

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: COULD YOU SURVIVE ON \$6.65?

Executives, politicians and media personalities are about to try!

Toronto, ON March 20, 2013 – From April 1-7, 2013, 6 volunteers will drastically restrict their personal food budgets to \$6.65 a day to help understand and draw attention to, the poverty and struggle of Fife House's clients; most of whom live below the poverty line. Participants include city councillor **Kristyn Wong-Tam** (Toronto Centre-Rosedale); Fife House Executive Director **Keith Hambly**; Board President **Bruce Mayhew**; Board member and clinical practice specialist; **Colleen Kearney**, Ryerson Sociology Professor **Doreen Fumia** and food blogger **Cory Pagett**.

Every day, Fife House clients cope with the reality of having only \$6.65 to spend on food; a tough task considering steady increases in prices. This year alone, prices of essentials like bread, eggs and meat are expected to see increases between 1 – 6.5%; predictions indicate that 2013 price increases will exceed National inflation.¹

Fife House has been providing safe, affordable housing to men, women and families in Toronto living with HIV/AIDS for 25 years. In addition to housing, Fife House assists clients through supportive programs, including meal programs; which help bridge the gap when financial resources aren't enough. Living with HIV/AIDS comes with numerous difficulties, so eating nutritious meals and having access to affordable housing and medication is critical to maintaining health.

The Thrive on \$6.65 Challenge asks participants to put themselves in the shoes of Fife House clients. Ultimately, they won't experience the whole reality; as participants already enjoy stable lifestyles and amenities; plus they're not coping with the significant side effects HIV/AIDS medications can come with. Collective experiences, effects on mood, energy and mobility will be shared through a blog created by Fife House specifically for this project.² *"We will certainly feel hunger, but I expect we'll also find out how difficult it can be to make food choices on a restricted budget, and how stressful it is to find (or not find) good nutrition"*, said participant and Fife House Board President Bruce Mayhew.

Indirectly, participants will be illustrating the importance of Fife House's meal programs. Currently, Fife House is able to fund some breakfast, lunch and dinner programs - in part from annual fundraising events like 'A Taste For Life'; taking place on April 24th at 50 restaurants across the city. Establishments will donate 25% of their revenue from dinner that night, to Fife House. A Taste For Life³ is projected to raise over \$90,000 to fund vital programs like the meal program at Fife House.

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¹ University of Guelph Food Price Index 2013 <http://www.uoguelph.ca/cpa/Food-Index-2013.pdf>

² Trying to Thrive on \$6.65 blog: <http://fifehouse.wordpress.com/>

³ A Taste For Life 2013: http://www.fifehouse.org/index.cfm?PAGEPATH=Events/A_Taste_For_Life&ID=962;
<http://www.atasteforlife.org/toronto.html>