



Gravenhurst Against Poverty

G.A.P.



NEEDS ASSEMENT REPORT

WHAT WE HAVE, WHAT WE NEED, WHAT WE CAN DO

Marlene Buwalda - April 18th 2018

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OBJECTIVE:

Gravenhurst Against Poverty (GAP), a new grass roots organization, requested a needs assessment survey be done in the greater Gravenhurst area. This report is the result of that request. It is a report for internal use only, and not a statistical report. It will endeavor to outline programs currently available for free (or minimal charge) in the community of Gravenhurst. These program spreadsheets reveal possible gaps in services that are available to people living on low income. In addition, through interviews and questionnaires, a little about our population living on a low-income will be revealed and their ideas compiled to help with final suggestions as to what kind of programs might be useful to people in our community. The final suggestions will attempt to collaborate, not compete, with currently running programs in Gravenhurst. We will summarize the findings of these interviews and questionnaires into groups based on their results. Suggestions for possible ways forward will be grouped into seniors, medical care, food security, mental health needs, youth, transportation, social programs, children, and housing for the Gravenhurst area.

METHODOLOGY:

In researching this report, we reached out to the residents of Gravenhurst. We spoke to over 50 individuals, groups and businesses who work(ed) or interacted with people living on a low income (See Appendix A). These people included district workers, club members, school principals, selected business owners, and individual Gravenhurst residents (whose names are not added to Appendix A). We interviewed these people and asked if they would like to join GAP, and what they thought the gaps were in community services in Gravenhurst. We also asked residents, mostly those living on a lower income, currently attending the Supper Club, Impact café, Women's Centre, Men's groups, Salvation Army Food Bank, District Housing, Gateway Church, Great Beginnings and Early On., and friends of those who attend, to fill out the attached

questionnaire. (See Appendix B) This questionnaire asks a little about the person filling it out and asks for suggestions as to what programs may be needed in this community. One hundred and eleven households filled out the questionnaire, however, ninety-four households were used for the data section of this report. The seventeen households left out were not from the low-income spectrum, and therefore not our target group. Though they were not part of our data group, their suggestions about programs needed in Gravenhurst are included in the final portion of this report. The ninety-four households were a good representation of the population of Gravenhurst, as seen below, in Chart 1.

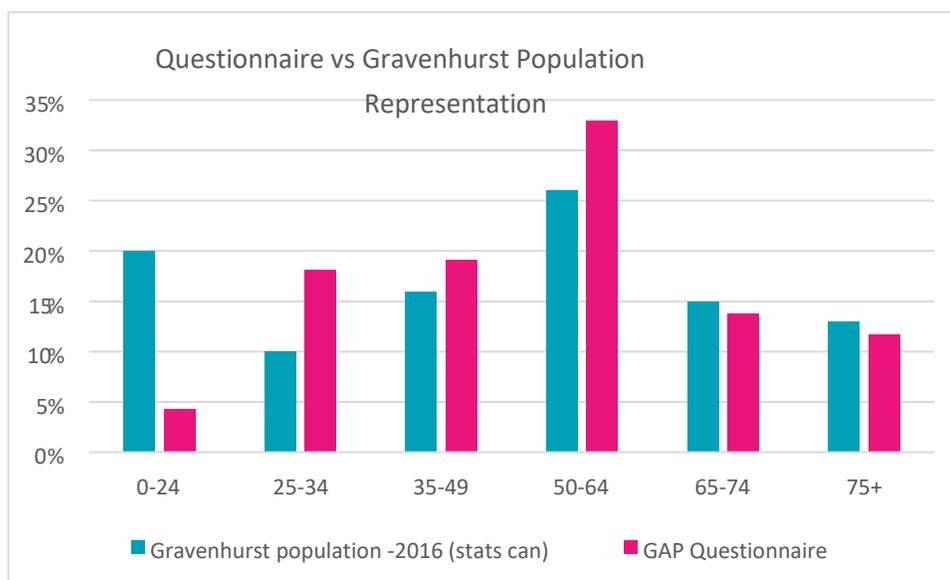


Chart 1

As seen here, the only population group lacking representation in our report is the under twenty-four group - which will be addressed at a later date. Our questionnaire did also use slightly different age groups from 26-35, 36-50, etc., but the group is quite a good representation of the Gravenhurst population nonetheless.

GRAVENHURST STATISTICS:

Although Gravenhurst is found to have the highest percentage of low income households compared to all other Muskoka municipalities, as seen below, it seems to have few options to help these families.

In the District of Muskoka, 7,535 persons or 13.0% of the applicable population were living in low income households in 2015 based on the LIM-AT. This ranged from a low of 685 persons or 10.5% in Muskoka Lakes to a high of 1,895 persons or 17.1% in Gravenhurst. ¹

According to Statistics Canada, Gravenhurst's low-income households represent 17% of its population vs 12% for Bracebridge and Huntsville and 14% for Ontario. I am not going to list all the programs available in other towns, however, looking over-all, Gravenhurst seems to lag in many areas. As one searches availability of certain programs, one finds most programs are available in Bracebridge, and Huntsville, but not Gravenhurst. Meals on wheels, and mental health walk-in counselling clinics, sexual assault services, medical walk-in clinics, local transportation, hospitals, to name a few.

GRAVENHURST FREE COMMUNITY GROUPS:

We gathered information on programs over a short eight-week period, and so, we are sure this is not an exhaustive study. There

¹ [http://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/determinants-ofhealth/socioeconomic-characteristics/income/low-income-measure-\(lim\)](http://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/determinants-ofhealth/socioeconomic-characteristics/income/low-income-measure-(lim))

seems to be pockets of programs available, but not much communication about how to access them, who can attend, and the costs involved. It seems many great programs are out there, but people are not becoming aware of them, especially if they are not always running consistently throughout the year.

The spread sheets (See Appendices C, D, E, F, and G) outline the groups which were found to be available with little to no cost to residents of Gravenhurst. The programs and spread sheets are grouped into **Women** and **Men** (Appendix C), **Youth** (Appendix D), **Food** (Appendix E), **Families** (Appendix F), and other **Non-Food** (Appendix G) activities, to make it easier to see where most needs are being met. Those without an actual date and time, are referenced with a telephone contact number at the bottom of the spread sheet. Again, it is not an exhaustive list but we tried to get as many programs included as possible.

The spread sheets featuring **Women** and **Families** clearly point out that these two groups are offered the most programs on an ongoing basis. However, women, who have a centre open each day of the week, still have few supplementary food options. Looking closely and the programs available for families, the Great Beginnings group where many of our at-risk families go, is only available once a week. Families with children under 6 years old, do have two additional food options, a soup day on Mondays, and a dinner on Thursdays, and Early On social programs available daily Monday to Thursdays. Unfortunately, many of our young moms living on lower-income tend not to attend Early On for some reason. Also, to do with families, in Gravenhurst, a report done on gender bias by the YWCA in 2013 observed, “There is only one licensed daycare program in Gravenhurst providing daycare for 64 children.”² They also mention that there are waiting lists, hence more subsidized daycare could help people go back to work.

The **Youth** have board games at TeaBeards, and the YMCA Friday night youth night including a youth leadership program, during the winter months, as well as scouts and beavers and some programs

² www.ywcamuskoka.com/helpful-links, GBA Gravenhurst 2013.

offered by the library. Again, more options would be good but more importantly, there is no low-cost food offered at these venues.

There are very few low cost or free **Food** options for Gravenhurst residents. Gravenhurst doesn't even have a low-cost food store, except Giant Tiger, which does not specialize in food. The Salvation Army (S.A.) Food Bank in Gravenhurst is open three days a week, and many also go to Manna Food Bank in Bracebridge. Manna, however, is open the same days as the food bank in Gravenhurst, whereas in Bracebridge the hours of the two food banks deliberately work together, leaving only the weekend without a free food option. In Gravenhurst people are not able to access free food Mondays or Wednesdays, as well as the weekend, unless individual churches or schools offer it to them. Although Gravenhurst's hot meal sources open all year round, unlike Bracebridge where most are only open in the winter, there are only two offered to all people. These options are offered at the end of the week; The Supper Club on Thursday nights, and the Impact Café on Friday afternoons. (Salvation Army also has a Thursday BBQ lunch during three summer months.)

There are two **Men's** programs available including food, Tuesdays at the District and Thursdays at Salvation Army, however Tuesdays is only open to men on ODSP or OW.

Looking at the **Non-Food** activities, there are quite a few options for senior's exercise programs at different locations. I am unsure how many people actually know about these programs, since no one I spoke to actually said they exist. This information is important to get out, but other than those exercise groups, there is really little option for people to sit and have a free coffee. Some people believe that the Senior's Centre is a valid option, however it does have an annual fee of \$25, and each activity costs additional money to partake. (\$3.50 extra)

In Summary, these charts point out that the major gap in services is clearly low cost healthy food options for all age groups, especially during the weekends, and in the early part of the week. It also shows

there are few options for socializing and getting out of the house for people living on a small budget, in most age categories, except women. Many people attend the programs listed for the social aspect of the group. 56% of the people questioned said they come out to the dinners or other programs for the social aspect, while 44% said it was for the food.

