy in their life. Thank you for all the good you do for so many."

On the phone, she told me she emailed [Doug Shipley](#) but got no response. "There's gotta be somebody who can help", she said as she started crying.

But there isn't help for her. Her husband isn't around anymore and her son is the reason why she's in this position. Obviously I've put her on the meal box program.

I normally don't publicly talk about my faith because I know so many people who dislike Christians, and often for good reasons too. I am a Christian but like so many, I've met a lot of self-righteous hypocrites who do nothing but stick their noses up. One of my biggest donors from last summer actually told me he hates Christians and he'll never step foot in a church again. These were his words exactly - they're literally seared into my brain.

But I'm just going to come out and say it, James 1:27 says, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

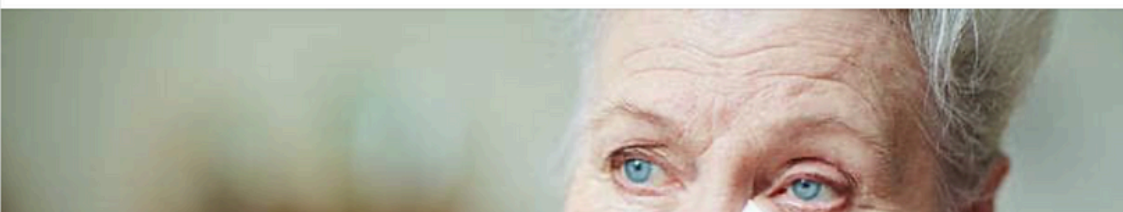
Where is the church!? Why are so many of our neighbours suffering!? Our government isn't helping the widowed and our politicians certainly aren't lifting a single one of their well-manicured fingers!

If I could raise enough money to feed 300 families a month, I would. Three hundred households in Barrie are on the wait list for a meal box this month and everyday I hear their stories. There isn't enough help out there and the amount of unnecessary suffering is awful to witness.

If you're reading this right now, and you are in a position to sponsor a low-income family in Barrie, please send me a PM because it turns out that a simple meal box is all it takes to improve a person's quality of life. It's not just the food that helps, it's also knowing that someone cares enough to do something about it that gives them relief.

Thank you for taking the time to read another one of my lengthy posts, and thank you to everyone who has already donated. Your kindness is actually changing people's lives. ❤️

Leah



Hello again everyone,

Our August delivery day is coming up soon! This month we're delivering meal boxes to 65 low-income families on Aug. 24th between 4-6pm and that's exactly one week away!

I would like to tell you about another recipient on our monthly meal box delivery program. I had the privilege of meeting this young woman and her daughter on the July meal box delivery day, as I delivered her meal box. I've put her on the program on-going because like so many others, her and her young daughter are starving... like, actually starving.

This is her story...

"I'm a single mom with a child who has a disability. I lived in a shelter with my daughter for over three months, and now I'm currently living in subsidized housing. Shortly after moving into Barrie Public Housing, I applied for Ontario Works. But just recently, I got a call from my case worker saying that if I don't find employment, I can't receive Ontario Works (OW) anymore.

For anyone who has a child with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), they know the struggle of raising a child with special needs. My daughter can't eat by herself, go to the bathroom by herself, go up and down stairs by herself, etc... Not to mention that she has countless visits to Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and IBI.

I provided OW with proof of diagnosis and sole custody court order. I'm the main caregiver of a child with disability, so how am I supposed to support my child and provide her with her needs if I'm away working for 9am-5pm? In April 2022, I was removed from the system and stopped getting the so much needed assistance (which was only \$300/month).

Long story short: I had to claim bankruptcy because I couldn't even afford to buy bread. I had to decide whether to buy a bag of potatoes or putting gas in my car to bring my daughter to therapy the next day. My child has sensory issues with food and texture. I really can't remember the last time I bought the type of food that she can tolerate to chew. It's been really hard... extremely hard!

Barrie Housing still charges rent. But this is a subsidy so my rent is \$93 a month. My water, gas, electricity, internet, etc... it's getting paid with the child benefit money I get from the government each month."

I know - reading about these kinds of stories is so heartbreaking. But I'm learning that the reason these stories exist is because no one is talking about them. Did you know that the starting rate for a Barrie Municipal Nonprofit Housing Corporation position in managing a building is \$100,000/year?

Look at this article. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/.../more-rental-housing...> The government loans #Barrie \$26 million for affordable housing last year... but the people they house are starving. You know how many families I'm serving in at the address listed in this article!? It's totally disgusting how many people need tremendous help right now.

The woman in this story does not live at the address in the article here, but there are so many families living in the same conditions as third-world countries. They literally don't have a single dollar to their name and they don't have any food. Their "homes" are lucky to have one stovetop working or any usable electrical outlets. The food bank only gives one week's worth of food... which is so much better than nothing.... But this is how thousands of people in our City are surviving.... They're starving in shit holes.

This woman, and her daughter left an abusive home and now they're starving. Why do we live in a country where women have to choose between not getting beaten and not getting food!? Is this really the best we can do? For women with children with disabilities, they're left with absolutely nothing. Why are so many organizations okay with this!?

**Fresh Food Weekly** exists because there are thousands of women and children in our City starving right now. I don't know why this isn't all over the news and I don't know where all this government funding keeps going but it's not going to the people who need it. The people and children who need it just keep starving day after day, month after month, and year after year.

If you would like to help even one family struggling in Barrie, you can sponsor them with a meal box for \$45. For August, these meal boxes are valued at \$135 and includes fresh food that has been locally sourced. Nothing is expired. Nothing is about to go past it's "best before date". Everything is high quality.

I am trying to show these people that they didn't do anything wrong by leaving their abusive partner or choosing to care for their young child with autism. I'm trying to show this woman that she's a great mother who deserves respect and dignity.

If you would like to sponsor a family in need, please send me a PM.

