



# Our Stories

First Person Accounts of  
Life on Social Assistance



A collection of personal reflections from people  
living on social assistance in Ontario.

**Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids Coalition**  
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## **OUR STORIES**

### **First Person Accounts of Life on Social Assistance**

These stories were gathered during the fall and winter of 2002/2003 from people in Toronto living on social assistance. Each story is unique, yet there is a theme that connects them all; none of these people had sufficient money to pay the rent and feed their kids or themselves. People are going hungry.

Toronto's Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids coalition is part of a province-wide coalition that was first established in Ottawa. It formed in response to skyrocketing rents and stagnant social assistance rates. Since 1995, rents in Toronto have increased by 30%, twice the rate of inflation for that period, while the shelter allowance, the portion of the social assistance cheque that is to be used for housing costs, has remained constant. In Toronto, for example, the monthly average rent for a two bedroom apartment is \$1,047 while the shelter allowance for a single parent with two kids is just \$544 per month. Too often, low-income households must dip into their food budget to keep a roof over their heads, each month presenting them with the troubling decision to pay the rent or feed the kids.

The Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids coalition is lobbying for an increase to the shelter portion of social assistance so that it reflects actual costs of living. The coalition's efforts include meeting with provincial and municipal politicians, raising public awareness through the media and mobilizing diverse communities throughout greater Toronto to put public pressure on policy makers.

**These are Our Stories; they affect us all.**

## Melody

I am a single mother with two children. My children are 8 and 3½ years old. I am struggling every day to make ends meet on my meager welfare income. My social assistance income is \$775.00. I receive a monthly child support of \$213.00 from my ex-husband, but that is not really helping me as it is deducted from my cheque every month. All this money is spent on my rent, which is \$950.00 per month. The Child Tax Benefit that I get every month helps me to pay for other expenses. But there is nothing left after I pay for food and necessity items. Every month I worry about how to pay my bills; I can't pay two bills in a month – I am always late. I don't have any options other than borrowing money from my friends. I don't want to be on social assistance; I want to have a job and give my children everything that they deserve to have. But I can't find a job – it's extremely hard to find a full time job these days. My rent is going up every year, my bills are costing more now, but my income is not increasing. I am terrified to think of being on the street with my children.

We need cheaper housing in Toronto – the government has to do something to make housing affordable. When will they realize how much suffering and indignation people are going through? Before there was money available from the shelter enhancement program that would help people like me pay their rent. But we don't get that money any more. At least if I could get that shelter money back and my child support money had not been deducted, I would be better off. But who is going to listen to our problems and make things better for us? This government doesn't care a bit for us.

**The average rental housing cost for a 2-bedroom apartment in Toronto is \$1047. The shelter allowance for a family of three on social assistance is just over half of that amount at \$554. The actual cost of housing far exceeds social assistance shelter allowances in most Ontario communities. (1)**

## Peter

### **Peter lives on welfare with his partner and their two children.**

It's such a struggle to pay the rent. Then there's the phone bill and the diapers.

Just to feed my son, I have to come to a food bank. My daughter's still just on milk. Diapers aren't cheap. Food isn't cheap. The costs are going up, but the job market, the bottom dollar is not going up. For people on welfare, or people who work, or people on welfare trying to work, it's still going to be a struggle.

I feel we are forced into living certain ways with no choice. They don't have the jobs. They don't have the job creation. Pretty much if you go to welfare or ODSP or any of these other programs, you are forced into a life of poverty. No one has a vested interest in you as a human being. All they care about is their numbers, the bottom dollar, and that's it. And trying to get people off welfare. They're just cutting them off, forcing these people to live on the street. It's sad. It's sad what I see.

We've got to support people better. You need people who got helped out, nurtured out of the pit, to lead others out. You get used to living like that. It doesn't become harder, it becomes easier. Because you want less from the world. And you want more from the little circles you create as you go along. It's a hard life. It's harder than any body else can ever experience.

**Poverty is the main contributor to a number of diseases. A new study in the British Medical Journal shows that children living in poverty are at greater risk for obesity, heart disease and diabetes later in life than adults who smoke, drink and eat unhealthy foods, putting undue financial stress on the health care system. (2)**

## **Kim**

My name is Kim. I have a common law husband and four children ages 3 to 9, our monthly income varies because my husband works at a minimum wage job and welfare takes most, if not all, of his wages. Our rent is \$960.00 a month. With four kids and two adults to feed every month we have to decide whether to pay all of the rent and depend on the food banks to feed the kids and ourselves or if we should go to a grocery store and buy food to feed all of us and not pay the rent then pray that we don't get kicked out of our apartment. This is what we have to do every month and if an emergency ever comes up we are in trouble because we don't have the means to do anything about it. On welfare you never get a chance to catch up or get ahead in life because if you are on welfare and you get a job they take your wages and you have to budget everything. I just wish people would understand that life's not as easy as they think it is living on welfare for honest people.

