



# MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN

VOICES AGAINST POVERTY



International United Nations Millennium Campaign

[www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org)

Canadian – Make Poverty History

[www.millenniumpromise.org](http://www.millenniumpromise.org)

Calgary –Children without Poverty

[www.makepovertyhistory.ca](http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca)

[childrenwithoutpoverty@yahoo.ca](mailto:childrenwithoutpoverty@yahoo.ca)

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Please do your part.

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The millennium campaign was created in 2000 by the United Nations to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. Please help. Please read on to help and wear a white band to show your support. White bands are available for \$1 from [www.millenniumcampaign.org](http://www.millenniumcampaign.org).

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"We are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside; but that will be only an initial act. One day the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be beaten and robbed as they make their journey through life."  
Dr. Martin Luther King

As I talked with my 11 year old friend last week, she asked me if I wanted to know how they became homeless. I shrugged sure, trying to appear indifferent and not over eager for her personal story. Do you want to know how an 11 year old, her two brothers and her mom can become homeless in Calgary?

It was almost a year ago, do you remember when houses were being auctioned on the same day, sold for higher prices than they were listed for, and finding first and last month's rent was difficult for some. Most looking for apartments, whether they had the money or not, could not find anything available.

A man befriended the family - single mom with three kids. He knew they were trying to find a place to live. He acted as their friend for over a month. When he mentioned to mom that he had a place for rent, she trusted him – he showed it to her and gave her the key. He took her last \$1200 for the damage deposit. When mom went to see the place she was to move into, she was introduced to the kind elderly couple who ACTUALLY lived in and owned the house.

My 11 year old friend asks me, "How could someone do that to a single mom with three kids?"

I had no answer for her question, because I myself do not understand how that can happen. Especially when the person has become familiar with the family and their situation. The only thing I had to offer was a common opinion of this dilemma and my empathy.

CHILDREN WITHOUT POVERTY is not a registered charity. Please donate to the charity of your choice. We recommend: [www.millenniumpromise.org](http://www.millenniumpromise.org) (not a registered Canadian charity), [www.tear.org](http://www.tear.org) (not a registered Canadian charity), [www.calgaryfoodbank.com](http://www.calgaryfoodbank.com).

To watch an 11 year old shake her head at the actions of an adult, because her morals are stronger than his! We still live where our children must experience our world in a way that does not make them easily trust, feel safe, and know the struggle for basic needs like food and shelter. How sad. I still believe in the Spiderman story where good prevails evil.

**YOUR HOMEWORK:** This month, seek out a school near you that needs food on hand for children who do not have lunch. Drop into the school; ask the teacher of your children or the principal what they need. Ask if they have children attending who are not properly nourished and what you can drop off to have on hand for kids who need food.

**Did you know?** Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids (BB4CK) Program provides 1,300 brown bag lunches to 40 schools across Calgary per day. It is one of their two programs, called Food for Thought. So why did I ask you to drop off food to the school this month? I did that because Bob McInnis the Executive Director of BB4CK believes that if we build better communities children will not be hungry and will not live in poverty. He wants BB4CK to be a facilitator to the communities - a catalyst. By coordinating requirements back to the community we empower the grass roots, turn it back to the community and provide the missing piece for people. Provide them purpose in what they do within their communities.

BB4CK receives no government or United Way funding. They operate based on private and corporate donations. Although you may direct your United Way funds to non-United Way organizations through your company. So why didn't I ask you to give them money instead of dropping off food at your local school?

Bob McInnis states, "We believe issues are solved by bringing people closer to the problems. We want to solve poverty – not build an empire or dependence on it." Donating money does not bring about purpose for the person donating. "All of our funding donors volunteer in some capacity & share the vision of this being the solution." Bob talks about bringing purpose back into your life.

"We have very good resources and can easily coordinate", states Bob. We can call Atco to deliver a fridge to a school; we can deliver when someone can not as we have vehicles. If we put it back into the community, the kids become a part of the community again.

Here are two stories that Bob shares that show how the purpose piece is very big for the organization. The stories also show how bringing it back to the community allows them to be the coordinators and not the owners of fixing the problem. BB4CK had a school where they only provided 6 lunches every day. One of the local moms of the school said they could take care of that by coordinating with four other moms, so the organization is no longer required in that school. In the Aboriginal Family School in Inglewood, BB4CK provided lunches. After six months, the school came back and said they weren't needed anymore, because they had taken care of the hunger within their own community.



Bob is also involved in the Living Wage whereby he states, “Minimum wage is \$7 per hour, the average Calgary wage is \$8.50 per hour and it costs \$13.25 to live in the city of Calgary.” This may help you in believing that there are 10,000 – 30,000 kids in Calgary with inadequate nutrition. People do not want to believe that kids are hungry every day. They are in emotional denial. There are mothers asking BB4CK for help, but are sometimes denied, because the school administration is not willing to admit that hunger exists at their school. BB4CK works in conjunction with the school administration, we need to have people see and acknowledge and not deny the hungry children in front of us.

In Toronto, there are 195,000 lunches provided every week to school kids there. But they are all provided by grass roots organizations with no one organization having a budget larger than \$10,000. “Calgary does not have many grass roots organizations, we need more”, Bob states.

There are many ways to help, by volunteering to deliver, volunteering to make lunches, dropping off food or donating money. Yes they will take your money, and yes they do have more purchasing power than we do as individuals. But they prefer the in kind donations, because it engages people to help within the community. They can be found on the World Wide Web at [www.brownbaggingit.org](http://www.brownbaggingit.org).

One mom involved with the organization is thankful in saying, “Thank you for providing lunches for my kids, now I can buy them books they need and new shoes.”

**Tired, just plain tired of the ‘hands in your pockets’ wanting your money, and the people at your door wanting your time?** It is getting close to the end of the school year. Many parents and children are looking to get their teachers a little something to show how much they appreciate them. But how many plaques, mugs or trinkets can a teacher keep and store over a 30 year career? Perhaps the parents/students can get together and buy their teacher a little something from the World Vision catalogue. Perhaps a pig or a goat!? I think teachers would really appreciate the gesture. [www.worldvision.ca](http://www.worldvision.ca) (gift catalogue is on the left hand side of the main page).

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