

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IT'S POSSIBLE TO SURVIVE, BUT NOT THRIVE ON \$6.65

Challenge participants learn the true costs of eating in poverty.

Toronto, ON April 9, 2013 – From April 1-7, 2013, 6 volunteers drastically restricted their personal food budgets to \$6.65 a day as part of a challenge to raise awareness of the struggle facing Fife House clients who live below the poverty line. Participants included 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**; food blogger **Cory Pagett** and; **Gail Flintoft**, retired nurse and current Fife House Board member.

Throughout the week, Trying to Thrive on \$6.65 participants wrote about their personal experiences and food choices on the Fife House blog. Though all participants expected to miss certain foods and feel hunger, all were surprised at the amount of planning, anxiety and feelings of isolation involved with eating on such a small budget. *“There is a great deal of social isolation when you’re on a restricted income”* said Food Blogger Cory Pagett. *“Grabbing lunch with a friend or socializing over a drink is not possible unless you are someone’s guest – and reciprocating is out of the question.”* Ultimately, living on \$6.65 per day, every day often means doing without social interaction and adds shame and guilt to an already difficult situation. Clients *can* survive – but they don’t thrive.

Throughout the Trying to Thrive on \$6.65 challenge there was great interest through several Twitter based chats. Fife House staff, selected stakeholders and current participants will be meeting next week to plan for the future of the challenge. In addition, Fife House is gearing up for their major restaurant fundraiser A Taste For Life on April 24th. *“Funds raised directly impact meal programs at Fife House and offer clients needed nutrition and the social connection many of us take for granted and that do help Fife House clients thrive,”* says Executive Director Keith Hambly. A Taste For Life is taking place at 49 restaurants across the city and is projected to raise \$100,000 this year.

For 25 years Fife House has been providing safe, affordable housing to men, women and families in Toronto living with HIV/AIDS. In addition to housing, Fife House assists clients thrive 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, eating nutritious meals and having access to affordable housing and medication is critical to maintaining health.

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