**One in five Toronto families lives in poverty. (3)**

## **Adrian**

**Adrian had no income for a while. He now receives CPP.**

I had a traumatic brain injury and it changed my life. Great deal of therapists. Fill in forms. Fell through the cracks because of the case managers. Now I find myself getting less than my rent in benefits and I can't leave Toronto. My case is still in court six years after my injury. And I meet all sorts of people with children who are in the same case, but they have children to support. And the children suffer.

Their parents are fighting. They are not getting the education they are supposed to have and not getting the nutrition they are supposed to have, and they're greatly suffering. And it made me greatly aware of the system.

## **David**

**David is a single man who lives on \$520 a month from welfare. His rent is \$375 plus utilities.**

I worry about being able to pay the rent all the time. I always have to spend at least \$400 on rent. Once I've paid it, I am left with about \$120 for the month. I regularly have to use the food bank. My stomach doesn't handle the canned food very well, but I have to eat it anyway, I have no choice. I have never been able to afford a phone. I have a voicemail box. I once almost had that disconnected, because I could not afford the \$12 to keep it hooked up for three months.

I have had to move regularly... One rooming house where I had to move from, people were smoking crack and making a real mess of the place, and stealing, they even opened my mail. There are also other times I had to move from rooming houses, because of problematic roommates. It is very difficult living in rooming houses. There are many rules, like no smoking, and there is no privacy. In one place, the landlady would come right into my room without knocking. That was really disturbing. I could have been lying in there naked!

Sometimes I miss meals. Often I go to shelters to eat there. Sometimes though, I will wait at a shelter for 2 hours for a meal, and then the food will run out before I reach the front of the line.

I survive by just using minimum expenditures. I mostly spend my money on food, and sometimes transportation. I can never buy any luxury items at all; I have not bought clothes in a long time. By the end of the month, I am totally broke, and just relying on food banks and meals at shelters.

It can be very humiliating being on welfare. I come from a certain community, where if they know I am on welfare, they look at me like I'm a piece of dirt. They don't understand what I'm going through, why I'm on it, and it's hard to explain.

## **John Z.**

**John Z. lives with his wife and their adult son who is autistic. He receives \$1417 a month.**

The fact that we have 3 people living in a small enclosed area, personalities begin to clash. Personality traits you never even knew existed begin to surface. Yelling. Screaming. My wife has hit me, has spat at me, and has done all sorts of manner of things. She's got angina now or she's got panic attacks about - where's the next money coming from?!

My son says he's fatigued. But we don't know what fatigued means. To him it could mean something entirely different.

I have a mood disorder. And a schizo-affective disorder. I'm on medication which hasn't worked. It works just a bit. I've had to borrow money from people. But I'm going to pay it back. I've got everybody written down in a book and I'll pay back every single penny.

Because I know that when I die the only thing I'll have to leave is my integrity. I'm 52. I'm trying to get stronger. I'm trying everything I can to be free of ODSP, but it's never enough. Never enough.

The money is such a very small sum. It should be raised. This would lessen the load on food banks, because the food banks are under tremendous pressure.

**Federal finance minister John Manley stated that Canada's program spending as a percentage of GDP "is now lower than in all other G-7 countries, with the exception of the United States," and that the 9.2% reduction in government program spending as a share of GDP from 1992-2001 was "a greater reduction than in any other G-7 country." (4)**

**Mr. H.**

Tell them I need more assistance to live. Please tell them that.

**Solange**

**Solange lives with her boyfriend and her four children. Her total monthly income is \$850. She pays \$460 a month for rent.**

Basically, I buy the meat. From the food bank I get rice, noodles, milk, bread and baby food. I must buy sugar and oil from the supermarket. For two days last week, I had no milk for my baby. Usually I can get powdered milk from the food bank. But still I am afraid that my baby will end up with stomach problems. I have no money and nowhere to go.

My life has been very stressful. My 4 year old daughter was kidnapped by her father when she was 10 months old and taken to Mexico City. For three years I fought to get her back. I had to go to Mexico 20 times and lost three jobs. I would like to work. I even found a job recently that was perfect for me and paid well enough to live on. But it was shift work. There is no one to look after the children when you work shift work.

**Michelle D.**

**Michelle left home at age 15 to live on the streets.**

I can talk about my family. My mom and dad live on social assistance. The kids in the family all tried working since they were about 13 years old. They need stuff to go out with their friends and for school. My real concern is probably their education. I don't know how they're saving for that.

Worry about paying the rent causes a lot of fights. A lot of tension and turmoil.

When I lived in my community I went on welfare. I got a part time job while I went back to school. It's a lot of pressure, right? Cause you can't do the two things. Like I've done it, but it's hard. When you get home you just crash. You can't study.

## Tracy

**Tracy and her husband live with their two children. Their total monthly income is \$1140. They pay \$875 a month for rent.**

We manage somehow. My husband and I are not big eaters. We eat simple meals so the kids don't go without.

I think social assistance should look more at each individual situation. Everybody's different. This system is not helping.

My husband lost his job. So now we get no money for him. He's back training, but it may be a while before he gets a paycheque. He still needs to eat. We all still have to eat.

Sure it's nice to have a few things that help out when you actually get a job, but what you really need is extra support at that time. There are things that could be made better for people, and other ways could be looked at for doing this. I have some ideas. Why doesn't anyone ever ask me?

**Lack of work is the largest single reason people are on welfare, and it probably accounts for more than half of all welfare cases. Disability is the second most common reason and is a factor in perhaps one-quarter of all cases. (5)**

## Norail

**Norail has no income at all. He lives with his mother. They survive only because another adult child is on ODSP.**

After paying the rent, there is no money for food.

## James

**James is a single man. He lives on \$520 a month from welfare and pays \$417 a month in rent.**

I have had to worry about being able to pay my rent, many times. When I lived in rooming houses, say I put off paying my rent a day or two, before you knew it, I was behind in rent. I was evicted once, and several other times I had to move because I knew otherwise I would be evicted.

I have been using food banks for the last six years. When I lived downtown I could use it twice a month, but now that I'm in Flemington Park, I can only use the food bank here once a month. I usually only eat once a day. Once I went two days without food. I rely a lot on my mother to give me food. I eat at her place, or she gives me little care packages. I feel terrible about relying on her, as she is on a fixed income, but if it was not for her, I would probably go seriously hungry.

Before welfare was cut in '95, I didn't have to use the food banks. After the cuts I had to use them, but I still managed more or less to adapt. But every year prices and rent goes up, while my income stays the same, so every year it gets harder and harder.

What would make things better for me would obviously be to receive more money. Even a small increase would really help a lot. Of course it would also help if rents were cheaper. I am trying to get on Ontario Disability [income security program for people who are unable to work, which is more generous than welfare], but when my doctor saw how long and complicated the form was that he would have to fill out for it, he refused to fill it out.

**In a study of four Ontario communities, more than half of food bank recipients with a disability did not receive ODSP benefits; estimates suggest that over 60% of these recipients would no longer need food banks if they were able to get ODSP. (6)**

## **Asma**

**Asma lives with her 8 year old daughter. She has a total monthly income of \$957. Her rent is \$760.**

I know how to do very well with very little. My mother taught me this. I buy what I can in bulk, like rice or flour. The rest of my money I spend carefully, a little at a time, to make it last. I try to buy what fresh food I can with this. Some things, like juice, are very expensive.

Overall, I do very well with the little I have. I know how to feed myself and my child. I have good business skills, and learned these in my country before I came to Canada.

I do not want social assistance. I want a job. I have training and experience. Did I go to school for so many years for nothing?

So many people struggle. Things are very tough. I know many people, who even when they speak English well and have much training, cannot find work. How come it is so very hard to find a job here?

**The Daily Bread Food Bank reports that 35.7% of food bank clients on welfare have at least some college or university education. (7)**

## **Kurt**

**Kurt is on ODSP.**

I'm sick and tired of the way people are being treated. The price of everything keeps going up and up. We need housing. We need fair rent. We need rent controls, maybe even back to 1990/1985 levels. The time for passing the buck is over. Government must take responsibility for their actions. What has happened to the right of the poor to even protest?

## **Missy**

**Missy lives alone. Her total monthly income on ODSP is \$649 a month. Her rent is \$140.**

My total income is not as bad as some and I'm now living in Ontario Housing. It's not a lot to live on but after 10 years I've unfortunately gotten used to it. In the beginning it's easier because when you run out of things you've still got something, but after so many years...