OUR PARTICIPANTS:

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

Looking at our participants who filled out the questionnaire, we see our largest group was in the group of 51-65 years.

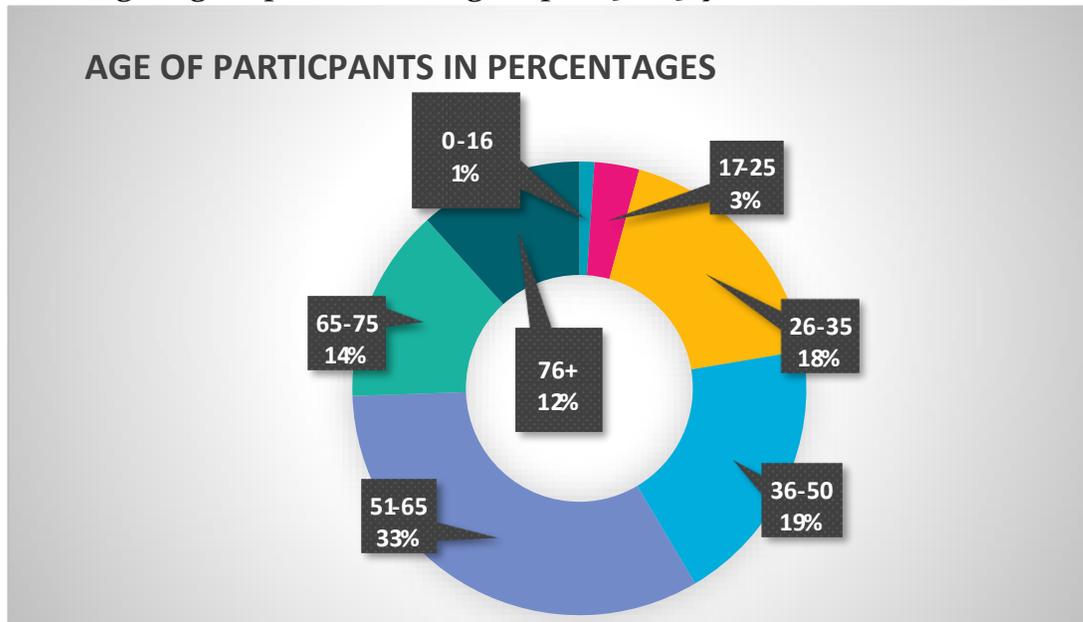


Chart 2

This was followed by 36-50-year-old group, then the 26-35-year-old group. However, if we add up all the seniors, being 65 plus, 26% of the participants were seniors, which makes them the second largest group.

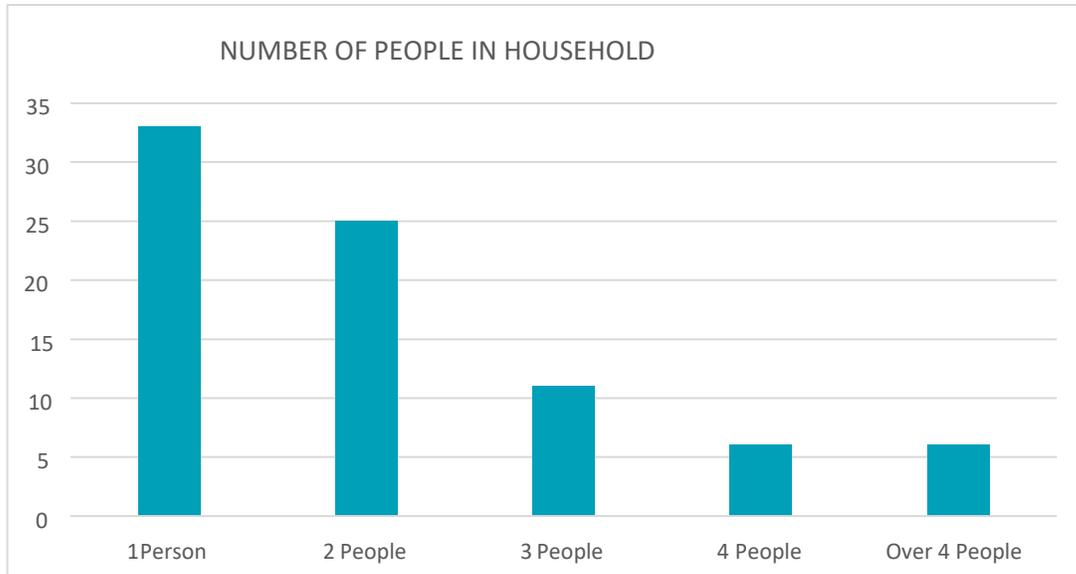


Chart 3

Most people come from single person households, or two-person households and about half own some kind of pet.

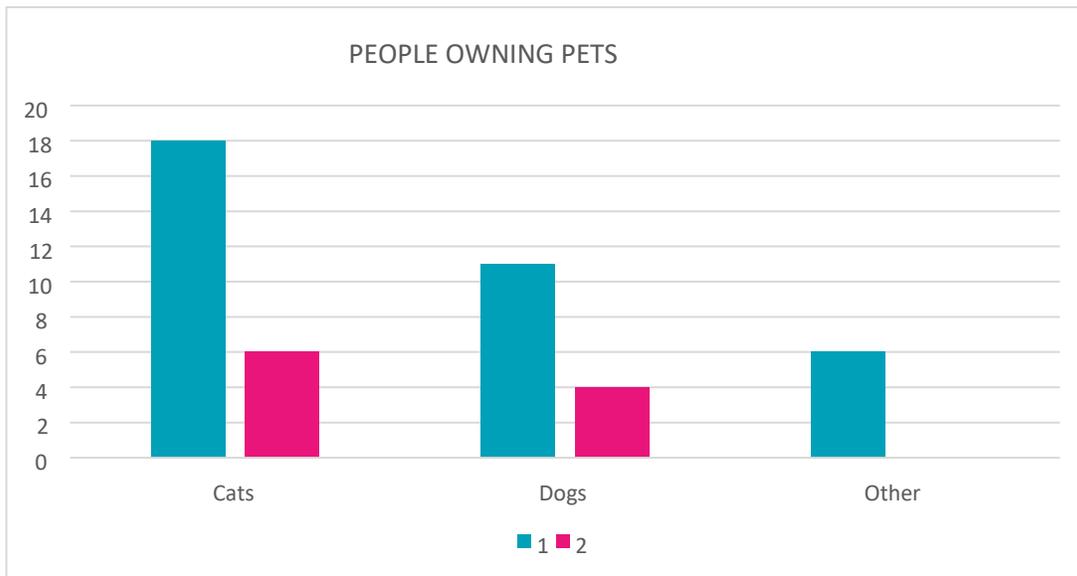


Chart 4

Since the District of Muskoka offers many programs for people accessing their help through OW and ODSP, and even outreach

workers for more isolated cases, the question was asked if people were able to access these services. 29% of the people who answered said they cannot access these programs. This could be because they have aged out of the system, or they have low paying employment and are not accessing government assistance to help, or they are doing okay on their own, as well as other reasons.

Internet access was another concern. We wanted to see how many people were able to access the internet, especially because technology is becoming a very important tool in our lives, and many organizations use this to advertise their services. 21% of the people answering this questionnaire, do not have access to the internet. This being said, 79% have access at home.

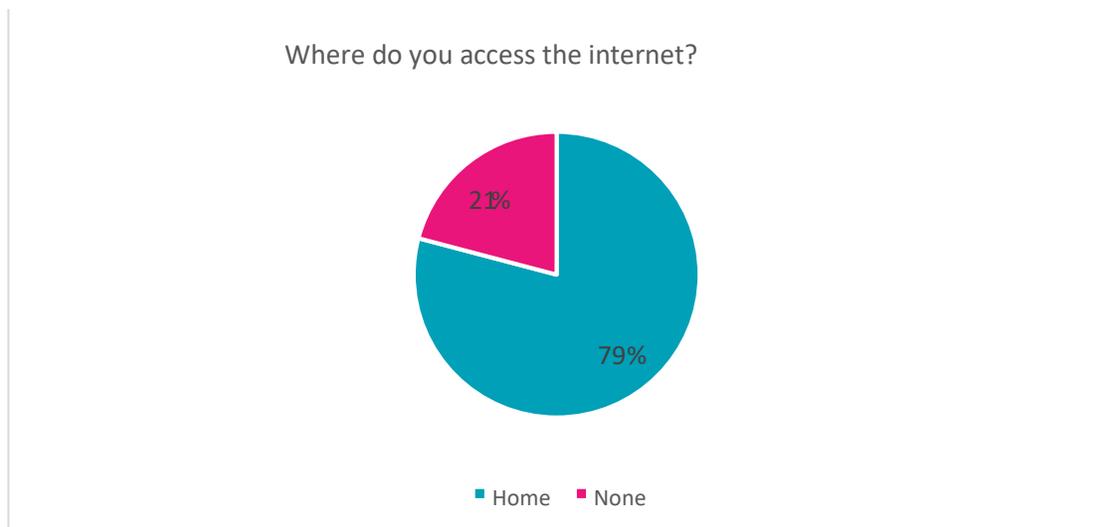


Chart 5

While advertising new programs, using many different avenues seems to be the best way. Fairly equal numbers of people use word of mouth, read the paper, as well as Facebook and bulletin boards to find out what programs are being offered, as seen in chart 6.

