

ReFresh Foods growing to meet the need

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April 22, 2010

After about a year in business, ReFresh Foods is celebrating a major milestone.

The regional food distribution program recently moved into a new warehouse capable of storing hundreds of pounds of fresh and frozen foods.

ReFresh was launched in December 2008 by the charity Food for Life. The organization collects fruits, vegetables, meat and frozen and dry food overstock from restaurants, farmers, grocery stores and corporate suppliers and then donates the products to local food banks and emergency food programs.

"This is a big change," said program director Marcus Logan, who celebrated the grand opening last week. "We still have our truck running full-time, picking up and delivering food to our members, and now we are able to collect more food and store it safely."

The warehouse, located on Mountainside Drive, includes a large freezer, a cooler and room for dry goods. Until occupying the new space, ReFresh used third party warehouse space that was available throughout the region.

The 1,500 sq.-ft. unit can store 50 pallets of dry food, 50 pallets of produce in the cooler and 20 pallets of frozen food.

During its first year, ReFresh collected 233,000 pounds of food from large corporate donors. Logan said ReFresh set a goal of 395,000 pounds to collect by October 2010 and the organization has already collected more than 300,000 pounds.

"It's really cool to watch large donations. Skids and skids of food come in, and within a week it's gone," said Logan. "We can now hold large volumes of food for food banks and smaller agencies in case they don't have room," Logan added.

ReFresh collects food from grocers including Sobeys in Milton and Ippolito food distribution centre in Burlington and redistributes it to smaller organizations including the Georgetown Bread Basket and Burlington's Partnership West Food Bank.

"We're celebrating how far we've come," said Logan. "We started with a truck and now we have our own space for life."

For more information about ReFresh Foods, visit www.refreshfoods.ca.



ReFresh Foods growing to meet the need. NEW WAREHOUSE TO HELP MEET DEMAND: ReFresh Foods Director Blair Richardson thanks all the supporters during the recent grand opening of a new food distribution warehouse on Mountainside Drive. The large warehouse will help serve the needs of food banks and emergency food programs across Halton. *Nikki Wesley – Burlington Post*

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