



2025 IMPACT REPORT

**30 YEARS OF
RESCUING FOOD.
IMPACTING LIVES.**



Food for Life 30 Year Timeline

1995

First Food Rescue

George Bagaco rescues surplus baked goods from a local Oakville bakery and delivers them directly to neighbours. One car, one route—Food for Life begins.

1998

First Vehicle

With support from the Rotary Club of Oakville West, Food for Life receives its first dedicated van—expanding beyond a single personal effort.

2002

Incorporation

Food for Life is officially incorporated with its first Board of Directors—building the structure to grow and scale impact.

2005

Community Program Model Expands

Neighbourhood-based food programs grow across Halton—no barriers, just neighbours choosing the food they need with dignity.

2008

Refresh Foods Established

Food for Life launches Refresh Foods, expanding into large-scale fresh food rescue and distribution, prioritizing nutritious, perishable food. With support from The Sprott Foundation, Food for Life introduces an environmentally friendly hybrid/electric vehicle—advancing sustainability in food rescue.

2010

Mountainside Facility Opens

Moved into the Mountainside warehouse in Burlington, adding walk-in cold storage and significantly increasing capacity for fresh food.

2018-19

Fresh Food Fridges Launch

Cold capacity expansions begin with support from Canada's Local Food Infrastructure Fund and Ontario's Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks that continued through 2021 - doubling our cold storage capacity and full quality control processes.

2019

4 Million Pounds in One Year

Food rescue surpasses 4 million pounds annually, reflecting rapid growth in reach and partnerships.

2020

COVID Response

Food for Life surpasses 5 million pounds of food rescued—driven by the rapid recovery of surplus from closed restaurants, venues, and programs. By stepping in to support the broader sector, we ensured good food was not wasted and quickly redirected to communities, while programs pivoted to deliver safe, accessible distribution throughout the pandemic.

2022

Mountainside Market Opens

Food for Life launches the Mountainside Market—creating a welcoming, market-style space designed to improve access to fresh, nutritious food for neighbours experiencing food insecurity, with a focus on dignity, choice, and community.

2025

30 Years of Rescuing Food. Impacting Lives.

Over 37.5 million pounds of food rescued and redistributed, 3 million household visits supported, and 350,000 volunteer hours since our beginnings.

A message from our

Executive Director & Board Chair

As we look back on the past year, we are reminded of the strength of our community and the growing importance of ensuring access to food for all.

Across Halton and Hamilton, the need for food access continues to grow, and with it, the importance of the work we do together. Because of your support, Food for Life has been able to respond, scaling our food rescue efforts to meet rising demand while remaining steadfast in our commitment to dignity, sustainability, and community care.

This year, we also proudly celebrate **30 years of impact**. For three decades, Food for Life has played a vital role in connecting surplus food with those who need it most. What began as a grassroots effort has grown into a dynamic, community-driven organization, one that not only addresses food insecurity but also contributes meaningfully to environmental stewardship. For the second consecutive year, Food for Life has also been recognized by Charity Intelligence Canada as a Top 10 Impact Charity, a Top 10 Food Bank Charity, and one of Canada's Top 100 Charities - recognition that reflects the deep impact, strong stewardship, and community leadership that continue to drive our work forward.

As the need continues to rise, so too must our ability to respond. Food for Life is actively strengthening its capacity to scale, expanding partnerships, improving infrastructure, and enhancing operations to ensure we are ready to meet both current and future demand. We stand ready to respond, guided by a vision where no good food goes to waste and every neighbour has access to the nourishment they deserve.

This work is only possible because of a dedicated and compassionate community.

To our **donors and partners**, thank you for your continued generosity and belief in our mission. Your support ensures that food reaches those who need it most.

To our **staff**, thank you for showing up each day with a deep sense of purpose. Your dedication and care are at the core of everything we accomplish, and your commitment makes a lasting difference in the lives of our neighbours.

And to our **volunteers**, thank you for your extraordinary dedication. Your time and energy are essential to everything we accomplish, and your impact is felt in homes across our region.

As we look ahead, we do so with determination and hope. Together, we will continue to rescue more food, deepen our environmental impact, and improve the lives of our neighbours across the communities we serve.

Thank you for standing with us.



Paul Keery
Chair,
Board of Directors



Karen Randell
Executive Director

CHARITY INTELLIGENCE 2025

**TOP 10 CANADIAN
IMPACT CHARITY**



CHARITY INTELLIGENCE 2025

**TOP 10 IMPACT:
FOOD BANK**





Our Programs

The Roxy Centre

Food for Life has partnered with the Roxy Centre in Acton for many years, providing reliable food support through morning and evening programs that serve 50–60 households weekly. A strong volunteer team enables the Centre to accept and distribute larger quantities of donated food, helping meet growing community needs. In a community where services can be limited, the Roxy Centre fills an important gap, offering not only food assistance but also connection, care, and support. Together, Food for Life and the Roxy Centre are helping reduce food insecurity and strengthen community well-being.