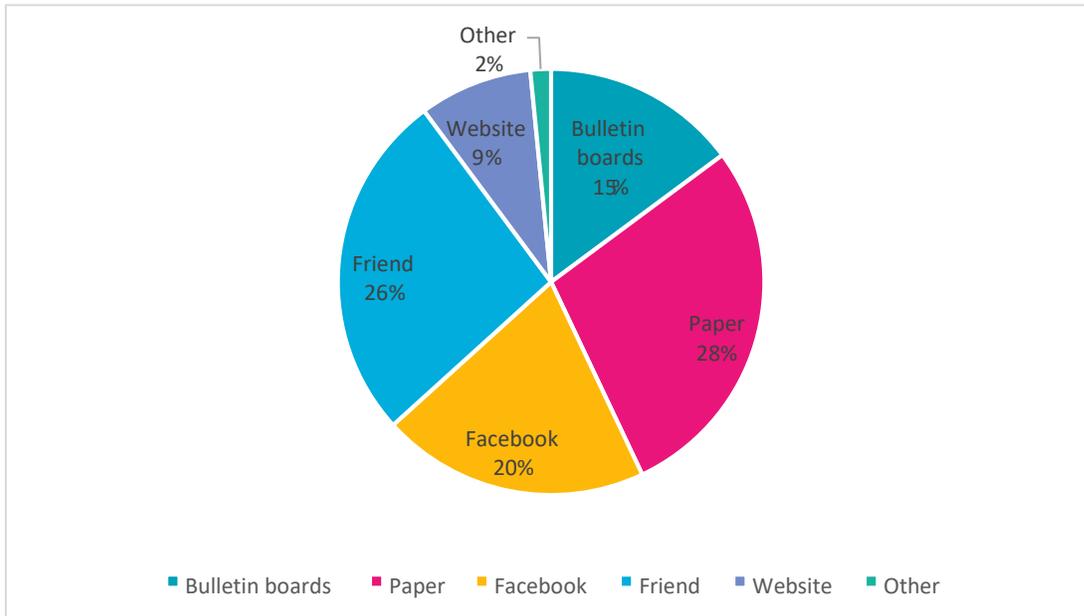


Chart 6

Chart 6 shows that there is no one way people find things out. I was surprised to see that 26% of the people questioned, did not know about Impact Café or Free Stuff for Daily needs. Another surprise was that 42% did not know about YMCA’s subsidized memberships. Perhaps the lesson is to never stop advertising and spreading the word about valuable programs.

When it comes to volunteering, most people (66%) filling out the questionnaires do not volunteer currently. When asked if they would like to volunteer, though, half of the people answering, answered positively. Even though there is no way of actually following up with specific people who would like to volunteer, we can take this into consideration when making decisions on volunteer needs at programs. Many people who attend the programs are very capable of also volunteering, and this can be a great way to build confidence.

OUR PARTICIPANTS:

FOOD SECURITY:

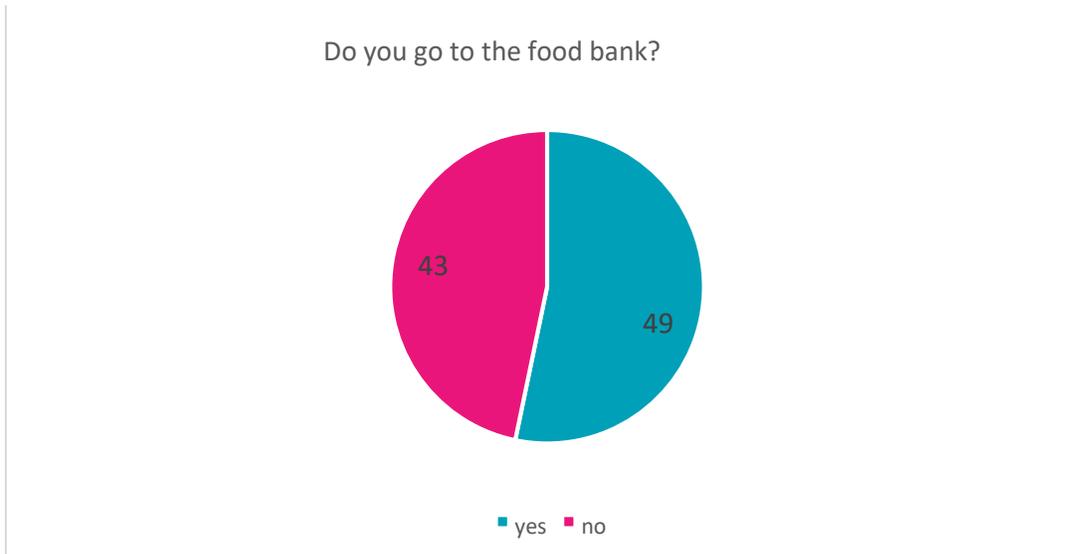


Chart 7

Almost half of people questioned don't use the food bank, but we did not ask why not. Some answers offered were that they were too ashamed, didn't like the questions that were asked, and it was too far to walk. Additionally, some of the elderly ladies mentioned they really don't eat much and don't need the food bank.

Out of the 53% of participants who go to the Food Bank, 78% say they go to the S.A. food bank in Gravenhurst. 53% of those people who go, say they go to Manna, and 22% of those who answered only go to Manna food bank. 31% who go to either food bank, go on a monthly basis, 27% when needed, 12% twice a year, 12% go at Christmas, and 10% go every 3 months or so.

We also asked if people have a sufficient amount of food for their needs in a month. 26% of people answering this question, say they do not, as seen in chart 8. A few pointed out that vegetables, toiletries, and baby food are things they are lacking.

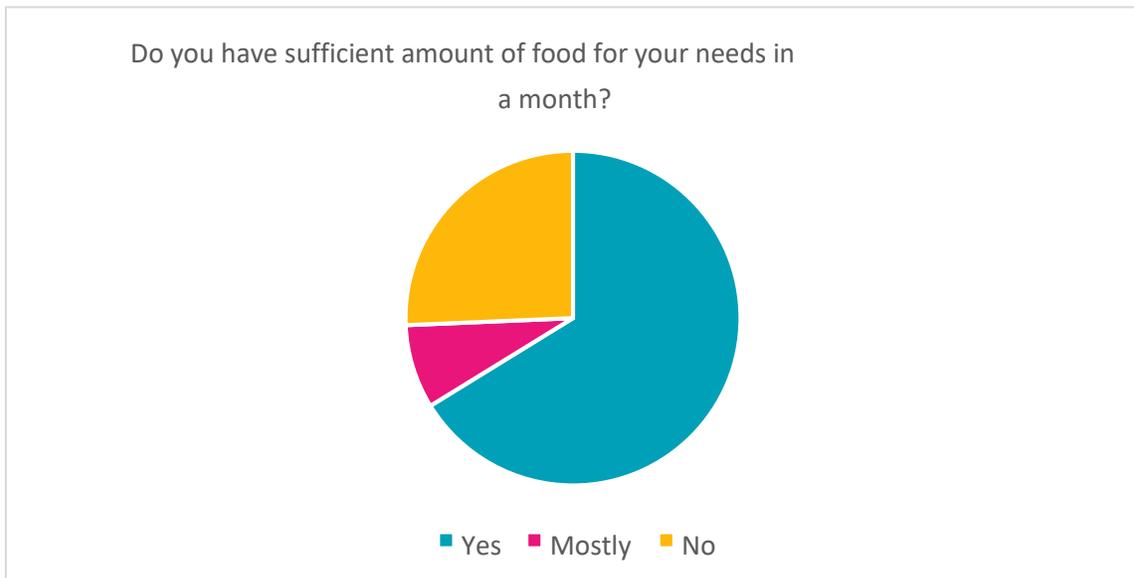


Chart 8

About 15% of people don't have safe or available storage in their home for food and a small percent of people, around 7% don't actually have a kitchen or the necessary items to cook with.