In addition, we're looking for a lot more delivery drivers on Aug. 24th next week. We need help with packing up the meal boxes, as well as delivering them and we also need a few people to help with cleaning up afterwards. And this all happens at **Countryside United Church** in #Thornton. Packing starts at 2pm and deliveries start between 3:30-4pm. If you would like to get involved, please send me a PM because we need more helpers!

Leah Dyck

August 28, 2022 · 🌐

4

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Hello again everyone,

If any of you have been following what I've been up to over the last year, then you'll know I'm a pretty passionate and intense advocate for the most vulnerable in our community. And I've been realizing a few things about our community throughout my journey of establishing this food charity.

Firstly, the amount of suffering that exists in our own backyards is a crime in itself. The sheer number of people who go hungry daily is outrageous, and I'm seeing it first hand. The second thing is that most people are unaware of the amount of suffering. It isn't in the news, and if it is, the pain of those suffering isn't illustrated much. And thirdly, when you tell people what's really going on, and then give them an opportunity to actually make a difference, they want to get involved and make our world a better place to live in. ❤️

A couple weeks ago, I reached out to our program's current and past recipients and asked them if they could share some of their struggles with me. Today I'm going to share the story of a woman whose disability has forced her to live in poverty her entire life, and it's because our government refuses to take care of the most vulnerable and use tax payer dollars to pay themselves hefty salaries instead. This is what happens when our government isn't held accountable for decades on end...

"I've always known what's it's like to live at the "poverty line" as people call it. When I was younger, there would be empty cupboards and an empty fridge. An oil tank with no oil in it to heat the house in the winter, or to have hot water to take a shower. We'd have to boil the water to get clean so people wouldn't start judging us.

I moved to Ontario in 2012, after leaving Nova Scotia. My mother has MS, and I have Lupus. The only income my mom had when we moved here was the children's benefit she got for me and my little sister. Eventually, she was approved for ODSP but even that wasn't enough. Due to paying rent and our internet/phone bill, we'd be lucky if we have just over a hundred dollars left to buy the basics.

Fast forward a few years, I also got approved for ODSP but it still isn't enough to eat on either. It was never enough. Groceries were scarce as we only tried to get what we really needed. We've always gone to, and still go to the food bank, and the coordinators there know me well. To this day, I go to the food bank because I have to, so my family to have food in the house. And some months are worse than others and when that happens, my moms PSW's makes sure to point it out that the cupboards and fridge are empty, and a feeling of complete shame comes over me and I feel awful. But theres nothing I can do because I have to wait for the next paycheque to come in which is at the end of every month."

This story makes me sick. Can you imagine what it must be like to be born with either of these conditions in the first place, and then to top it all off, you can't even eat when you're hungry? These women are never going to not have MS or not have Lupus. They will have these disabilities for the rest of their lives. And if nothing changes with the government, they'll continue to live in extreme poverty for the rest of their lives too. I realize that ODSP is increasing their rates by the most they ever have this September, but it's no where near enough. Even if they doubled their rates, it's STILL not enough to eat! That's how bad things are!

I wanted to share this story because I want you to hear her pain. I hear it and it disturbs me to the point where I can't sit in silence anymore. These women have suffered unjustly their entire lives and although I can't force the government to start doing the right thing, I've created a way to get fresh food into their homes with [www.FreshFoodWeekly.com](http://www.FreshFoodWeekly.com) . [Fresh Food Weekly](http://www.FreshFoodWeekly.com) helps a wide range of struggling families, whether they're on disability, live on a low pension, are a single mom, or literally work three jobs and still can't make ends meet because their wages are so low and the cost of living is so high.

Our meal boxes cost \$45 each and they can only be purchased on behalf of a low-income family living in Barrie. If you would like to help a low-income family living in Barrie by sponsoring them with a meal box, please send me a PM to make arrangements. I can also issue tax receipts as I just received charitable status on July 19th! 🙏

Thank you for taking the time to read this long post and thank you for any support you may be able to provide 🙏❤️.

Leah

[#FoodSecurityIsFreedom](#) [#foodsecurityprogram](#) [#barrie](#) [#familiesupportingfamilies](#)  
[#foodcharity](#) [#giving](#) [#foodsecurity](#) [#feedingfamilies](#)

This morning I read another recipient's story and I'm absolutely furious. I'm so enraged that the Barrie Municipal Non Profit Housing Corporation (BMNPHC) and Ontario Works (OW; a.k.a welfare) are so indifferent to victims of crimes against humanity.

The reason I'm talking about this is because no one else will and the public needs to know what's really going on. This is the story of one of the recipients of our meal box delivery program - who will absolutely be receiving a meal box each month. Interestingly, it was her sister who lives in Ottawa, who reached out to me after Googling resources in Barrie for people who are starving. Of course, I put her on the [Fresh Food Weekly](#) program immediately.

This is her story...

"Hi there, I don't even know where to begin. In the last couple years, I've been through ALOT. I'm a human trafficking survivor, I've been assaulted, sexually assaulted, lived in a shelter, and slept outside when sometimes that was the safest option for me. I reported these things that happened to me, was then put on the priority list for housing, where I got my apartment, and what I thought would be a fresh start. In the year since I've been here, someone who has sexually assaulted me keeps coming to my building, so I've seen him quite a few times.

I've asked BMNPHC, OW, and the county if they could transfer me for safety reasons but they all said no. So this makes me feel like I'm not a person but just a number. I have panic attacks constantly because there's people who knew my trafficker who also know I live here and this affects my safety, and my life. Yet still, I'm stuck in this building.

I have been diagnosed with extreme PTSD because of the things I've been through. Because of this, I can't work...I have anxiety that leads to panic attacks on a daily basis just thinking of going out my apartment door. I was given a puppy (an emotional support dog). He's now 10-months-old and I don't know what I'd do without him, but sometimes it's either he eats or I do, and I always choose him.

I'm going through the process of getting ODSP..."

\*\*\* the wait time to have your ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) application approved is upwards of three years by the way\*\*\*

"...but right now I'm getting OW. As far as the amount I get, my trafficker had used my SIN number for a while, so I couldn't get anything, not one cent. Now, OW takes an overpayment off each cheque from me, pays my rent directly to the building and I'm left with less than \$300 a month.

Food is definitely a daily struggle. I use the food bank whenever possible but it's not enough food for the month and it's difficult going there, being treated like another number and not a human being. Sometimes I go days without eating, even though I try to stretch out what I have. It's a struggle right now, not just for myself but for thousands of people who are put in the position to beg and borrow just to eat.

I honestly could write a book on my life over the past few years and it would be a good horror movie."

Firstly, I want you all to know that for this woman to write this to me would have been re-traumatizing for her. I want to thank her for her bravery and strength in telling her story. She did it so that you will all know what is really going on. Our government acknowledges that she was trafficked, has given her an emotional support dog for her PTSD and still makes her pay back the money her trafficker stole while using her SIN number. They know her trafficker comes to her building, yet refuse to move her because it saves them money by keeping her there. This is what our government is doing to victims of human trafficking, right here in Barrie. And Barrie housing has no problem at all charging her rent still. All of their staff take two week, fully paid vacations each summer while their tenants literally starve.

I'm beyond outraged and I can't believe this is happening. But I do believe it because these are the stories I hear every day. Injustice after injustice and the people who are supposed to be helping are doing nothing but allowing the abuse to continue.

The [United Nations](#) has defined 'Crime Against Humanity' as follows:

"For the purpose of this Statute, 'crime against humanity' means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:

- c. Enslavement;
- e. Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law;
- g. Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity;
- h. Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court;"

\*\*\* This woman is being discriminated against due to her low social and economic status\*\*\*

This woman is a victim of crimes against humanity and if something doesn't change, she will live in poverty for the rest of her life, and starve daily. After everything she's already been through, this is the fate she has to look forward to in Canada.

If you're reading this and you feel compelled to help, you can sponsor her, and others struggling like her here in Barrie, with a meal box for only \$45. I can also provide you with a charitable tax receipt as well for your donation. The September meal box is valued at \$120 and you can check out it's full list of contents here: <https://www.freshfoodweekly.com/.../the-super-september...>

If you would like to sponsor a low-income family living in Barrie, please send me a PM.

Thank you again for taking the time to read this woman's story, and for becoming aware of what is really happening in our own backyards.

Leah Dyck

September 15, 2022 · 🌐

6

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Hey again,

This afternoon I would like to tell you about another [Fresh Food Weekly](#) recipient who is actually the exact same age as me. As always, her story is really upsetting because it highlights an array of problems in "the system".

Firstly, this woman has a diagnosis for a crippling disease with no cure and it's going to take at least three years for her to get any kind of financial aid because three years is how long it takes to "process" her application. Secondly, when she applied to get financial aid, one of the Barrie case workers was condescending to her. And thirdly, even if she does get approved for ODSP in 2025, she'll be lucky to get even \$900/month... and I know this because it's what many others have shown me.

This is her story...

"I've recently been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) and I'm only 33-years-old," the Barrie woman told me. MS is a disease where the nervous system attacks the nerve fibres in the brain and spinal cord. When this happens, it causes inflammation, and that destroys nerve cell processes, as well as alters electrical messages in the brain. Some individuals may be affected mildly, while others may lose their ability to write, speak or even walk. Without treatment, most people with MS will develop disease symptoms that will gradually worsen over time.

"Treatments are in the talks," she said. "However, I have so many appointments that I'm unable to make because of financial reasons - I simply don't have a way to get there most of the time. And the fact that they schedule so many of them at ridiculous times in the morning makes them even harder to get to. I had an MRI this morning at 3:15 a.m., and I don't have anyone who can drive me. My grandmother used to help me with getting to appointments but she passed away in February. So I'm pretty much on my own now. Sometimes I'm even asked to have someone drive me home, but I can't do that as I don't have anyone to drive me. And I'd rather not bother people at 3 a.m.

When I get flair ups, I can't do very much. I've applied for ODSP, but they've shoved me off onto Ontario Works (welfare). They told me I had to apply through them first - which is fine, I understand there's a system. However, I've heard this process takes three years. Also, when I went through the application process for ODSP, I was told by the worker (here in Barrie) that I didn't look sick so I shouldn't get my hopes up. I don't look sick?! I was walking with a cane! I can barely get out of bed on a daily basis, and I can't walk without assistance or assistance devices. Every single day is a struggle."

This woman went on to explain that she's applied for our meal box program and has only received it once, which she said was the best thing she could ask for; "the gentleman who dropped it off was kind. Everything in it was great."

"Life is hard when you have a crippling disease which makes it so you can barely work, and then everything else follows suit... when you can't work, there's a lack of finances, which means there's a lack of food, and other items you need.

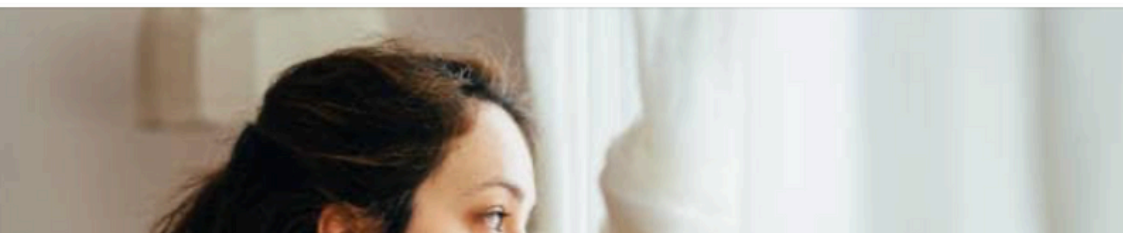
But the meal box helps. Thank you for everything you do! I appreciate it."

