



bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk

# Newsletter

April 2016

“Remember to feed the Poor.”

(Galatians 1)

## FOUNDERS LEAVE

In 2015 we said goodbye to Mary and Guy Beckingham who had been at the helm of Foodbank for the past five years. We are indebted to them for their tireless efforts in building up and organizing the development of the work from the network of distributors to the regular supplies of stock and volunteers. We wish them God's blessing in their new work in Mozambique.

Over the past twelve months over 4000 people have been saved from food poverty by Foodbanks within Bromley. Dozens of volunteers collected outside Tesco stores before Christmas to ensure supplies would be sustained, then helped pack special Christmas parcels with luxury items like Christmas puddings and cake and chocolate to be given out to those highlighted by the distributors as being particularly worth helping. There has been an increase in numbers needing assistance with emergency food. Even in a borough as relatively wealthy as ours over 4% of the residents are poor.



Our distributor base continues to grow. This is a vital ingredient in the process of reaching those in the borough who are the most in need. By working with and through professional organizations, we can be confident that our vouchers are being distributed wisely. School family workers, housing associations, debt agencies and support groups all became voucher distributors this year.

If anyone would be willing to assist our Project Manager in liaising with them please email us. Thank you distributors for your support and feedback.

*I have just delivered 3 x Christmas hampers to some of our very vulnerable clients. They were clients that hardly have any money so receiving 3 x bags of nice things was a very big deal for them. All 3 people were very moved at the kindness and generosity of the volunteers at the foodbank and the people who donate when I gave them their hampers. Thank you so much for letting us nominate clients and then deliver the hampers to them. It was one of the nicest mornings I have had at work all year.*

## Stock needs

Our current priority requirements are:-

- Pasta sauce and UHT milk.
- Sugar and coffee.
- Deodorants and non bio washing powder.
- Squash and fruit juice.

No more baked beans or soup please until further notice!

## Saved from hunger

**A client's story:** A lady found herself without money or food following the death of her disabled husband. Her carer's allowance and her husband's disability benefit had been stopped and whilst her new benefits were being sorted out she had no income. All her savings had been spent on her husband's funeral. She ate all the food in her cupboards and only came to a Foodbank when her housing officer asked her why she looked so weak and sent her to us. For the first time in a week she had enough to eat.





Our 4 Centres became 6 with the opening of the Bromley Common outlet in Turpington Lane Community Centre and Goodmead Centre in central Orpington. These are Hope Church initiatives and they asked to come under our umbrella in order to share resources and experience. These have provided other locations for clients to collect food at times when the other branches are not open.

## FUND RAISING

In the next few weeks we are holding a collection at Bromley Football club before their game against Aldershot on 30<sup>th</sup> April. If you can help hold a tin please email us and leave a contact number and email address.

We are also initiating a 200 club asking people to fill in a monthly standing order to meet our monthly running costs which will ensure we have regular income. If a leaflet is not available to you please visit our website to fill out standing order and gift aid forms there.

There will be another Tesco collection at the end of June and the first weekend in July so please book the dates.

## Van & Volunteers!

Finance is of course something we cannot avoid. Every charity has running costs and many people have given monetary donations towards the purchase of a Foodbank van. In December, having got our van fund well under way, we were amazed to receive the wonderful gift of a large Previa MPV. With the back seats removed we can get 50 boxes into the car. This is only 10 less than the van we were considering.

It now seems a waste of money to buy a van when we have a vehicle perfectly suitable for the task. Hopefully those who so kindly donated money will be happy for us to put it towards our annual running costs to pay for storage and insurance and petrol and a project manager who does wonders coordinating all the centres and collections. Please tell us if you wish your gift to be ring fenced and saved for the future and not used in this way.

We also owe a huge debt of thanks to Gary at Coolings and to Access and Big Yellow for all their help with storage.

Approximately 80 people help at the Foodbank Centres week by week. We are fortunate to have plenty of volunteers; some come every week, some fortnightly and some monthly. They do all the heavy lifting, weighing of stock, date sorting, boxing up as well as making up food packs appropriate to client's needs, chatting to clients, making endless teas and coffees and always with a bright and cheery smile. It is a pleasure to visit the different centres and share a laugh with the volunteers or sometimes a tear when there has been a particularly difficult situation to deal with.

A huge thank you to every one of them! Many other volunteers help us at the Tesco collections; with the sorting sessions; Harvest time; Christmas hamper making, driving; lifting; dropping off; fund raising, administration, promoting Foodbank etc. A heart-felt thank you one and all!

If you have helped in the past please send an e mail to the address below to confirm your willingness to assist in the future. The next Tesco collection will be from June 30 to July 2<sup>nd</sup>.



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