A large percentage of people said they would supplement their diets with fruits, veggies and dairy, if it was free. 88% of the people said they would like to. However, when were asked if they purchased the monthly fresh food baskets available in Gravenhurst, most people said they did not. 81% answering, did not purchase the basket. The reasons varied, and only a few people added a reason. Some said the baskets were too expensive, some said they didn't know about them, or they had a special diet and didn't find them diabetic friendly, and others mentioned that their kids didn't like them, or they forgot to order, and then it was too late.

When asked if they would use a food bank where people could attend more than once a month, but obtain less food, most said no they would not. Only 33% said yes, that they would use it. It seems that it is difficult

for some people to get out and go to places for a number of reasons. A few reasons mentioned were anxiety, lack of physical capability, fear of leaving their safe home, and unsafe sidewalks in the winter. Some said delivery would be beneficial.

Through the results of question 36, it would seem most people have a fairly well-balanced diet, because many said they ate from all food groups. However, this data might be deceiving, since the quantities are not listed, and one can get quite a number of food groups if one eats a can of hearty soup for dinner. I realized this, when someone added soup as another food group. Therefore, people could be saying they eat all the items from the food groups, which was the case, but their diet could still be lacking. People did say however, that they would like to eat more meat, vegetables, dairy, and fruit above grains when asked. They also mentioned that some items are difficult to obtain such as meat, fruits and vegetables, dairy and fish, and they would like to eat them more often, as seen in chart 9. Thirteen people said they do not purchase dairy products at all.

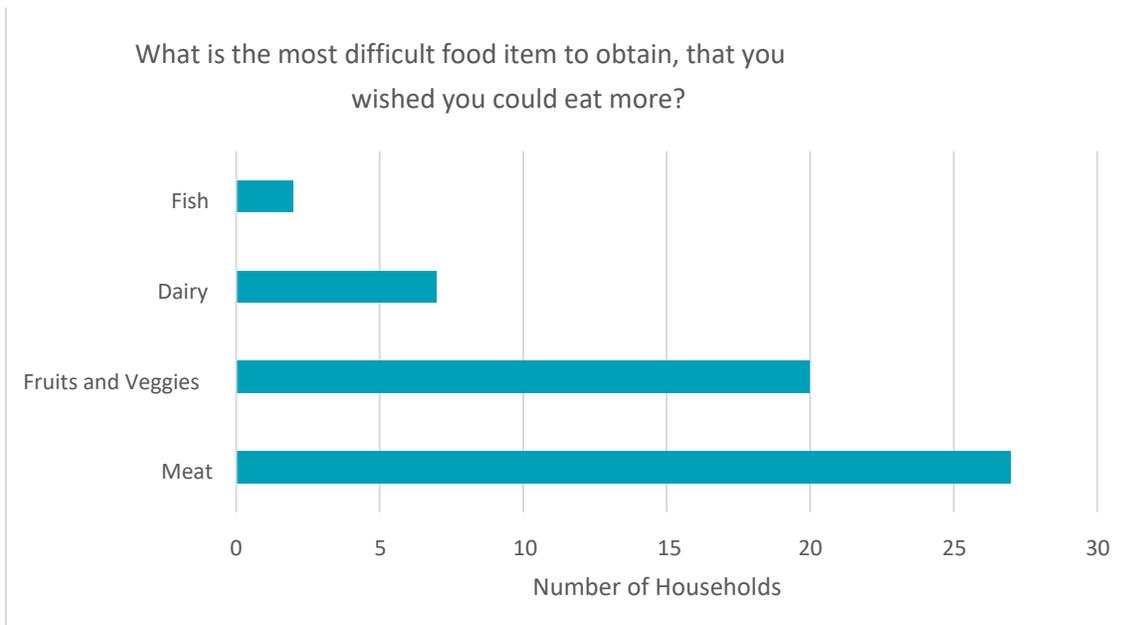


Chart 9

Most people, 95%, know how to cook, and over half would like to learn more about cooking in general, but 66% specified they would like to learn more about healthy affordable cooking.

A few people also said they would like another dinner program over a lunch program, but most people said either would be good.

OUR PARTICIPANTS:

TRANSPORATION AND MEDICAL INFORMATION:

Transportation is a big issue, 54% of the eighty people who answered the question said they had transportation when they needed it.

However, of the other 36 people only half have access to it sometimes, and half, not at all.

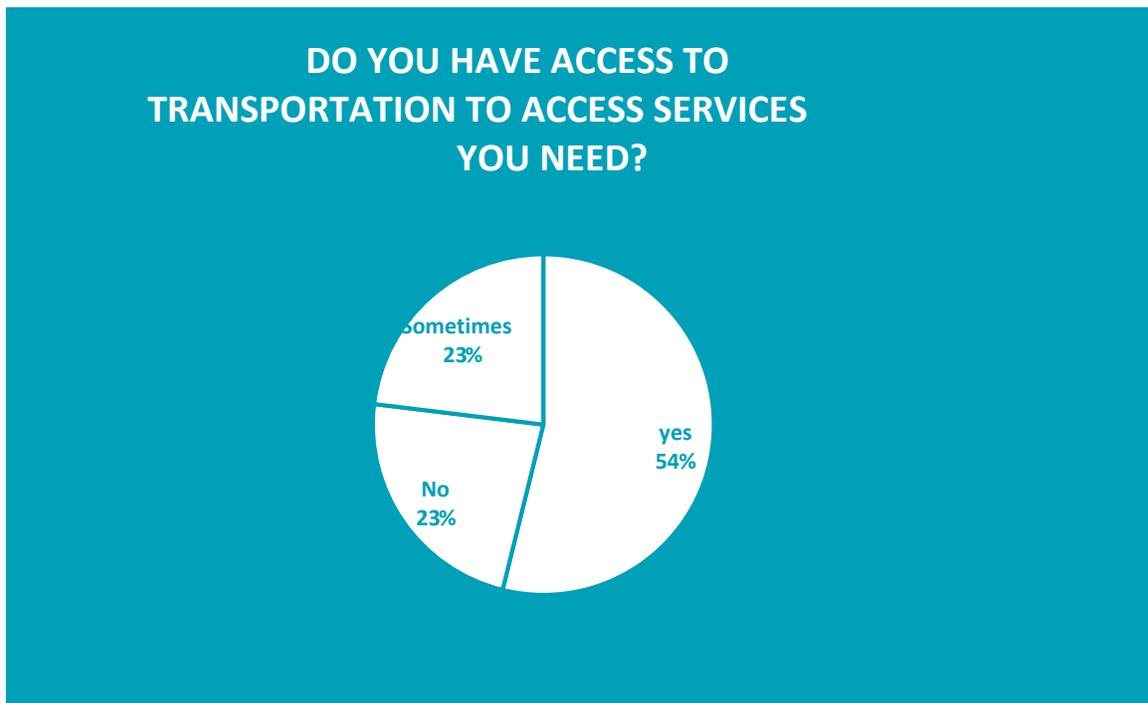


Chart 10

This is a problem for many reasons, not the least of which is the fact that 62% of our participants need to travel outside of Gravenhurst for regular medical care as seen in Chart 11.