You just do things like you ride your bike, you never take the transit, you go to the food bank, you don't have any entertainment, you buy your clothes at Value Village or Goodwill. You lose all your friends.

What the government is doing now is not good. It means you have to be sick. You have to be unemployed. You have to be down and out. You've got to go through humiliation after humiliation. You get lower and lower. You get treated like a number. You get treated like shit. And after a while when your self-esteem is down to nothing - you're in the system. After a certain amount of time it's very hard to get out.

And there are people who want to get out. Maybe some want to stay there; I'm not going to judge them. But I know some want to get out and where's the support for it? They make it sound good. I recently went to a meeting for people with disabilities. It's a farce. Some employer says, OK we'll hire a person with a disability. But they're giving them no special consideration. The person has to have all their own supports in line before they go for that job.

Or you volunteer somewhere. And you end up taking the job of someone who would have been paid. And you're doing the work that somebody else would have, but you're not given the credit for it. You're not given the self-esteem. Which again is another way of suppressing people.

## **Liam**

**Liam lives with his wife and their 16 year old daughter. Their income is \$960 a month, plus Liam does odd jobs. Their rent is \$980.**

Something needs to change. The system needs to come a little closer to life. Liam has lived in other places in the world. Canada could learn from some of them, he thinks.

His social worker has told Liam that he and his family need to find cheaper accommodation. He says that this is impossible. The social worker says that this is not her problem.

Liam has done hard work before. He got work because he was willing and able to do it. Here, in Canada, they check your resume for spelling errors and toss it away without ever even meeting you. Liam says his story is the story of many people, including many of his friends. He has a university degree from another country. His wife is an economist. He does not want to complain because many things are better in Canada. But he feels that the skills of many good people are being wasted.

## **Claudine**

**Claudine is a 59 year old woman. Her income is \$620 per month, and rent is \$350.**

When I pay my rent, I have less than \$300 left for the month. But I always pay my rent. It is my first priority, as I need to have a roof. I use the food bank every month. For a while I was too embarrassed to use it. Nobody likes to use them. But you have to get over your pride, you have no choice.

The last room I rented, the landlady simply evicted me by putting all my stuff outside the door. I am going to sue her for that. People really abuse you when you don't have any money.

I don't usually miss meals, as I can cook with almost nothing. I can live on things like lentils, chick peas. I know how to do this. Something I cannot afford to buy though is fruit, and this is hard, as I like fruit, and it's a food that we need.

I buy a lot of items at the dollar store. Obviously they are not the best quality items, but it's better than nothing. I can never buy any luxury items at all.

I think they should give people on social assistance who want to work more tools. If I had a way to start my own business, I would do it. But I don't have the tools.

## **D.W.**

**D.W. lives with his wife and 4 year old son. Their total monthly income is \$1120. They pay \$675 a month for rent, plus extra for hydro.**

D.W. talked about the frustration he felt. They were doing reasonably well until his wife was injured at work. Now he feels he cannot work unless there is help for his wife at home with their child.

He spoke of times when they did not eat because of pride, and how difficult it was to make that first trip to the food bank. He spoke bitterly of things that people take for granted, like TV, that are seen as unnecessary luxuries for people on social assistance. He spoke about how hard all this was on his four year old son.

With support, he could work; he has skills. If he could work, even for a short time, he could get them off of social assistance. He would even volunteer at the food bank, to give something back. Without support, he feels his whole family is trapped. He does not feel this current system gives that kind of support. D.W. is so angry about it all; he would run for political office if he could.

## Rose

**Rose is a single mother with two children aged 15 and 19 on social assistance. She gets \$1069.00 a month which includes her child support money and pays rent of \$861.00 per month.**

I live in a one-bedroom apartment with two grown-up children, as I can't afford to move to a bigger place. After I pay my rent each month, there is very little money left to buy food and other necessities. The child tax benefit of \$203.00 that I get every month helps me to get by somehow. However, I still don't have enough money to buy food. Having a dinner is a luxury for my family; we usually eat a small supper, as that's all I can afford. We never have enough food and I always worry about the fact that my children are not eating enough. I do not feel comfortable to use the food bank; I have never used any. I am so worried about not being able to pay my bills. I can't afford not to pay my rent or my phone bills. I would rather cut back on food expenses and not eat than be homeless.

