



News Release

February 17, 2011 – Partnership putting food on the shelves at Friendship Inn

When you serve 500 meals a day, every day of the year, keeping food in your cupboards is bound to be a challenge. That's why the Friendship Inn has formed a partnership with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon to teach local school children about the needs of the less fortunate in our community - and to inspire them to help fill those needs.

Fourteen schools are currently participating in the project, which marks the first time the Friendship Inn has created an ongoing partnership with a school division. Over the next few months, Friendship Inn executive director Geselle Doell will visit each school in turn to tell students about the Inn and its work, and then ask them to donate a specific food staple. "When I speak to the children, I ask them to picture going home to get a snack and then when they open the cupboard, it is completely empty," says Doell, who tells the children there are many people in Saskatoon without enough to eat.

Students are then challenged to fill one or more plastic swimming pools with their donations for the Inn, as the project's slogan is "Pool Your Love for the Friendship Inn."

The extra staples, like cereal, from the schools will help stretch the Inn's annual food budget, freeing up money to buy other items. "Giving a box of cereal may seem like a little thing, but it is huge in the overall scheme of things," Doell says.

During the two-week period that a school is collecting food, students will also learn more about local poverty, hunger and social justice through special lesson plans their teachers will use during classroom time. "This is an opportunity for our division to live out our vision of 'Reaching Out to Transform the World,' " says project leader Gilbert Chevrier, who coordinates religious education in the division.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon helped create the project by bringing the school division and the Inn together to launch the initiative, which will grow and adapt to the Inn's needs in coming school years. "The beauty is in the simplicity of it," says Blake Sittler, acting Director of Pastoral Services for the diocese.

Georges Vanier Catholic Elementary School is collecting boxes of cereal until Friday, when they will be picked up by the Inn. Media are invited to attend. Geselle Doell, Blake Sittler, students, and school staff will be available for interviews.

9:30 a.m.

**Food collection for Friendship Inn
Friday, February 18, 2010
Georges Vanier Catholic Elementary School
820 Wilson Crescent**

More . . .

cont'd: Partnership putting food on the shelves at Friendship Inn

Saskatoon Friendship Inn was established in 1969 with the help of the Catholic Diocese and the InnerCity Council of Churches as a drop-in centre for transient and homeless men and grew to become a soup kitchen. It serves an average of 500 meals to men, women, and children, every day of the year.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools is Saskatchewan's largest Catholic school division, with approximately 15,000 students. We not only help students do their best in school, we show them how to reach out and make the world a better place.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon includes approximately 87 rural municipalities as well as the city of Saskatoon, with a total population of approximately 318,000.

Stretching across 44,800 square kilometers from Macklin and Leader in the west, to Kelvington and Wadena in the east, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon includes some 87,000 Catholics served by 98 parishes.

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