I can't even begin to understand how hard life is for this woman, but I do know that every day she struggles to find enough food to eat. And I also know that some of the staff at ODSP make people like her, with diagnosed disabilities, feel even worse about themselves by making rude comments such as "you don't look sick". I've witnessed it myself many times.

If you're reading this today and you would like to help this woman, and others like her by sponsoring a meal box for \$45, please send me a PM. The September meal box is valued at \$120 and will be delivered next week on Wednesday. You can also learn more about our monthly meal box delivery program by visiting our website at: [www.FreshFoodWeekly.com](http://www.FreshFoodWeekly.com)

Thank you again for your time in reading her story. ❤️

Leah





Leah Dyck

September 30, 2022 · 🌐

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7

So today I would like to share with you all another story of one of the recipients on the [Fresh Food Weekly](#) program. I think, with this man's story, it's nobody's fault - he was dealt a bad hand in terms of his health. It could have happened to anyone. That being said, now he lives on \$300/month and it's unlikely his financial situation will ever improve. So him and his young son will receive a meal box each month. This is his struggle:

"Three years ago, my wife divorced me. I was back in school as a mature student during this time and I didn't have the money to get a new place. So I got a small loan from my aunt, and found a place suitable for me and my eight-year-old son. After my schooling, I started a job and started to work and within two years, I started to have money in my bank account again.

But just after Christmas, on December 27th of last year, I had just finished making dinner for my son and we were just about to watch a TV show together. I was talking to him but he had a weird look on his face and I couldn't make out why - I couldn't even make out the words he was saying to me. So, he took my phone and FaceTimed his mom and told her that daddy was speaking alien. He gave me the phone and I remember her saying "do I have to get you to a hospital?" I said, "no, the computer wasn't working properly" - for some reason I was fixated on the computer. I then got up and had a shower and when I got out of the shower, my ex and my mother were there.

My ex-wife took me to the emergency ward at the hospital and my mom looked after our son. A lot of that night is a blur to me but my ex did videotape some of it, that way I'd be aware of how I was. I'm a big guy and to see myself looking like a child with the way I was acting, and talking, it was probably one of the scariest things I've ever seen. The doctors rushed me in because they figured out I was having a stroke. It turns out, I had a hemorrhagic stroke. For those who don't know what that is, it's when your brain bleeds into your skull.

Since then, it's been nine months and I've been riddled with the after effects of a stroke. For the first little while, my speech was really affected along with a lot of the sensation on the right side of my body. I was in pain and I'm still in pain now. Prior to the stroke, I had issues with my heart. My blood pressure was almost double the average of a normal person. Now the doctors are seeing that my body is worse off than they thought. We didn't catch a few issues because we were only focused on the heart. It's kind of like you have to take a step back to see the whole picture instead of just up-close, staring at what you think is the issue. So along with the after effects of this stroke, I now have found out that I have a spine that is deteriorating and have issues with my blood cells, which are causing me to cough up blood 20-30 times a day. To look at me, you wouldn't see any of it other than the mobility issues though.

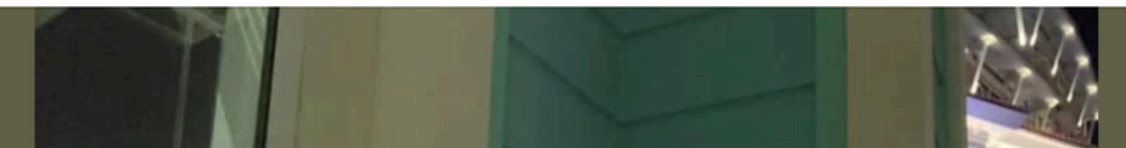
When I saw the email asking if we would write our story because [Groups](#) help someone else, I struggled over it quite a bit not because I don't want to help someone else - I'd love to help but because I hide a lot of this from my son. I keep him updated on my progress and he helps me with my physiotherapy. Reliving it in my head and all the stuff that I've gone through and still am going is also tough.

I suffer from depression, sometimes it gets the better of me. I start thinking about being a failure to my son, and being a burden to my family. Then I start thinking about how I'm going to pay rent and buy clothing for my kid. I haven't worked in eight months and I'm not out of the woods and from what I've learned, I'm not going to have a very healthy life. But how am I going to pay for anything? I've used up all the money I've saved in my bank account. I've had to swallow my pride and let my parents pay for the hydro bills and groceries at times. I'm now on Ontario Works (welfare) because I have no other options and it pays for my medication which keeps me alive.

So, if swallowing my pride in telling my story helps even one person, then it's worth it. So, I pray this reaches one person even if just to give them hope because without hope you're not living."

If you're reading this man's story, and you would like to help him or help another family in need, you can sponsor them with a meal box for only \$45. The [#Thanksgiving](#) meal box is going out next week and includes a Turkey and a lot of other great Thanksgiving staples. Please send me a PM if you would like to donate ❤️.

Leah



Leah Dyck

October 8, 2022 · 🌐

8



Hello again,

Here's the story of a woman I've known for a very long time, but it was only in the last couple of years that I've really started asking her about her health and trying to understand how her life has changed so drastically in such a short period of time. She's 59 - the same age as my own mom, and now her quality of life is awful and it's because Ontario Disability (ODSP) couldn't waste \$11 on her.

Let me explain...

Firstly, this woman has worked as a cleaner at a hospital, and then she worked in shipping and receiving, and her last job was at a nearby print shop, which lasted nine years. During her print shop tenure, she had two separate falls (years apart) while walking her dog, after work hours, sometime during the winter - both falls happened on ice. She was in her 40's. The first fall resulted in a back fracture and the second fall broke her ankle.

For some reason, no doctor thought her bone density should be tested after either fall. We'll get back to this later.