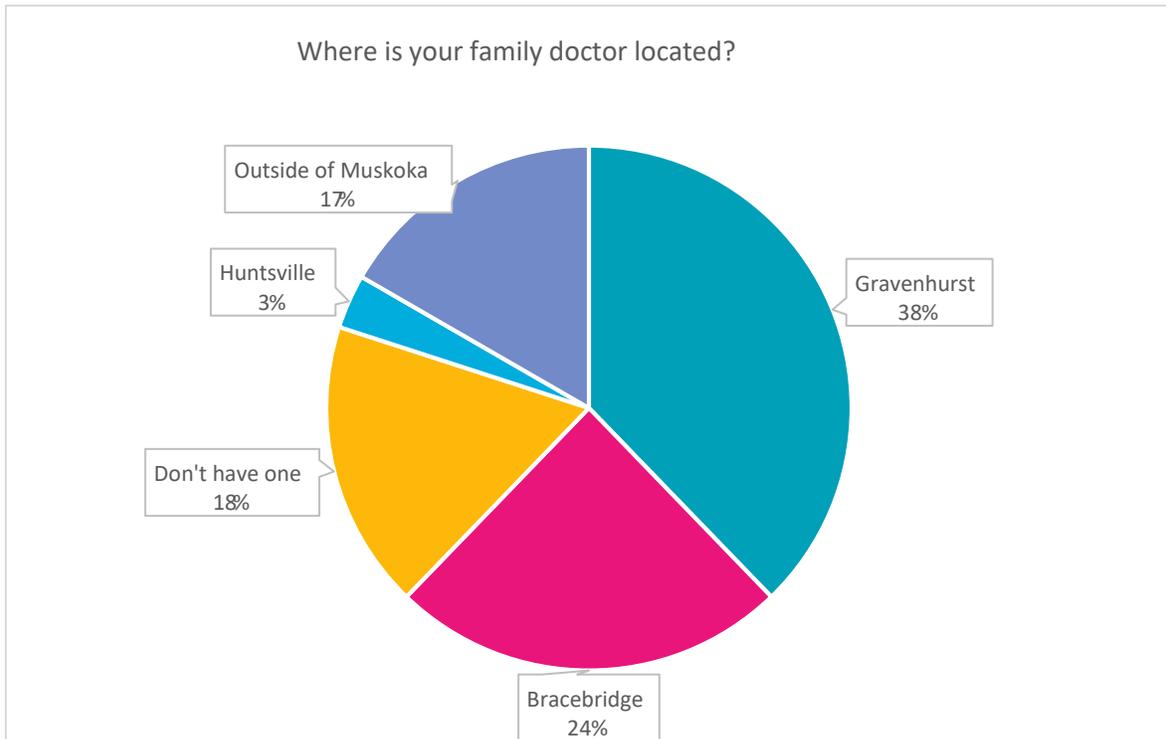


Chart 1

People also cannot access other dinners from other towns, or any activities outside of the range of walking distance from where they live. As we read earlier, even the Gravenhurst food bank is too far for some, and 53% go to Bracebridge to supplement their food options. Also, 74% of the respondents do not attend dinners outside of Gravenhurst, with the largest reason being, lack of transportation.

OTHER MEDICAL INFORMATION:

We asked participants to tell us where they go for non-emergency medical care, and the answers showed us that 54% go to their family

doctor, which as we seen above, is not always located in Gravenhurst. 42% of people travel outside Gravenhurst to other locations for nonemergency medical care. Of these thirty-nine people, twenty-seven go to a walk-in-clinic, nine go to an emergency department, and two go to Bala's nurse practitioner. Two call tele-health and two people choose to get no care if it is not an emergency.

Out of the sixty people who answered the question about regular dental check-ups, over half do not get them. This also includes seniors, though, who mentioned they don't have teeth, therefore, don't need this care. Sixty-six people answered the question about regular eye check-ups, and over half said they did get them.

WHAT THE INTERVIEWEES SAID ABOUT OUR YOUTH:

Only a few questions were focused on youth in this questionnaire, since a youth questionnaire will be done at a later date. 61% of the people answering the question, "Do teens have enough after school activities in Gravenhurst?", said no, they do not. Most people said there is nothing for them to do, one person's take was that they walk the streets. Then others said, they have the library, churches, basketball, track and field, scouts, YMCA, TeaBeards, skate park, hockey, dance, beaches, fishing, swimming. Many of these are free, but some need parents to sign them up, or have fees to be paid. Some ideas offered by people on this question were, they need shows, they need home economics, budgeting and skills training, cyber café, video café, and a safe place. Remember these suggestions are from people over 25, but many did grow up here, and all live here. People did ask about Youth at Heart, a previous youth program which ran out of the Opera House. This program grew into the YMCA's leadership program, which is said to be technically still running, but lacking participation. We, hope to obtain more ideas from the youth themselves in the future.

WHAT THE INTERVIEWEES SAID ABOUT SENIORS:

There was only one question directly related to the needs of seniors. We asked, “What is needed for seniors in this community, in your opinion?” We will begin by separating out how seniors (over 65) answered this question. Thirteen out of our twenty-four seniors replied to this question. The most suggestions and of almost equal importance to people were, better transportation, housing and need of a free social club, or community drop-in for cards etc. Though many voiced their concern with the lack of transportation in general, one person also added that people with disabilities have trouble getting around. A concern that lack of sufficient sidewalk cleaning in the winter was also a hindrance for some. For housing, requests were for a seniors-only housing, and especially low income, or geared-to income housing. Some other suggestions were, more exercise programs, information about programs, and personal home care for those who are unable to care for themselves, even temporarily. We mentioned previously, in the section of Gravenhurst community groups, that though exercise programs are available for seniors, we believe not many people know about them.

People under 65 years of age responded to this question as well, and some requests overlapped. Free social activities were the number one response in this group as well, with twelve people asking for this. Some suggestions were, groups with arts, bingo hall, health workshops, morning programs, exercises, card games, recreational games and crafts, and interaction with the younger generation. Help at home was the second largest request, with ten people requesting this. The requests for help ranged from snow shoveling to meals to be made, light housework and yard work, shopping, lunch deliveries, meals on wheels, and visitors. Transportation, and housing were tied in importance for third place. Transportation requests were for rides to appointments, transit bus, rides from institution to institution without having to call an ambulance, and also wheelchairs. Special housing

requests were for more safety, cameras in housing, and more affordable housing. A few other general requests were for, more money, a walk-in-clinic, care in general, dentures/teeth help, communication, more time in meals, and just to be listened to.

The suggestions above only come from the specific question about what seniors need in Gravenhurst. Other suggestions for senior's programs were made in later questions about general needs in Gravenhurst as well and are represented in the section called final suggestions by community members.

FINAL SUGGESTIONS BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Needs of our community

Based on residents who are living on a low-income:

The final answers from people who attend the free community groups offered in Gravenhurst, are gathered here. Three open-ended questions were asked as a final request for suggestions. These questions gave participants ample ability to suggest things for their community that they thought were lacking.

1. Everyone knows that Gravenhurst has issues with housing and transportation... what else do you think people need?
2. What kinds of groups would you like to see in Gravenhurst?
3. What kind of help do you think some people need but can't get in Muskoka?

The chart below shows the total top ten responses according to the residents who answered the above three questions on the questionnaire. Take into account that I have placed some things into groups, which have the word 'total' behind them, there are a number of items included in these totals, broken down later after the chart.

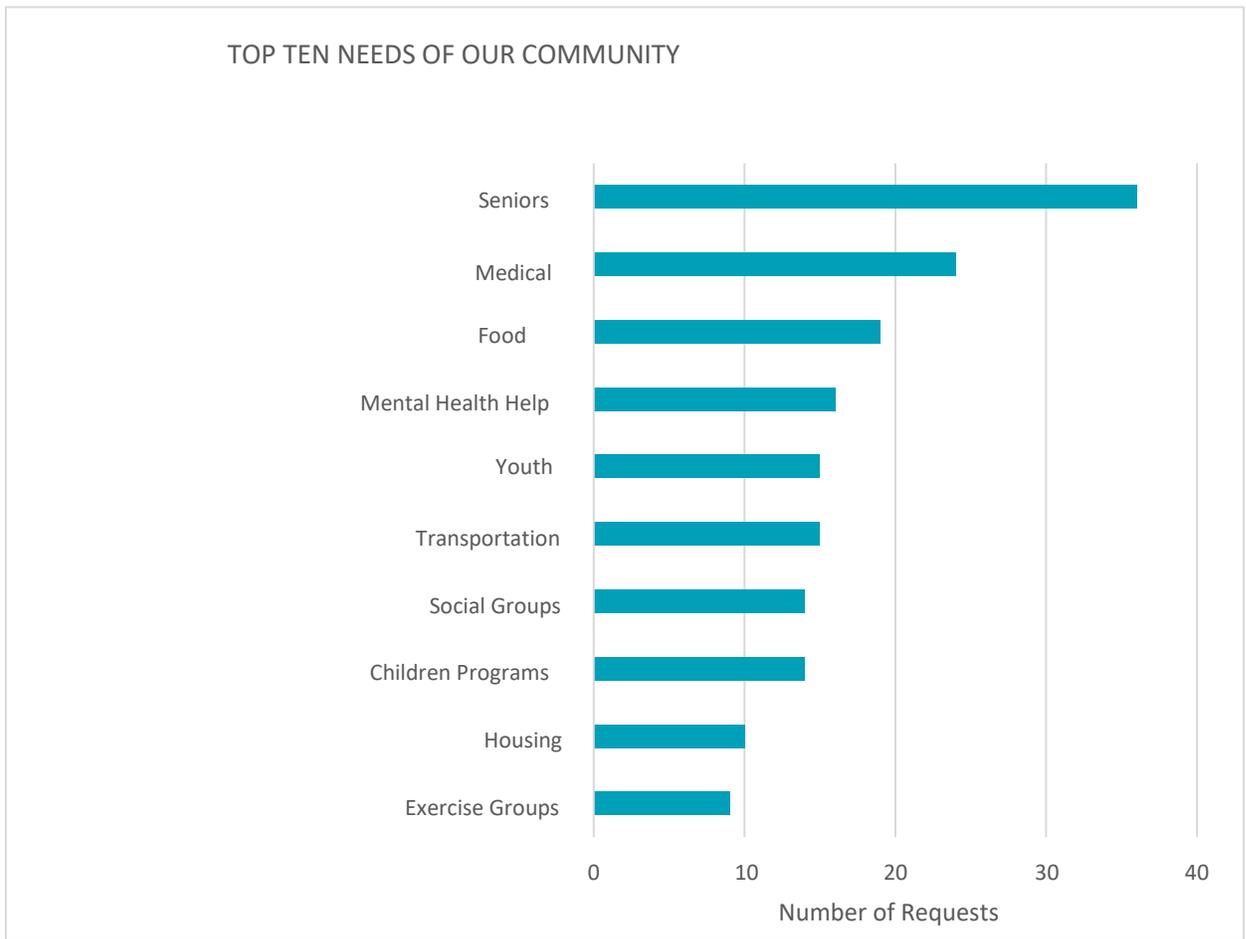


Chart 12

The top five categories in Chart 12, are totals. These totals represent all requests for particular items or groups pertaining to the specific category as outlined below.

