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## THE METRO PAGE

# Give \$200,000 to ease plight of hungry, Ottawa urged

By Dana Flavelle Toronto Star

**FoodShare** Toronto is asking the federal government for \$200,000 to help provide alternative solutions to the hunger problem, the agency's executive-director says.

The proposed program is designed to encourage low-income groups to start their own co-operative grocery stores, food-buying clubs and gardens, Donna MacDonald said in an interview yesterday.

In addition to providing cheaper food, such projects help build community pride

and individual skills, she said.

The proposal has been submitted to Health and Welfare Canada, which will take about seven months to review it, said MacDonald.

She said the ideas offer better short-term solutions to hunger than food banks. "Lining up for food isn't going to change anything. It's just going to make people more helpless and dependent."

Alternative solutions are needed, MacDonald said, because changes in government policies that affect the poor — such

as welfare rates and income tax measures — could take years, and "the hungry can't wait."

Metro now has about 150 food banks handing out bags of groceries or serving hot meals to nearly 60,000 people each month. Under the direction of a central agency — Daily Bread Food Bank — they're now conducting a massive food collection.

Readers will find special grocery bags, sponsored by four major supermarket chains, included in their copies of The

Toronto Star tomorrow

They're asked to contribute canned, meat and other protein sources, such as peanut butter, macaroni and cheese, powdered milk and baby formula. Donations may be dropped off at any fire hall by Monday, April 20.

**FoodShare**, set up just over a year ago and financed by Metro and Toronto, gathers data on the problems of the poor and advocates on their behalf. It does not collect or distribute food.

Gerard Kennedy, executive-director of

the Daily Bread Food Bank, said FoodShare's proposal may delay more permanent solutions.

Last year, Daily Bread gave away 952,560 kilograms (2.1 million pounds) of food to agencies that distribute it to the needy.

In the first three months of this year, the food bank gave out 471,904 kilograms (1.04 million pounds) of food, five times the amount it distributed during the same period last year, Kennedy said.

Volunteers for the food drive should call Daily Bread at 769-5155.