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REPORT STRESSES URGENCY FOR HUNGER, POVERTY SOLUTIONS

Halifax, NS (February 5, 2019) – Feed Nova Scotia says a new report is yet another painful reminder of our collective inability to adequately address hunger and poverty.

Canadians visited food banks 1.1 million times in March 2018, according to HungerCount, a national survey compiled by Food Banks Canada. Nearly half of those using food banks are single individuals including those on social assistance, receiving disability supports, or working. Children represent 35 per cent of those relying on food banks. Nick Jennery, executive director at Feed Nova Scotia, says while the report is new, the message is the same.

“As a country and as a province, we’re failing people,” he said. “Poverty reduction needs to be a priority for everyone, not just those who are living it or the organizations who have created this tenuous safety net.”

Feed Nova Scotia is taking the opportunity of the HungerCount release to share additional provincial statistics on food bank use. In March 2018, 19,257 individuals in Nova Scotia were supported by the organization’s member food banks. That number is down a negligible 0.9% compared to March 2017. Almost 50 per cent of households who accessed support from a food bank in 2018 reported Income Assistance as their primary source of income.

The organization echoes Food Banks Canada’s call for federal leadership toward a basic income for all Canadians, affordable early learning childcare, increased support for single adults living with low incomes, and increased Northern food security. They’re also looking to the provincial government for continued work on the Employment Support and Income Assistance transformation, and want to see their commitment to raising rates reflected in the upcoming budget, and a more dramatic increase to the rates in 2020.

“People are hurting deeply,” says Jennery. “And at the end of the day, we all have a simple choice to make: Do we apathetically turn the other way, or do we push for change that sees everyone thriving?”

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