Senior's Total includes:

- Twelve requests for crafts, sewing, quilting, knitting, gardening,
- Thirteen requests for senior transportation help,
- Eleven requests for help in their own home, such as cleaning snow removal or volunteers to help get them out for coffee.

This only includes transportation when it was specifically specified for seniors. All these requests total thirty-six requests as shown on the chart.

Our Medical Total includes:

- Fifteen requests for walk-in-clinics or nurse practitioners and
- Five other requests such as dental, eye and dialysis help.

The Food Total includes:

- Seven requests for fresh produce and hot meals,
- A few of each for food preparation help, low cost food stores, and food cards rather than actual food to be handed out.

Mental Health Help Total Includes:

- Six requests for addiction help or harm reduction help,
- Six requests for mental health help, therapy, or counselling,
- Four requests for spiritual help or elder's wisdom circles.

And finally, the **Youth Total includes:**

- Any request that mentioned youth. Most people wanted youth programs in general, bowling, movies, pool hall, or just things for youth to do, one person mentioned help for youth at risk.

The categories numbered 6-10, are transportation, social groups, children's programs, housing, and exercise groups. Though I ask specifically for needs other than transportation or housing, people still answered that Gravenhurst needs more of both. Fifteen people put **Transportation** down, suggesting local buses, better corridor 11 stops, and trips to the hospital or Walmart would be helpful. Ten people mentioned the need for more affordable **Housing**, or more rent

supplements. The **Children's Category** includes many different ideas from fourteen households such as, more free things to do with babies, parenting classes, music, post-partum groups, make and take food groups, before and after school groups, swimming groups and mom and tot groups. Fourteen people also asked for a **Social Group** stating people need a safe place to go. The **Exercise** category also has lots of ideas hidden in its number. Nine people asked for such things as exercise groups, yoga, tai chi, dancing, sports, games, pool and bingo.

Those are the top ten suggestions from the community. The other suggestions were as follows:

- Nine people wanted education, skill trades training, computer, or budgeting training
- Nine more wanted employment or factory jobs
- Seven people asked for short term emergency housing
- Four people wanted affordable entertainment or movies
- Three people each wanted, music, jamming sessions or a drop-in centre
- Two people each wanted, free light medical supplies such as band-aids, a hearing aid donation area, men's-only support groups and a need for sexual assault services to have an office here
- A final few last ideas were for tickets to outings, a petting zoo, chalkboards around town to draw on, bed bug protectors and prevention, and workshops on how to buy a phone.

The above are the ideas from our community who attend the free programs and are mostly living on a low-income around town. As a final note, from people who used to live in Bracebridge and now live in Gravenhurst, a couple mentioned that they find that Gravenhurst has fewer community events throughout the year, where people can go and be part of the larger group.

FINAL SUGGESTIONS BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Needs of our community based on residents who work with people living on a low-income.

The next chart, chart 13, shows the top ten ideas from people who work around town and are not living on a low-income.

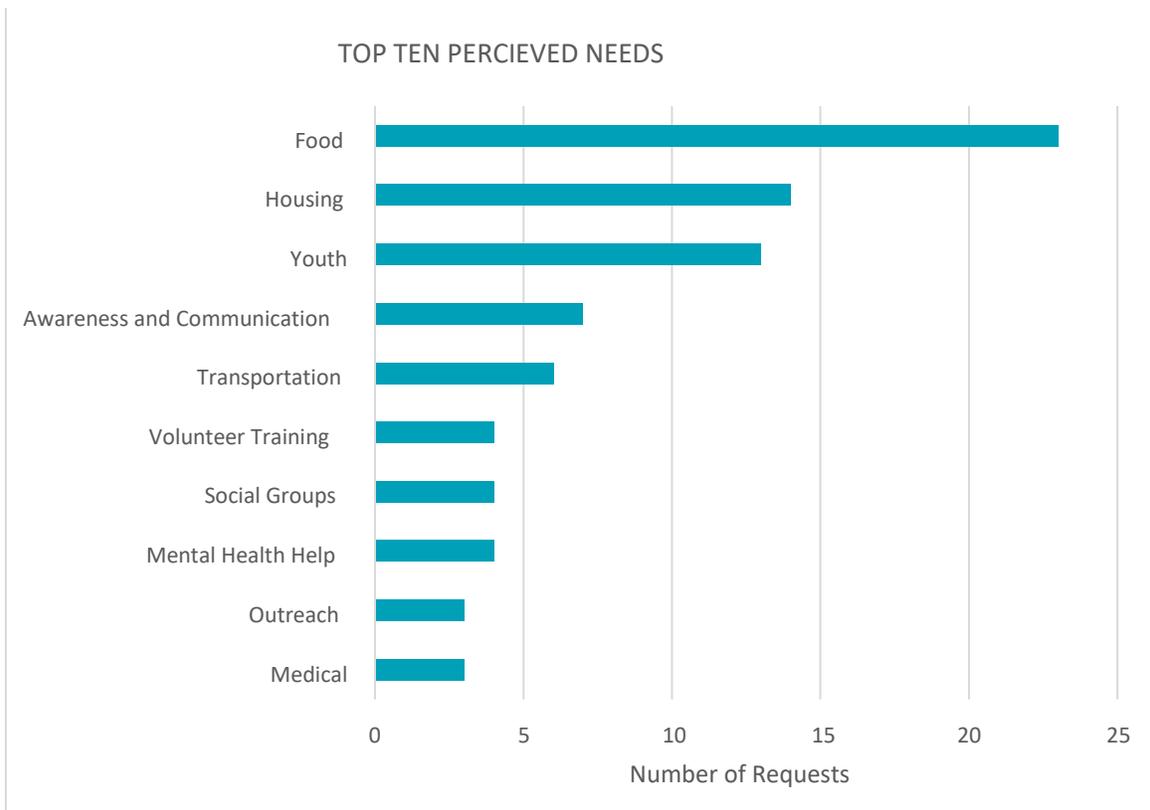


Chart 13

As I met with business owners, or leaders of groups, district workers, and others speaking about GAP, I asked people where they think the need is, for people living on a low-income in Gravenhurst. The above chart is fairly self-explanatory, but we will look at some the details of

the numbers above, and those ideas that didn't make the top ten, as we did with the chart formulated with suggestions from people who live on a low-income. I spoke to only around 50 people in this case and did not ask specific questions about groups such as seniors, or youth in this case, and not everyone had any specific suggestions, so their ideas are more varied.

Food includes:

- Eight people suggested a community kitchen, meal planning, shopping, life skills, cooking, budgeting, crock pot dinner
- Five wanted healthy fresh fruits, vegs, milk, supplement fresh food baskets for people, share vegetables from baskets
- Three people suggested pre-made frozen food for seniors and others
- Seven other ideas were offering cat food, baby formula, lunchtime help at schools, food gift cards instead of food, low cost food store, and trips to Walmart

Housing includes:

- Four people each suggested, increased rent or mortgage supplements, more short-term housing, and short-term emergency housing for youth
 - Two people said affordable housing
- Youth includes:**
- Thirteen requests for a youth drop in centre, safe place for youth, games, movies, video games, youth groups, cooking, sports, and budgeting.

Awareness and Communication includes:

- Seven people mentioned that communication within the town groups and services could be improved. People also mentioned that many people living here, do not recognize the problem Gravenhurst has with respect to poverty, and more advocacy is needed in this area.

Transportation includes:

- Six requests for transportation, including to get to programs and medical appointments, especially in the winter

Volunteer includes:

- People mentioned that volunteer training for programs should be mandatory, suggestions were Bridges out of Poverty, High Five training, any other beneficial training to help volunteers be compassionate with people attending programs.

Social Groups includes:

- Four people mentioned that we need a safe place for people to go, or free social groups.

Mental Health includes:

- Four people mentioned the need for meditation and more mental well-being, spiritual or addiction help

Outreach includes:

- Three people suggested having street outreach of some kind, perhaps with a van with blankets, coffee, safe people to talk to, similar to what they do in Toronto.