Birch Glen

Birch Glen Cooperative's Food for Life program provides morning and evening food distributions each week, serving residents of Birch Glen, Glen Oaks Cooperative, and Glen Abbey buildings. Together, volunteers have created a welcoming and dependable source of support for nearly 100 households each week. By sorting and distributing fresh, nutritious food, they help ensure neighbours have access to healthy options while fostering stronger connections across the community. The program provides not only food support, but also a sense of care, belonging, and neighbourly connection.

Programs Supported in 2026		
Community	FFL Programs	Agency Partners
Burlington	8	17
Oakville	13	9
Acton	3	3
Georgetown	5	7
Milton	7	6
Hamilton	2	12
TOTAL	38	54

A Snapshot of Households supported each week (Data pulled from November 2025)		
Community	TOTAL FFL	FFL Agency Partners
Burlington	875	738
Oakville	922	367
Milton	511	62
Georgetown	229	92
Acton	124	13
Hamilton	19	1142

On average, Neighbours took home **13% more** food weekly than in 2024.

& Volunteers

"Volunteering fills my cup with gratitude. It is a positive experience helping others. The various opportunities I have had at FFL have been beneficial in getting me out of my comfort zone and anxiousness."



Volunteers remain at the heart of Food for Life's impact.

In 2025, **846** unique volunteers dedicated 36,198 hours to helping rescue, sort, pack, and distribute healthy food across our community.

From supporting our pack room and market programs to assisting with community initiatives, 633 volunteers contributed directly to food distribution efforts, while another 213 volunteers supported community-based opportunities that strengthened our reach and impact.

The power of volunteerism extends beyond individuals. Through our Corporate Volunteering Team Experiences, 1,668 volunteers contributed an additional 3,336 hours, bringing together businesses, community groups, and employees who rolled up their sleeves to support neighbours facing food insecurity.

Volunteers are more than helping hands, they are champions of dignity, community, and connection. Their commitment allows Food for Life to rescue more food, serve more neighbours, and build a stronger, more nourished community for all.

To every volunteer who gave their time, energy, and compassion this year: thank you. Your impact is felt in every meal shared and every life touched.

"Volunteering at Food for Life is more than just helping out, as it reflects responsibility and connection to the diverse community in Halton."



Hours given by volunteer opportunity:	
Community Programs	23,167
Pack Room	5,290
Mountainside Market	6,131
Tremaine Market	1,610

Hours given by Municipality:	
Acton	3,375
Burlington	15,273
Georgetown	4,374
Milton	6,438
Oakville	6,738

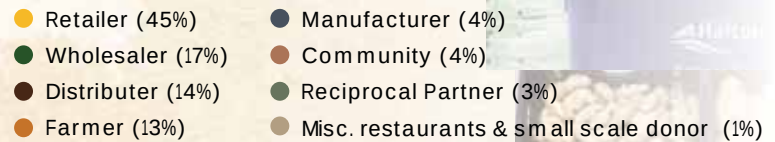


Operations & Environmental Impact

What We Rescue: Essential Food Categories



Rescued Food by Donor Type



4,750,017 LBS Food Rescued

KG's of Greenhouse Gases Diverted 6,000,000 KG's

Inedible food diversions	6%
Food % sent to Animal Feed	2%
Food % sent to Compost	2%
Food % sent to Landfill	2%

Food % sent to Compost

4,473,705 LBS FOOD DISTRIBUTED

Valued at \$16,284,286

Efficient Transportation, Greener Impact

LBS/KM	64 KM (6% higher than 2024)
AVERAGE LBS Rescued/Pickup Stop	1,172 (6% higher than 2024)
AVERAGE LBS Distributed/Delivery Stop	1,093 (2% higher than 2024)

Thank you to our Top 10 Food Rescue Donors

COSTCO
WHOLESALE

fresh taste

Earth
Fresh
REAL.GOOD.

UHC Hub of OPPORTUNITIES

MAPLE LEAF

Gordon
FOOD SERVICE

THE GIFT OF
GIVING BACK

Longo's

QUEEN VICTORIA
IPPOLITO FRUIT & PRODUCE

FORTINOS
Your Supermarket with a heart!

30 Years

of Rescuing Food, Impacting Lives

Food for Life began with a simple act of kindness.

In 1995, founder George Bagaco started rescuing surplus baked goods from a local Oakville bakery and delivering them directly to neighbours struggling to put food on the table. Armed with little more than his personal vehicle and a belief that no one should go hungry while good food was being discarded, George laid the foundation for what would become one of Canada's leading food rescue organizations.

