

# Health Unit Media Release

Oct 25, 2011



## **Raising Awareness about Poverty in our Community**

The Health Unit, in partnership with the Food Matters Coalition is organizing an event called “Spread a New Attitude about Poverty” on November 4, 2011 at Loaves and Fishes in Brockville to raise awareness about the reality of living with a low income and to decrease the stigma that sometimes surrounds people living in poverty.

In Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, approximately one in ten families, and one in nine children, are living below the low income cut-off. For some, affordable, quality housing and healthy foods are hard to find.

According to a recent Nutritious Food Basket survey, it costs a minimum of \$738.96 per month to feed a family of four. For families on low income, once rent, utilities and other expenses are paid, there is little money left over for healthy food. “Some families are being forced to choose between putting a roof over their heads and buying healthy foods”, said Carole Chang, a Registered Dietitian at the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit.

“Living with low income leads to perpetual stress. Poor nutrition affects a child’s ability to learn and an adult’s ability to search out and retain a job. Both lead to increased risk of chronic and infectious diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer, as well as babies being born too early or too small” says Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health at the Health Unit. “As a community, there is much we can do to provide a healthy supportive environment for all of our residents.”

To learn more about the issues associated with poverty, and what you can do to support individuals and families in our community, go to

<http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition/foodmatters/default.htm>

-30-

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