Medical includes:

- Three people suggesting we need dental or general medical care

Other ideas were:

- Training over the winter for cash registers, tourism, housekeeping, visits to factories
- Seniors help in the home, snow removal, volunteers to get them out for coffee
- Incentives for teens to finish high school, perhaps a gift certificate from local businesses
- Help with the other costs of College or University. Though tuition might be paid now, other costs are also involved.
- Men's only support such as shelter and clothing

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

People are beginning to recognize the need in Gravenhurst. While interviewing people, many mentioned that they work with people from all over Muskoka, however their largest caseload is in Gravenhurst. Things need and are beginning to change.

One thing I wanted to mention is that as I was writing this report, I noticed about twenty percent of our questioned population could be falling through the cracks. About 25% of our questioned population said they did not have sufficient food for the month. Over 20% have no access to transportation, and almost 20% have no family doctor. About 20% of our questioned population have no internet, and over 25% of our population questioned had no access to the District OW or ODSP programs. It is my hope that this report provides important feedback from Gravenhurst's low-income population, to be used to help improve the lives of Gravenhurst residents.

As noted in the objective, a summary of ways of moving forward will now be broken down into groups of seniors, medical care, mental health needs, youth, transportation, social programs, children's programs, and housing. Hope they are a helpful place to start.

Seniors:

Twenty-six percent of our questionnaire respondents were seniors, Though Gravenhurst has a large senior's centre, many lower-income seniors find the cost per game too onerous to forfeit each time. It seems seniors want to get out of the house to socialize, and some need help doing that. Winters can be more difficult due to the lack of local transportation and even then, slippery sidewalks hinder them from the ability to utilize it.

Solutions need to be found for safe places to have social activities, preferably with snacks and access to a ride if outside their homes.

Higher-needs elderly individuals should be considered as well, perhaps working with Friends of Muskoka, and the District of Muskoka's senior's programs. Meals on Wheels is available in most other towns, perhaps that is also an option for Gravenhurst.

Medical:

Only thirty-eight percent of the people questioned said they have a family doctor in Gravenhurst. Almost 20% have no family doctor at all. In 2010, the Ontario government wanted to address the issue of people not having a family doctor, and a patient-enrolment physician billing system was adopted. This allowed a 43% increase in Ontarians obtaining a doctor³, but as we see in our numbers, people are still not able to access the care they need, and some still have no doctor. According to a Cottage Country Health Team member, a Nurse Practitioner was hired to be available last year in Gravenhurst during the summer months on Saturdays, and it was not well attended. This year they don't have the funding for this. Therefore, a further discussion about possible walk-in clinic with a doctor, or nurse practitioner, is an option, with the funding. Preventive care is also an option, such as diabetic clinics, and foot care etc.

Food:

The need for access to more low cost healthy food on a regular basis is apparent from this report. Gravenhurst's fresh food basket program is currently being underutilized and could perhaps be part of the solution. Meat and dairy are also high-cost low-availability foods, to which people need more access. Perhaps a supplementary food bank specializing in these items is an option.

³ www.auditor.on.ca, 2016 Annual Report Volume I, Chapter 3.11

Most free meals and food are offered at the end of the week. Perhaps contemplating a food solution on a Monday or Wednesday will fill some of the gaps. These solutions could be free lunch or dinner programs, community kitchen teaching healthy affordable cooking, or a crock pot cook off.

Mental Health:

Working with Addictions Outreach, Canadian Mental Health Assoc., (CMHA) would be beneficial to see what kinds of programs can be offered to Gravenhurst residents. Possibly free mental health walk-in counselling, like is in other towns? If people are on Ontario Works, there is a Living in balance program, which works with people living with addictions. But for those not involved with the district, there are few options.

Preventive measures could be perhaps offering meditation, yoga or wisdom elder circle groups.

Youth:

It is clear youth need some more safe places to go. We hope to have youth input through a questionnaire currently being circulated around town. Anyone working with youth knows that they don't attend groups very often, unless specifically geared to them. Therefore, it is important also to have some youth leaders on board to begin this journey. Looking at a past successful programs, such as Youth at Heart would be beneficial. This program had food as well as games etc.

Transportation:

If our requests for senior's transportation were added to the other general transportation requests, transportation needs would have ranked second on the Chart 12, top ten needs of our community.

The town of Gravenhurst recently had a trial run for a local bus which ran for six months. They have decided, because of lack of ridership to cancel this bus. Perhaps looking at how other towns make their bus successful, and advocating again, could be beneficial. Also, looking at feasible alternatives, such as volunteer drivers, or purchasing a van could help. Weekly trips to low cost food stores, or free food programs, or medical appointments, are especially needed.

Social Programs:

This overlaps with most other categories. Each age group is really in need of safe places to go for free, except for women, who have a daily centre.

We could work toward having social programs with healthy food for seniors, youth, children and men. We could also aid currently running social programs, such as the women's centre, and/or great beginnings, with a food component without much effort.

More options are needed, however for all but women at this point.

Children's Programs:

The two biggest issues for children or families seems to be the need for more free programming, with food, for lower income families, and more before and after school care. Perhaps looking into a cooking class, where parents bring home food, or having an apprenticeship for opening child care in their own homes may be an option as well.

Housing:

Affordable housing is needed in many locations around Muskoka. Gravenhurst council would have to be involved with any possibility of increasing the number of units available in the town. The district does

offer down payment help, so the possibility of helping people stay in their homes, by having mortgage supplements, may be something to look at. Rental subsidies are great, but the issue is lack of available rental units, unfortunately. Looking at incentives for people to rent rooms, or apartments in their home could also be an option.

CONCLUSIONS:

There is much to be done, but this report as well as others, are shining a light on the long-overlooked issues Gravenhurst residents are facing. Some matters are being addressed as this report is being written. The most important thing to remember is to continue to collaborate with currently running programs and communicate as much as possible with each group at the table.

As businesses, the town, the district, and individual residents of Gravenhurst come together, great things are bound to happen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. [www.12statcan.gc.ca](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca), census profile 2016, Gravenhurst vs Ontario, low income households.
2. [http://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/determinants-ofhealth/socioeconomic-characteristics/income/low-income-measure\(lim\)](http://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/determinants-ofhealth/socioeconomic-characteristics/income/low-income-measure(lim))
3. www.ywcamuskoka.com/helpfu-links GBA, Gravenhurst, 2013.
4. www.auditor.on.ca, 2016 Annual Report Volume I, Chapter 3.11.

APPENDIX A

G.A.P. CONTACTS

1. AETC Gravenhurst
2. Anglican Church
3. Big Brothers Big Sisters
4. Career Discovery
5. CAS and OW Case worker
6. Catholic Women's League
7. Community Health Unit
8. Curries music
9. District Economic Development
10. District Homelessness
11. Employment North
12. Free stuff for daily needs
13. Fresh food Baskets
14. Gateway
15. Gravenhurst High School
16. Gravenhurst Public Library
17. Gravenhurst Public School
18. Great Beginnings
19. Hope Chest
20. Impact Café
21. K.P. Manson P.S.
22. Learning for Living
23. Legion
24. Lion's club
25. Manna Food bank
26. Men's Christian Fellowship Breakfast
27. Metis Nation
28. Morley and Associates
29. Muskoka Community Connections
30. Nest Gravenhurst
31. ODSP
32. OPP
33. OW, Manager of Programs
34. OW. Youth Supports and services
35. Probation
36. Probus Club
37. Prompt
38. Rebecca's Home Care Loan Closet
39. Rotary Club
40. Ryde Co-op
41. S.A. men's group leader
42. Salvation Army Food Bank
43. Scouting
44. St Vincent de Paul
45. Supper Club
46. Tea Beards
47. West Muskoka Food bank
48. Women's centre
49. YMCA
50. YWCA Getting Ahead Graduate
51. YWCA, Executive Director