What started as one person helping a few families quickly grew into something much bigger. Community members stepped forward to help. The Rotary Club of Oakville West donated Food for Life's first dedicated vehicle, while support from the United Way and the Ontario Trillium Foundation helped transform a grassroots effort into a sustainable organization with the capacity to grow.

Food for Life was built on dignity. Neighbourhood-based programs removed barriers and judgement, ensuring people could access healthy food close to home in welcoming community spaces. At the same time, the organization pioneered a same-day rescue and distribution model that provided fresh, nutritious food while keeping it out of landfill.

A major milestone came in 2008 with the launch of Refresh Foods, expanding large-scale fresh food rescue and distribution across the region. Support from The Sprott Foundation also enabled the introduction of Food for Life's first hybrid-electric vehicle, reflecting an early understanding that food security and environmental sustainability are deeply connected.

As food donor partnerships grew, so did the organization's impact. Investments in cold storage infrastructure, supported through Canada's Local Food Infrastructure Fund and Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, significantly expanded refrigeration and freezer capacity, strengthening Food for Life's ability to rescue, sort, and distribute fresh food.

When the pandemic disrupted communities, Food for Life adapted its programs in less than 48 hours, launching innovative approaches that protected volunteers and neighbours while continuing to meet growing demand and rescue food from businesses facing closure.

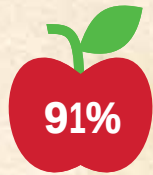
Today, Food for Life has rescued and redistributed more than 37.5 million pounds of food and supported more than 3 million household visits. For 30 years, it has demonstrated what is possible when a community comes together around a simple belief: good food belongs on plates, not in landfills.



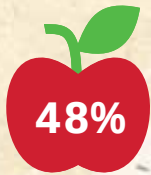
Our Research

Research is essential to understanding not only how much food we distribute, but how that food changes lives. Through annual surveys with neighbours and agency partners, we measure the impact of rescued food on health, food security, financial stability, community connection, and service delivery. The results demonstrate that access to healthy food creates benefits that extend far beyond the dinner table—strengthening individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

Health & Wellbeing - Neighbour Impact



reported positive impacts on their overall health



reported reduced household stress



reported improved physical health



reported improved mental health



in estimated healthcare savings generated annually through improved food security outcomes

*"With your help, I was able to pay my rent."
- Halton Neighbour*

Food Security & Financial Stability



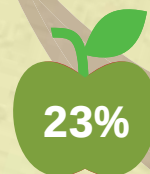
improved their food security status



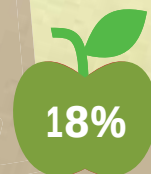
maintained stable food security and avoided worsening hardship



/week average grocery savings per household (approximately \$296/month)



reported improved financial security

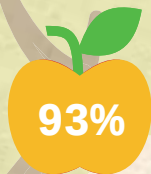


reported being better able to pay bills on time

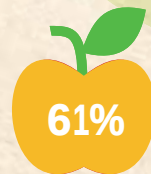
Agency Partner Impact - Strengthening Community Capacity



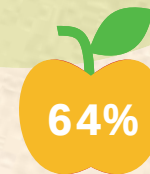
partner satisfaction with food quality, quantity, delivery, communication, and safety



improved their ability to support clients with fresh food access



experienced agency cost savings



reported increased demand for services



expanded their community impact through partnership with Food for Life

These are just a few of the many ways **Food for Life** impacts neighbours and agency partners — learn more at FoodForLife.ca/our-research

Community Events: The Power of Coming Together



Food for Life is fortunate to be supported by a community that continually shows up with generosity, creativity, and a shared commitment to ensuring neighbours have access to healthy food.

Throughout 2025, events such as CNOY Burlington North Walk, Rotary Burlington's Lakeside A La Carte and Hamilton District A Masons Back to the 70's Ladies Night, the Fortinos Turkey Drive, and the United Way Plane Pull brought people together in support of our mission. These events raised critical funds, increased awareness, and strengthened community connections.

They are just a few examples of the many fundraisers, food drives, and community-led initiatives that supported Food for Life this year. Beyond the dollars raised, they reflect a community that cares deeply about its neighbours and believes everyone deserves access to healthy food.

We are deeply grateful to every organizer, sponsor, volunteer, participant, and supporter who helped make these events possible. Together, you are helping build a stronger, healthier, and more connected community.

Celebrating Staff Milestones

In 2025, we celebrated several remarkable service milestones that reflect the dedication, care, and commitment of the people behind Food for Life's mission. Meaghan Richardson and Melissa Bain marked 10 years of service, while Ron Heigelsberger celebrated an incredible 16 years with the organization. Their passion for community, unwavering commitment to neighbours, and years of leadership and service have helped shape Food for Life into the organization it is today.



