

Help for the Pontiac's hungry

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PONTIAC • The formation of a new group hopes to stuff the Pontiac's hunger full of food.

The newly created but not yet fully operational *Moisson Outaouais* will act as a region-wide distributor of food, arranging for donations to food banks.

Currently, emergency food services in the region obtain most of their goods directly from donations they solicit themselves and from Ottawa, thanks to a partnership with the food bank there.

However, the services are underdeveloped and often those in need of food would be forced to go to the city, which has the greater ability to aid those there.

Thanks to *Moisson Outaouais*, those days should be over.

"There was no instance of collecting and distributing food on the Québec side," said *Moisson Outaouais* Director-General Jean Pigeon.

"By having a *Moisson* we can work to distribute free food and they don't have to

pay for it."

Pigeon compared the setup of *Moisson Outaouais* to United Way, which collects money and donations and then distributes them to others on a localized basis.

Specifically for Pontiacers, *Moisson Outaouais* will give food to *Bouffe Pontiac* in Campbell's Bay, which will then distribute food to those in need in the area.

Moisson will utilize its greater size and power to negotiate contracts with providers, organizing donations and see that each area is served adequately.

Pigeon said the local food banks, like *Bouffe Pontiac* in Campbell's Bay, do a good job but "... they have a greater need than what they can distribute."

To start, 24 different organizations throughout *Outaouais* will receive food to distribute.

In its first year, *Moisson* will work together with Ottawa, where the food will be stored until a more permanent alternative can be found.

Bouffe Pontiac hopes *Moisson* will help to further develop its own food sharing

initiatives.

Currently, they are the only food bank that qualifies for donations from *Moisson Outaouais* in the Pontiac.

Three weeks ago *Bouffe Pontiac* became a full-fledged agency that will offer regular assistance and aid those in need with proper budget management and creating more sustainable sources of food, like starting a vegetable garden, according to its director Danielle Roman.

Previously, *Bouffe Pontiac* operations largely surrounded a food sharing store during the Christmas season in a hall and emergency food services.

Pigeon said agencies that receive food must meet *Moisson Outaouais*' standards. "We have to know the agencies adhere to the policies and give to the right persons."

"In the Pontiac with saw mills closing it is the basic needs people have to get met and that's what we have to focus on," said Pigeon.

Based out of Gatineau, *Moisson Outaouais* hopes to be in full operation by the new year.