At the age of 50, she quit her printing job because everyday she was experiencing pain in her bones and joints throughout her entire body. She was forced to go on Ontario Works (welfare). After some testing, her family doctor diagnosed her with arthritis and fibromyalgia. Her doctor said this was likely the result of extensive, physical labour she endured as a cleaner, and shipping and receiving labourer for many years. She was prescribed anti-inflammatories to manage the pain, but developed ulcers and had to stop taking the medication. Her doctor told her she couldn't go back to work again due to her severe arthritis. This diagnosis allowed her to apply for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) in 2019, but within two months of submitting her application, it was denied.

She contacted a community lawyer who helps people like her who are clearly disabled and still get their applications denied... yes, this happens so regularly, there are community lawyers dedicated to ODSP appeals. This lawyer appealed their decision to decline her application... and then Covid hit.

Then she had another fall. This time it was in her kitchen and it resulted in a Tibial Plateau Fracture, which is a break of the larger lower leg bone below the knee that breaks into the knee joint itself. Now she lives with a plate and pins in her leg. At the time of the fall, she had to be in a wheelchair for three months, and eventually had a walker and leg brace, which wasn't covered by O.W.

After a total of three years of waiting, ODSP scheduled a video court appearance with her, in which she had to do in her bed with a leg brace on - yes, that's how long it was taking her to heal! I know this is true because this is what made me start asking her questions... I was constantly wondering why she was so young and in a wheelchair/walker/leg brace all the time. The day after her video court appearance, she was approved for ODSP benefits.

Then on Feb. 18, 2022, she had another fall. She was walking to the bus shelter after leaving a medical appointment and slipped on ice. ODSP only covers cab rides that are \$15 or more. But because hers was only \$11, they wouldn't cover it.

After this fall, her doctor finally got the brilliant idea of testing her bone density. She was then diagnosed with Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI), an inherited genetic bone disorder, also known as brittle bone disease.

This woman's ODSP support payments are \$850/month. She has been living in severe poverty for the last 10 years and will continue to live in severe poverty for the rest of her life, constantly at risk of breaking bones. After all this, she still lives at the same address, and her doctor's appointments are still only less than \$15 away and every winter she will risk falling on ice because ODSP refuses to cover transportation costs to medical appointments.

What is wrong with these people?! How can the people in charge be so sadistic?!

This woman will be receiving a meal box through [Fresh Food Weekly](#) every month for as long as I'm in charge. If you would like to sponsor her with a meal box, or anyone else like her with a meal box, it only costs \$45. Please send me a PM for details on how to do this... or to help this woman in any other way.

Thank you for taking the time to read her story.

Leah



Leah Dyck  
October 12, 2022 · 🌐

9 Groups

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Hello friends and supporters of [Fresh Food Weekly](#),

Today I would like to tell you about one of our program's recipients who has two sets of twins. She's also applied for ODSP and is currently waiting to hear back. She is completely exhausted and I honestly don't know how she still has energy to breathe.

This woman and her family will be receiving a meal box from us every month going forward... it looks like she's received a few already but I didn't know how much her family truly needed them until now. I wanted to share her story with you to show you what life can look like when health problems riddle an entire family.

Here is her story:

"Our struggle started a few years ago. After having my third and fourth child (twins), we just could never get a head. Last October, my whole Achilles' tendon tore in half. I underwent three surgeries, was on a PICC line for 12 weeks, and a year later I'm still dealing with massive amounts of pain. I have a ton of rips throughout it and I'm currently awaiting a CT scan later on this October.

I haven't been able to work in a year!!! We have four kids, and the first two are twins (and they have autism) and the other two are also twins. We were run out of our home back in July due to a horrible neighbour who just wouldn't stop. Countless police calls, her showing up high all hours of the night... and her going after myself and my children. We ended up moving in with my in-laws to help them out, and be away from everything that came with the nightmare we were living.

My father-in-law hasn't worked in over five years; since his back surgery. My mother-in-law got hurt years ago at a job and now has permanent nerve damage on her left side. Most days it's hard for her to even get out of bed. We are a family of eight living in a three-bedroom townhouse, with one income. We make decisions every other week as to what will be paid and what will be moved to another week. I source out the food bank as much as I can, and try and do everything to make sure the family has everything they need. My son's medications aren't covered and cost \$350/month. Mine are \$247/month and my in-laws are over \$500/month. Then add in every other bill. My older twins are turning 13 this month and I have no idea how we're going to make it special for them.

Everyone struggles but this has been a nightmare for far to long! Without programs like yours, my kids wouldn't have had an Easter dinner, or snacks for back to school. You make sure you go above and beyond and for that we are very great full!!!"

If you're reading this and you would like to help, you can sponsor her family, or other families like hers, with a meal box for \$45. I can also issue you a charitable tax receipt for your donation as well. If you would like to do this, please send me a PM for e-transfer and receipting details.

Now, more than ever, the struggle is real. Families all over our city are living horrible, awful lives, with bills constantly looming over their heads, no food and empty cupboards, and their basic human needs not being met.

We can't rely on our government to do the right thing. So can we rely on you?





Hello friends of [Fresh Food Weekly](#),

Today I would like to share with you another story of one of our program recipients. I've been going back a few times with her since August, just to see how things are going with her.

I think her story really goes to show how the pandemic has impacted the lives of the more vulnerable in our community. Like me, this woman was laid off when Covid happened and didn't have a job to go back to. Her story shows the ripple effects of what happens when you lose your job and quite frankly, lose an industry for lengthy period of time.

This is her story:

Aug. 10, 2022: "I'm a single mother with four children.

When Covid hit, I was laid off from my job as a manager and CrossFit coach at a local gym. I decided to go directly into maternity leave due to not having a position to go back to, as well as the costs of childcare and the complexity of my daughter's needs, I have chosen to work from home.

