

Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

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October 22, 2012

City of Hamilton

Dear Members of Hamilton City Council

Re: Board of Health's approval of Easy Food Box pilot project

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction has been very pleased to work with Hamilton City Council over the last number of years to move forward a number of initiatives intended to reduce poverty and improve the lives of the lowest income members of our community.

We read with great interest the proposal from Environment Hamilton and the Community Food Stakeholder Sub-Committee for the development of a pilot project to provide 'easy food boxes' of fruits and vegetables to single individuals in receipt of Ontario Works. As you are aware, individuals on Ontario Works are living in deep poverty making it next to impossible for them to acquire fresh fruits and vegetables. According to Hamilton Food Share, 75% of all individuals accessing food banks in Hamilton are on social assistance benefits – demonstrating the woefully inadequate rates Ontario Works recipients are currently receiving.

We believe this pilot project is important and necessary for individual and community wellbeing. At the Board of Health meeting on October 15, 2012, it was anticipated that the Hamilton Community Foundation would fund \$10,000 to cover project evaluation costs; but as it was learned the Public Health Department will be doing an evaluation in-house, instead it will be the Poverty Roundtable that will commit that same \$10,000 to help offset the project costs of the one-year pilot. We will also be discussing with the Public Health Department a possible role for our Evaluation and Learning Working Group to help support the evaluation of the project.

Thank you for your continuing support and leadership,

Tom Cooper



Director
Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction