



Susan Marjetti
Senior Managing Director, Ontario Region, CBC Radio

October 18, 2016

Dear Ms. Marjetti

On behalf of the [Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health](http://www.osnp-ph.on.ca) (OSNPPH), the independent and official voice of Registered Dietitians working in Ontario's public health system, we are writing to you in advance of the anticipated Sounds of the Season campaign. We would like to outline our position that charity is an ineffective and counterproductive response to the serious problem of food insecurity, and to suggest that a representative of OSNPPH be interviewed during the campaign.

On November 26, 2015, OSNPPH released its [Position Statement on Responses to Food Insecurity](#) and [infographic](#). This Position Statement was motivated by discussions in December of 2014 among social determinants of health activists, including the call by the low-income advocacy group *Put Food in the Budget* asking CBC to host a more balanced discussion of the limits of charity as a strategy to end systemic poverty in Ontario. OSNPPH wrote this Position Statement due to concern about the 2014 Sounds of the Season claim that donating to food banks would "feed the city". The Position Statement has been [endorsed by over 140 organizations and individuals](#).

As demonstrated in our Position Statement, the primary community response to food insecurity – food charity – is an ineffective and counterproductive response to food insecurity. Food charity does not address the root cause which is poverty, and it perpetuates the misconception that food insecurity is being taken care of by food banks. While food charity may help to relieve immediate hunger in those who seek assistance, food insecurity persists. To effectively address food insecurity, income responses are required.

Year after year, our Nutritious Food Basket analyses clearly indicate that families and individuals who have minimum wage incomes or receive social assistance do not have enough money to cover the basic costs of living. When their income is too low, people are forced to choose between paying rent and other expenses, including nutritious food.

CBC has the opportunity to raise awareness about the underlying cause of this serious public health issue and the need for effective solutions. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further, and to be interviewed during the Sounds of the Season campaign. Please contact Mary Ellen Prange at MaryEllen.Prange@Hamilton.ca.

Sincerely

Mary Ellen Prange, RD
Food Security Workgroup, OSNPPH

Candice Einstoss, RD
Co-chair, OSNPPH

Copy: Mike Balkwill, Put Food in the Budget campaign
Dennis Raphael, PhD, Professor of Health Policy and Management, Graduate Program Director, Health Policy and Equity