I do what I can to bring in an income and be a full-time mom. I've sold my vehicle and many of my belongings to ensure I can pay bills, and that my daughter's special diet is adhered to.

I still have a safe home but I've been issued a notice that my landlord wants to move into our home. I'm terrified, as rentals are so expensive and I've used credit cards to get by and that debt makes my credit score lower. I'm doing everything I can to pay it down so that I will be accepted by another landlord.

It's been a challenging two years - I'm determined to bring my family through it and find a way to provide for and care for my children ❤️.

Asking for help is a tricky thing, it can leave me feeling depressed. However, I've got my sights set on what needs to happen so that my family makes it through these economic times and change of housing.

I'm very grateful for the kindness extended to my family ❤️"

Sept. 3, 2022: "My 16-year-old daughter has an intellectual disability, her actual diagnosis is not medically reported (she has extra DNA on one of her chromosomes), and so it's been challenging as we never know if what she presents has something to do with this addition of DNA or not. She has several medical conditions and has ADHD and anxiety. She's a trooper and keeps a great attitude! She attended a pre-employment program this summer and has an interview today to volunteer at an organic farm to see how she fairs at farm work and hopefully it will develop into a job for her!

She is triggered by foods; gluten and dairy are out, as are many of the additives in prepackaged foods. Her behaviour changes and she gets both headaches and stomach aches.

I've been able to work out a deal with a local yoga studio where I work off the dues of their upcoming hot yoga teacher training course. I was an avid yogi for many years at that studio but haven't been since Covid hit. The environment is one that welcomes children, and my 16-year-old daughter feels so calm there (and me too). I did ask about working to earn the teacher training certificate and I was thrilled to be given the opportunity to do so!! The training starts in October, for nine weeks, and then I'll have some practical, and then I hope to be earning money!!! Yay

My home is still up in the air 😞 it's a very stressful place to be. The landlord tenant board must set a hearing and that has yet to be announced. Once that is set I'll know my fate. I am hopeful that I will not have to move as I do believe that my landlord has applied for this eviction in bad faith.

I am feeling optimistic and I think that this training will help me with my confidence and getting back into the community 😊

Thanks very much for reaching out;

I know that there are far worse off in our community and sometimes that makes me feel like I shouldn't use the community supports; but we all have our stories and I'm glad that you're telling some of them!"

Oct. 25, 2022: "Training is going so well; so empowering and so amazing!

The landlord tenant board hasn't set the date yet so I'm still waiting ... grateful to still be here but the looming nature of it is unsettling!

I have extended my credit to it's max, as I'm trying to meet the needs of my family. My credit is still 'good' but I'm so nervous about not being accepted if I do have to apply for a new rental.

Thank you for your amazing gesture within our community!

Eating healthy food has a direct relationship with how we feel about ourselves so when you're already struggling eating Kraft dinner and other processed foods certainly doesn't help!

You're making a difference!!"

Thank you for taking the time to read this woman's story. In my opinion, she has more mental and emotional strength than maybe even me... probably physical too. I can't even imagine what it's like to be a single mom of four kids (all of whom live with her btw), one with special needs, have a landlord trying to evict you, work a full-time job... and make meals and clean the

Thank you for taking the time to read this woman's story. In my opinion, she has more mental and emotional strength than maybe even me... probably physical too. I can't even imagine what it's like to be a single mom of four kids (all of whom live with her btw), one with special needs, have a landlord trying to evict you, work a full-time job... and make meals and clean the house... or have any kind of social life.

If you would like to sponsor this family, or other low-income families like hers, you can sponsor them with one of our meal boxes for only \$45. And yes, Fresh Food Weekly is a registered charity and so I am able to issue you a charitable tax receipt for your donation! 😊 If you are interested in sponsoring, please send me a PM for more details on sending an e-transfer and getting a receipt 🙏❤️.

Leah

Leah Dyck

January 13, 2023 · 🌐

Groups

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Hello friends of [Fresh Food Weekly](#),

I haven't done one of these posts in a while but today I thought it would be a good day to share with you a little bit about how Fresh Food Weekly is impacting the lives of it's recipients. This morning I received this email from a recipient who is a single mom of two young children with no one to rely on but herself... and the very few community supports available to her.

This woman has been a recipient of our program for a little while, but it wasn't until this morning that I learned that she is also a survivor of human trafficking. This is what she has to say:

"I am a recipient of Fresh Food Weekly and I can't express how much your help and support means to me and my family, and all the others in the community. You are truly an inspiration! I received the email about our stories and in short form, here is mine... I won't get into detail because it's a lot, and embarrassing and emotional... I don't really tell anyone.

I am 26-years-old with two young kids, I moved to Barrie about six years ago. Before that, I struggled with addiction, and I'm a survivor of human trafficking and domestic abuse for six years - it took away my teenage childhood. I got trafficked at a young age and then I got addicted to drugs during these years. I also got a criminal record due to this lifestyle, and that has definitely impacted my life today.

But today I'm a better person. I got clean six years ago and then had a baby girl on my one-year sobriety date - I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. She changed my life and she really inspired me to keep pushing forward and change for the better. Now, I'm finally living on my own and have my life together, and I also have another kid who is one-year-old. Life is still a struggle in this society; I'm just a stay-at-home mom at the moment, and unfortunately my criminal record has affected what I wanted to pursue as a career for the time being, so I'm just on Ontario works (welfare) and I receive housing so I'm very appreciative of those things. But affording everyday essentials and groceries with the way things are with this inflation has definitely affected our family and our income. We are spending most of it on food and daily essentials, bills and transportation as I do not have a car, and rely on cabs - so at the end of it all, we are just paying to live.

Thanks to you're program and help during the months, you have definitely put a little relief in our lives and are now able to save a little bit of money here and there, that I would have otherwise spent on food. It's much appreciated what you and your team does for this community!! Keep it up and thank you for everything 🙏❤️."

