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Leah Dyck

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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 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 mom's 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 there's 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 . Fresh Food Weekly 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 🙏❤️.

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