I came to Canada a few years ago; I don't have the education that would help me to find a job. I have been trying so hard to find a job, but it has been extremely difficult for me. I don't want to be on social assistance, but I have no choice. I am tired of the struggle. If I could have the child support money not deducted from my social assistance cheque, things would be easier for me. I don't think that it is fair to single mothers on social assistance like us that the government is not allowing us to have the benefit of the child support money. What is the point of getting it when it is deducted dollar for dollar from my social assistance cheque? I could support my children so much better with this extra money.

**Social assistance (cut by 21.6% in 1995) and Ontario Disability Support Program rates have not increased in a decade. The minimum wage has been frozen at \$6.85 per hour for more than 8 years while the cost of living has risen by 12.8%. (8)**

## Willie

**Willie has children that are grown now. His monthly income is \$520 a month. He pays \$343 dollars a month for a shared room.**

A few years back, welfare was a different story. Conditions now are much worse. Once you pay the rent, you only have a few days to find work before you are broke. How are you supposed to find a job when you don't have money to even get there? So you are looking at paying the rent and finding work. Eating isn't a big part of it.

If you do find work, it's usually at minimum wage through an agency. They keep you for 30 days and then they let you go. It's generally degrading work and you have less money than before. Plus it's harder to get to the food bank to get some food because most of them are only open during the hours you are working. I also require medication. When I work, I have to do without the medication, because I lose the drug benefits I have from welfare. I feel doomed no matter which way I go.

This government strips you of all reserves before you get welfare. They clean you dry without giving you a chance. I have certification as a forklift operator. It's a \$100 to renew. I haven't got that. It's going to cost a lot more than that to re-certify.

The food bank helps and at least I have a roof over my head. There are others who are worse off than I am. I'm thinking of those single mothers. I bet they have some horror stories.

**Welfare is a revolving door program, with 1 in 5 returning to social assistance within 8-11 months of leaving. The City of Toronto reports that most people leaving welfare find jobs that are "typically unstable and low paying with few benefits" causing a "cyclical pattern of moving back and forth between social assistance and marginal employment." (9)**

## **Nadera**

**Nadera is a single mother with two children aged 19 and 21; both of them are in school. Her monthly income is \$1097.00 from social assistance. Her rent is \$1100.00 per month.**

Every month I worry about paying the rent, as my rent is much higher than my income and I have no money left to buy food for the three of us. Occasionally, I have to use the food bank. However, what I get from there is not enough for the family. I always worry about having food for my family, as there is never enough. Sometimes I don't eat; I skip meals, so that my children could have something to eat.

I can barely manage to get by with the help from my son's OSAP loan assistance. That helps to buy some necessity food items. I don't buy fruits, as I can't afford to buy such nutritious food. I can't even think of buying clothes for me.

Things would be much easier if I could find cheaper or subsidized housing. I have applied for subsidized housing three years ago, but they said that I might have to wait for another eight to ten years.

I am an immigrant to Canada - I was a doctor in my home country. It has been extremely difficult for me to cope with all the barriers that I have been facing after coming to Canada.

Finding affordable housing has been one of the biggest challenges that I had to face. I didn't find any yet. The government should help newcomers with housing once they arrive in Canada. How can we afford to pay such extraordinarily high rent? It is impossible for us.

**44,780 rental units were lost in Ontario between 1996 and 2001 according. Average Ontario rent increased 17.4%, from \$712 to \$836 between 1998 and 2002; inflation for the same period was 10.3%. (10)**

## Julia

**Julia lives with her 7 year old son. She gets \$644 a month on social assistance. Her rent is \$200.**

I was working at my company for 10 years and I thought I had long-term disability included. When I was in the back seat of a taxi another taxi rear-ended it. This is still in court; it's gone to pre-trial already. I thought my company would pay for it.

I tried to go back to work part-time. I missed a lot of days of work, not knowing that I had a herniated disk. I struggled. I had a lot of neck pain. I still struggled to go to work but didn't know what was going on until I did an MRI two years later. By then you know it was getting so bad that one day I came home and my whole right side went numb and I slipped over my left foot and fell on my face on the side walk. And I stretched the ligaments on my left foot making it even worse. So I couldn't work at all. My company paid me 10 months short-term, but then cut me off because I'd have to go to long-term. So I ended up going on welfare.

I have two boys. I had to throw out my teenaged boy because I couldn't deal with the stress anymore. So I threw him out and now I'm just with my little boy, he's seven years old. And my oldest son, he had a lot of problems before, growing up, so I couldn't deal with that.

So I've been on welfare since Sept 2001. I'm in Toronto Housing so my rent is geared to income. If I wasn't in Toronto housing, I don't know what I'd do. I've thought about suicide lots of times. I didn't know where I was going to go to get toys for my kids for Christmas. So thank god for Scott Mission being there.

Like welfare was only giving me \$700 to start off for me and my boys. So how am I supposed to live like that? Now I've been pulling my hair. Now I understand why a lot of kids end up in Children's Aid.

Even with rent-geared to income, I still have to worry about having enough to eat. That's why I go to food banks all the time. I can't afford to buy things. I stopped buying him clothes, my little guy. I can't afford my teenager. That's impossible.

A few more hundred a month for people with kids would help more. It's ridiculous now what they're paying. With rents so high. People can't live on that.

**The rate of fraud in the income tax system is approximately 20 times higher than the rate of fraud in the welfare system. In December 2001, there were 682,862 people receiving social assistance in Ontario. In 2000-2001, Ontario investigated 52,582 social assistance recipients for fraud. Only 430 people were criminally convicted of welfare fraud, this is less than 1% of welfare recipients. (11)**

## Joyce

**Joyce is a single mother with three children aged 7, 10 and 11. Her family lives on a total of about \$1,640, which comes from welfare and the child tax benefit. She pays \$1,000 in rent.**

Every month I am behind in rent. I get two eviction warnings from my landlord every month. It's a continual source of stress, as I know I could be taken to the tribunal for this. I did a few months back get some help from social services in paying my arrears. But now, because of Christmas, I am behind again.

Sometimes I have to skip meals to make sure my kids have enough. Fresh fruits and vegetables are a luxury for us, as often I can't afford them. I am concerned, because I feed my kids a lot of canned goods, and they have a lot of preservatives. I know this kind of diet impedes their ability to concentrate at school, which impedes their ability to learn. I think this is one of the reasons they have attention deficit. Also, they know about all the problems I have with paying the rent, and paying all the other bills etc., and this kind of stress in their life also impedes their ability to learn.

I saw this woman on TV who was saying that the problem with people on welfare is that they don't know how to cook, i.e. they'll cook a macaroni and cheese dinner, instead of a proper meal. What this lady didn't understand, is that Kraft dinner is 69 cents a box. So it's much cheaper to prepare the Kraft dinner, than a recipe that calls for a variety of ingredients, spices etc. Maybe that lady has all of those ingredients and spices in her kitchen, but we definitely don't.

How I survive is through the food banks, and often, by sacrificing my needs, doing without. Our hygiene is poor; laundry comes to about \$80 per month. So instead of spending the money on laundry, my kids regularly have to go to school with dirty clothes. The choice comes down to doing laundry, or eating. In other words, in order to survive, looking good, feeling good, smelling good, has to be sacrificed.

If I could suggest changes to the system, I would suggest that people's full rent needs to be covered, whatever it is, even if welfare pays the rent directly to the landlord. I find as it is anyway, the government is not really paying welfare to me, its paying welfare to my landlord; he gets most of my money. You can work with your budget if you don't have to worry about paying the rent. Also, welfare rates in general need to be increased. They are not looking at the full scope, at everything you need, for e.g. laundry, hygiene products, etc. All of these really add up.

Also, the government needs to recognize that being a single mom is a job. So that single moms don't feel they are just 'welfare cases' but that they feel they are earning their money.

**Among parents using food banks in four Ontario communities, over 80% reported sacrificing their own food to feed their children. Despite their efforts, almost 40% of recipients reported that their children go hungry at least once a month. (12)**

## NOTES

1	<a href="#">Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2002</a>
2	Toronto Star, October 11, 2002.
3	Report Card on Children, City of Toronto, 2002
4	The Economic and Fiscal Update, John Manley, October 2002
5	Profiles of Welfare: Myths and Realities, National Council of Welfare, 1998
6	Looking for a Hand Up: A Profile of Food Bank Recipients in Four Ontario Communities, Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2003
7	Annual Survey of Food Bank Clients 2003, Daily Bread Food Bank
8	Welfare Incomes 2002, National Council of Welfare, 2003 and Minimum Wages in Canada: A Statistical Portrait with Policy Implications, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2003
9	Survey of People Leaving Ontario Works: Key Findings and Implications, City of Toronto, 2002.
10	<a href="#">Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2002</a>
11	Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services
12	Looking for a Hand Up: A Profile of Food Bank Recipients in Four Ontario Communities, Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2003.

We wish to thank all the people who contributed their stories. They did so with the understanding that their stories would be shared. May the sharing continue.

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