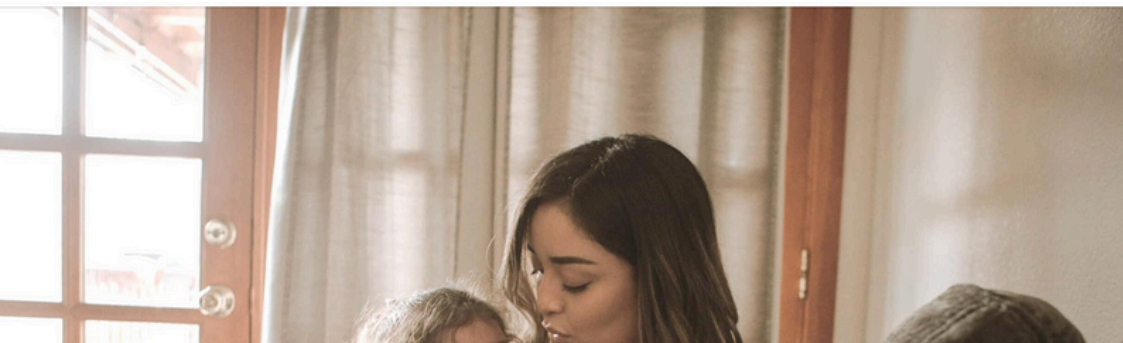
I can't imagine what her everyday life looks like, but it just goes to show the sheer strength and determination this young woman has and how she's demonstrating this for her children. I'm so thankful to be able to help them, even though I know our food program isn't enough; one day we'll be able to help them more. But in the meantime, I'm so proud to live in a [#community](#) who shares my attitude of helping the vulnerable and wants to have a positive impact on the world they live in.

If you're reading this and you would like to help this woman, or other people just like her, you can sponsor a low-income family in [#Barrie](#) or [#Innisfil](#) with fresh food for \$55 (this will cover one month). We can also provide you with a charitable tax receipt for your donation. You can donate either by PayPal or credit card on the website: <https://www.freshfoodweekly.com/shop> or you can send an e-transfer to: [ffwbarrie@gmail.com](mailto:ffwbarrie@gmail.com). If you send an e-transfer though, send me a PM so I can get your charitable tax receipt details 😊.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Leah

(The image used here is not of the woman in this post)





Leah Dyck

February 25, 2023 · 🌐



12

Hey everyone,

Back on Nov. 15th and on Sept. 5th, 2022, I posted about a girl who was rescued from a sex trafficking ring and I told her story and I mentioned how she only gets \$300/month and she has an emotional support dog ....

I was wondering if anyone is able to pick her up some dog food? Unfortunately she can't even afford to feed herself, let alone her dog and her dog is hungry.

Things are particularly difficult for her right now as she just testified in court against her trafficker at the end of January, and this process has "re-traumatized" her. I actually took her to her "pre-court" date, and met the detective on her case, her lawyer and another female cop who works with victims of trafficking. They were all very nice people who wanted to make sure this trafficker could never do this again. And he actually plead guilty, which was a shock to everyone. No one expected that.

Anyways, on top of having the courage to be in the same room as him again (for court), Barrie Public Housing (BMNPHC) has sent her an eviction notice because someone on her floor has complained about her dog barking too much. I've met her dog many times - it barks slightly less than most dogs bark, and it only barks to say hello. Then it stops. This is just a typical day of living in Barrie public housing: constant eviction notices for their tenant's dogs barking. They actually rather try to evict before they try to have a conversation with their tenants about it. Yes, this is their protocol. I've been in public housing for nearly 15 years and I've seen them do it time and time again. This is harassment and completely inappropriate to do, especially to someone who's testifying against someone else for crimes against humanity. Barrie housing has absolutely zero compassion for human life, especially victims suffering in severe poverty.

If you're in a position to help this woman, she'll take any type of dog food, but her dog has been eating the Costco dog food for a while if you're wondering what her dog has been eating. Please send me a PM if you're able to help her out ❤️.

Thank you,

Leah



Hello everyone,

This evening I would like to tell you about one of [Fresh Food Weekly's](#) recipients because I don't think most of us are aware of just how horrible life is for some many people living with disabilities. To keep her identity confidential, I'm going to call her Martha, even though that's not her real name.

Martha worked for a chip manufacturing company that was owned by SunPack Products Inc. This company manufactured food products such as chips, croutons, and bread crumbs. This was back when she was in her 20's and she said she was making around \$18-\$20/hr at the time. She also owned a condo and lived with her girlfriend.

Today Martha is 57-years-old.

One day while at work, she was loading bread loaves onto a conveyor belt when she slipped and fell. Immediately she knew something was seriously wrong. She went to the doctor's and had an X-ray and she was told she had a herniated disk.

"A herniated disc is a fragment of the disc nucleus that is pushed out of the annulus, into the spinal canal. Discs that become herniated usually are in the early stage of degeneration."  
<https://www.aans.org/.../Neurosurgical.../Herniated-Disc>

She then learned that she did indeed have degenerative disk disease and spinal stenosis. Degenerative disk disease is when the cushioning in your spine begins to wear away. Spinal stenosis happens when the space inside the backbone is too small. This can put pressure on the spinal cord and nerves and cause a great deal of pain.

I'm not saying SunPack Products Inc. did anything wrong here, and I'm not saying Martha did anything wrong either. I'm saying accidents happen and they can happen to anyone, and they can happen anywhere.

So Martha started receiving Workers Compensation. She was given a one-time payout of \$25,000 and then collected weekly payments for three years. In the first year, her weekly payments were the equivalent to 80 percent of what she was making before the accident. After one year, though, her payments started decreasing steadily until they completely stopped altogether. Martha says they decided she was fit to go back to work after three years even though her physical problems only worsened.