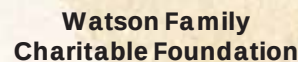
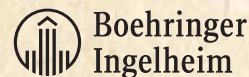
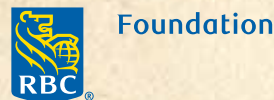
Thank You to our Generous Donors

To our major donors, funders, and community partners: thank you for making this work possible.

Your investment in Food for Life does more than support our programs today—it helps ensure we are ready for tomorrow. Because of your generosity, we can strengthen our operations, expand our reach, and build the capacity needed to respond to growing community need.

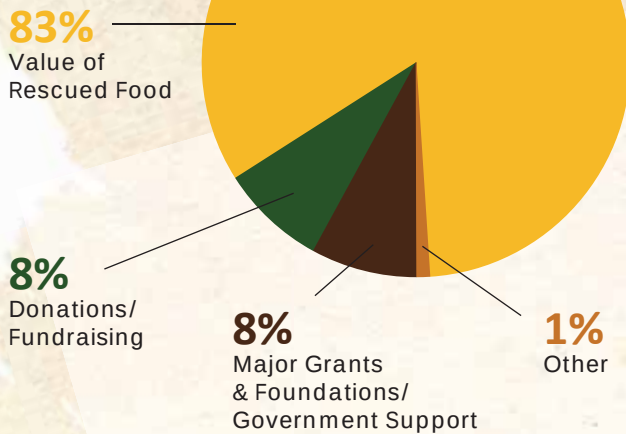
As food insecurity continues to rise across our region, your support allows us to stand ready, ensuring neighbours can access healthy food when they need it most. Every dollar invested helps deepen our impact while advancing our mission of Rescuing Food. Impacting Lives.

Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

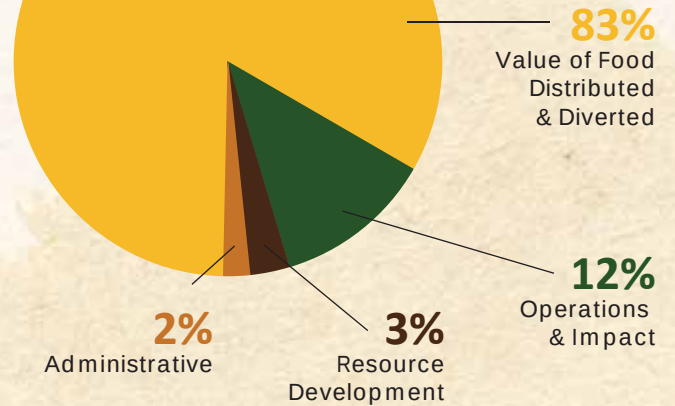


Financial Overview

Donations & Income \$19,633,288

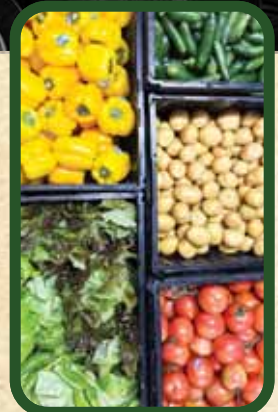
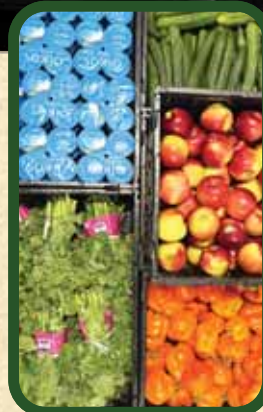


Expenses \$19,105,365



In 2025, every \$10 donation transformed into \$63+ worth of nutritious food for community.

*full audited financial statements are available on our website





Join Us in Rescuing Food & Impacting Lives



At **Food for Life** our mission is simple: Rescuing Food, Impacting Lives. Together, we nourish our neighbours in need and create stronger, healthier communities, all while protecting our planet by reducing food waste.

Become a Food Donor

Partner with us to rescue surplus food from your business, farm, or organization, and help us deliver it where it's needed most.

Donate

Your financial support directly fuels our efforts to rescue food and distribute it to those who need it the most. Today, every \$10 donation helps us rescue over \$71+ worth of nutritious food for community.

Become a Monthly Donor

Commit to making a lasting impact by joining our monthly giving program. Your ongoing contribution provides reliable support, ensuring we can continue our mission year-round.

Volunteer

Join our passionate team of volunteers, corporate and community groups to make an immediate impact in your community.

As our neighbours face some of life's greatest challenges, let's work together to fight food insecurity and ensure everyone has the nourishment they need to thrive.

LEARN. VOLUNTEER. DONATE.

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FoodForLife.ca

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Charitable Registration Number 890943772RR0001