As a result of the stopped payments, she wasn't able to pay her mortgage anymore, and lost her condo and was forced to declare bankruptcy. Martha's girlfriend still had a job though and so they started renting a cheaper apartment together.

Eventually, Martha was granted an MRI scan and her doctor discovered that she had developed severe narrowing of the spine, so she was given a wheelchair. Then she suddenly dropped 30 pounds and learned she had developed type 2 diabetes. She believes this happened because of her drastic lifestyle change. She was sitting all the time and wasn't able to afford as many healthy food options.

She also started pulling some of her sciatic nerves, which usually happens when you have a herniated disc. She says it's extremely painful when this happens.

Once she was cut off her Worker's Compensation, her legal aid lawyer told her she could either go on CPPD (Canada Pension Plan for the Disabled) or ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program). ODSP originally denied her application but because she had a legal aid lawyer, the lawyer wrote them a letter and suddenly her application was approved.

Then Martha's girlfriend started being abusive and she had to go to the [Women & Children's Shelter of Barrie](#). And from there, she was able to get into Barrie public housing. "If it wasn't for housing, I'd be homeless", she told me.

Now Martha just barely survives on ODSP, which is \$990 a month. She uses a wheelchair to get around and lives in public housing. "There goes my relationship, there goes my house. All it takes is one little slip and you can lose everything," she said. Included in her monthly income of \$990, is \$86 a month allotment for her "special diet" and \$8.68 per month for her blood-glucose strips (for pricking your finger to check your blood sugar levels). She says they cost \$40-\$50 bucks for a box of 100. I just Googled them and all the ones I saw were \$70-\$90 for a box of 100. The amount she goes through depends on how much she needs. You're supposed to prick yourself before and after you eat. But the bare minimum you should be testing is three times a day, which would be 90 strips a month. But she can't afford that so she doesn't check her blood-sugar levels at all.

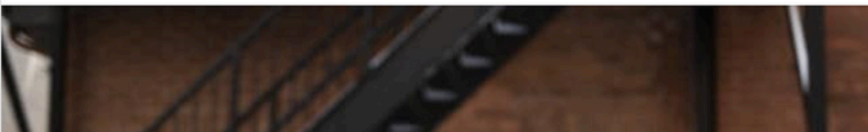
Our government doesn't even give her enough money to cover her basic diabetes medical costs let alone giving her enough to eat.

People like Martha are being left to rot and it's because the people in charge of determining how much money she should have couldn't care less about her or her suffering. So we need programs like Fresh Food Weekly, the [Barrie Food Bank](#), the [Barrie Good Food Box](#), etc., because without THESE supports, people like Martha would literally starve.

If you're in a position to help Martha and other people just like her, you can sponsor her with a biweekly meal box for \$55 a month. And you should because our government ISN'T. Whether you're able to help out one-time or many times, there's such a huge need to help the vulnerable. You can donate by e-transfer to: [ffwbarrie@gmail.com](mailto:ffwbarrie@gmail.com) or donate by credit card or PayPal through the website: <https://www.freshfoodweekly.com/shop> and we can absolutely provide you with a charitable tax receipt for your donation as well.

Please send me a PM if you're able to support.

Thank you for taking the time to read Martha's story.





Leah Dyck

April 14, 2023 · 🌐

14



Hello friends of [Fresh Food Weekly](#),

Over the last few days we've been able to enjoy some really nice, beautiful weather. It actually feels like it's summer outside! That being said, I would like to tell you about one of our program recipients who's been benefiting from our food security program for almost a year now. Like so many others, she's suffering in silence, at home, alone and lives her life hungry.

"Depression seems to be part of living in poverty and it makes everything so hard. I suffer from Fibromyalgia and I live with some other really complicated health problems such as Chronic Kidney Disease.

I've been on ODSP for years now and I continue to struggle financially. I don't smoke, drink, or do any drugs (just a comment, as people think that's how we spend our money). I don't eat out, not even for coffee.

I usually can't afford meat and have peanut butter for protein. I have a restricted diet from Chronic Kidney Disease but I have a better diet with Fresh Food Weekly. With Fresh Food Weekly, a lot of stress is lifted off of me. Receiving a meal box is the highlight of my month. I can't always get out to buy groceries because I can't afford a vehicle. Knowing people care is so up-lifting. My health may improve as stress is so hard on me.

I've gone without food completely while I was fleeing from domestic violence and I still have PTSD from it. I also worry about MAID (medical assistance in dying), that the government is trying to put through. I've fought so hard to live and can't believe that the government would even consider people ending their lives while not giving them the proper supports.

I've never had this kind of help before and it is so helpful and appreciated.

Thank you for all your hard work and beautiful spirit."

There are thousands of people in our city just like her. Everyday is a struggle and everyday, they're worried about the future. They're wondering if the depression will get so bad that they'll finally decide to end it all with the help of MAID. And they're angry this is the only support provided to them.

But you can be a support for her.

If you're able to sponsor a low-income family for \$55/month, you're actually changing a person's life. I know this \$55 isn't fixing their problems, but it is providing some level of relief, as they can count on some good food coming their way regularly. In some cases, this relief might even be the difference between choosing to keep on going on, or finally getting some peace with MAID.

If you're in position to help her, or people like her, you can donate by e-transfer to: [ffwbarrie@gmail.com](mailto:ffwbarrie@gmail.com) or you can donate by credit card or PayPal by going on the website: [www.FreshFoodWeekly.com/shop](http://www.FreshFoodWeekly.com/shop)

We can also provide you with a charitable tax receipt for the full amount of your donation as well. If you would like a tax receipt and want to donate by e-transfer, please also send Leah an email at: [ffwbarrie@gmail.com](mailto:ffwbarrie@gmail.com) to provide your tax receipt details. If you donate through the website, we'll automatically send you a charitable tax receipt.

Thank you for taking the time to read her story, and thank you for your consideration in helping her, and others just like her.

With warm regards,

Leah