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APPENDIX B (2 PAGES)		GRAVENHURST RESIDENTS - HELP US FIND THE GAPS IN GRAVENHURST'S COMMUNITY SERVICES						
This questionnaire is to see what Gravenhurst has and needs more of.		DO NOT ADD YOUR NAME						
This is only for our use to get ideas of what kinds of programs might benefit Gravenhurst residents in the future.		(circle your answers)						
1	What age group are you?	0-16	17-25	26-35	36-50	51-65	65-75	76+
2	What programs in Gravenhurst do you go to now?	_____						
3	What do you like most about these programs?	food	social	other _____				
4	How do you find out about things going on in Gravenhurst?	bulletin boards	paper	Facebook	twitter	website	other _____	
5	Do you attend programs offered by	ODSP?	OW?	no? why not? _____				
6	Do you use social media?	Facebook	twitter	instagram	snapchat			
7	Where do you access the internet?	home	OW office	Library	Employment north		other _____	
8	Do you buy the monthly fresh food baskets available in Gravenhurst?	yes	sometimes	no	why not? _____			
9	Do you go to the food bank?	yes	no	why not? _____				
10	Circle all you attend.	Manna food bank (Bracebridge)		S. A. food bank (Gravenhurst)		Glen Orchard		
11	you go to other places, why do you go to more than one food bank?	_____						
	How often to you access the food banks?	every month	twice a year	only at Christmas	seldom	other _____		
12	Do you have sufficient amount of food for your needs in a month?	yes	no I need _____					
13	Do you have enough safe storage for extra food?	yes	no	comment _____				
14	Would it help you to be able to access a foodbank more often but get less food each time?			no	yes	comment _____		
15	Would you supplement your food with fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy if free?			no	yes			
16	Do you know about Friday free lunches, and Impact Café?.	yes	no					
17	How many people in your household?	1	2	3	4	4+		
	How many are children?	_____		How many seniors? _____				
	How many pets?	cats # _____		dogs # _____		other _____		
18	Do you have access to transportation to access services you need?	no	yes	all the time	sometimes			
19	Do you have access to a kitchen?	yes	no	all the time	sometimes			
20	Do you have necessary items in the kitchen to cook with?	yes	no - I need -	microwave	pots and pans	stove	hot plate	other _____
21	Do you know about (the Bukers') Free Stuff 4 Daily Needs?	yes	no					
22	What is the most difficult food item to obtain, that you wished you could eat more?	_____						
23	Do you purchase milk? Yogurt? Dairy products?			no	yes			

24	Do you know how to cook?		no	yes																
25	Would you be interested in learning more about cooking?		no	yes																
26	Would you be interested in learning more about healthy affordable cooking?		no	yes																
27	Would you use a place if it was open for you to come at dinner/lunch for you to cook?		yes	no																
28	If there was another dinner or lunch held somewhere... what would you prefer?		lunch	dinner	either															
29	Do you attend other community dinners in other towns?	yes	no	if no, why not? _____																
30	What is needed for seniors in this community in your opinion?	_____																		
31	Do teens have enough after school activities in Gravenhurst?		yes	no	Comment _____															
32	What are some that you know of?	_____																		
33	Do you know about the YMCA's subsidised memberships?		yes	no																
34	Do you volunteer?		yes	no	if yes, how? _____															
35	Would you like to volunteer?		yes	no	if yes, how? _____															
36	Which food group do you eat the MOST ?	DAIRY	MEAT	FRUITS	VEGS	GRAINS														
37	Which would you LIKE TO HAVE MORE OF ?	DAIRY	MEAT	FRUITS	VEGS	GRAINS														
38	When you need non-emergency medical help where do you go?	Family Dr.	Emerg	Tele-health	walk-in clinic	Nurse Practitioner	Bala	other												
39	Where is your family doctor located?	Gravenhurst	Bracebridge	Don't have one		Other	_____													
40	Do you get regular dental check ups?	yes	no	where? _____																
	Do you get regular eye check ups?	yes	no																	
40	Everyone knows Gravenhurst has issues with housing and transportation,																			
	What else do you think people need?	_____																		
41	What kinds of groups would you like to see in Gravenhurst?	_____																		
42	What kind of help do you think some people need but can't get in Gravenhurst?	_____																		
	Are you able to meet for coffee (my treat) and talk to me about your experience living in Gravenhurst? - if so - please tell me! 705-641-2225 - thx Marlene!																			

APPENDIX C

FREE Gravenhurst Programs for Adults

Men only
 Women only
 Friday

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-12pm	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.
12-4pm		OW / ODSP Men's drop in food -lunch 12-3pm OW office		Salvation Army - Men's drop-in food - lunch 12-3pm Feb-May, Sept-Nov	
5-7pm					

Assaulted Women's hotline 1-866-863-0511
 YWCA subsidized memberships, walk in and ask.

APPENDIX C

FREE Gravenhurst Programs for Adults

Men only

Women only

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-12pm	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.	Women's Centre Drop In 10-3pm 270 Muskoka Rd S.
12-4pm		OW / ODSP Men's drop in food -lunch 12-3pm OW office		Salvation Army - Men's drop-in food - lunch 12-3pm Feb-May, Sept-Nov	
5-7pm					

Assaulted Women's hotline 1-866-863-0511

YWCA subsidized memberships, walk in and ask.

APPENDIX D

Gravenhurst Programs for Youth

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-12pm	Employment North 8:30-4:30pm	Employment North 8:30-5pm	Employment North 8:30-5pm	Employment North 8:30-5pm	Employment North 8:30-5pm
	2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet *	2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet *	2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet *	2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet *	2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet *
12-4pm			Library workshops - Youth 3:30 for ages 13-18		YMCA Youth night-winter-time
5-7pm	Youth Choir - 6pm Trinity United Church Scouts Canada Ventures 14-18/yrs Scout's Hall 6:30-8:30 www.scouts.ca	Chess - TeaBeards 7pm	Games @ TeaBeards 7-pm	TeaBeards - 7pm Movies in Gull lake park	Youth Gym Night 5-9:30 Free gym/facility use and games Youth leadership night at YMCA** in July/Aug

* Youth Job connection - under 30 get paid to work on resume,

WHMIS and health and safety certificates - Employment North- Michelle - 705-687-6350 ** Formerly Youth at Heart

Other programs

YMCA day passes- 0-17yrs - \$5 18-29yrs - \$7 - I.D. needed if over 16 yrs.

Grad dresses /suits - The Supper Club

Mental Health hotline - 1-866-531-2600

Addictions Outreach - 1-800-668-1856

Employment North 10-3pm 2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet *

HANDS child and youth mental health hotline - 1-844-287-9072

Health unit needle exchange - 1-877-721-7520

Saturday

APPENDIX E

Gravenhurst Regular Programs Currently Providing Food

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9-12pm	Breakfast Club at schools EarlyON @ YMCA * 9:30-3pm - Soup Day parent & child under 6/yr	Breakfast Club at schools	Breakfast Club at schools	Breakfast Club at schools	Breakfast Club at schools	
12-4pm		OW / ODSP Men's drop in** food -lunch 12-3pm OW office		Salvation Army - Men's drop-in** food - lunch 12-3pm Feb-May, Sept-Nov Salvation Army BBQ *** June - August 12 noon	Impact Café 11:30-2:30 141 Main Street	
		S.A. Food Bank 1-4:30 620 Muskoka Road N		S.A. Food Bank 1-4:30 620 Muskoka Road N	S.A. Food Bank 1-4:30 620 Muskoka Road N	
5-7pm				Supper Club - 6pm Trinity United, 290 Muskoka Road N EarlyON @ YMCA * 5-7pm - Dinner Program parent & child under 6/yr	WISE Senior's Drop-in Event**** 1st Friday of each month (not Aug) Ryde Co-Op 12:30-2:30pm	

* must have a child under 6 years to attend and should register before attending.

** Men Only and Tuesday's only men on OW or ODSP

*** Summer months only

**** once a month only

St Vincent de Paul - focuses on food security...will shop with people once every 4 months.

APPENDIX F

Gravenhurst Programs for Families with Children

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-12pm	<p>EarlyON @ YMCA 9:30-3pm - Soup Day parent & child under 6/yr</p>	<p>EarlyON @ YMCA 9:30-3pm - Baby Talk parent & child under 6/yr</p> <p>Growing Up program 10-12pm St. James Anglican Church Great Beginnings</p>	<p>EarlyON @ The Nest 9:30-12pm parent & child under 6/yr</p>	<p>EarlyON @ YMCA 9:30-3pm - Baby Talk parent & child under 6/yr</p> <p>Muskoka Family Focus April 26th-May 31st 0-1 yr "Make the Connection" Meeting Room -Centennial Centre</p>	<p>The Nest 10-5pm Family Supports Affordable baby supplies 405 Muskoka Rd. South</p>
12-4pm		<p>Parental Nutrition 1-3pm St James Anglican Church Great Beginnings</p> <p>The Nest 10-5pm Family Supports Affordable baby supplies 405 Muskoka Rd. South</p>		<p>The Nest 10-7pm Family Supports Affordable baby supplies 405 Muskoka Rd. South</p> <p>EarlyON @ YMCA 5-7pm - Dinner Program parent & child under 6/yr</p>	
5-7pm	<p>Muskoka Youth Choir 6-6:45pm ages 5-12yrs. Trinity United Church 705-687-2542</p>	<p>Cubs - 8-10 yrs 6:30-8:30 scouts hall www.scouts.ca</p>		<p>Beavers 5yrs -7 /yrs 6pm scouts hall Scouts - 10yrs-14/yrs 7pm scouts hall www.scouts.ca Movies in Gull lake park in July/Aug * must have a child under 6 years to attend and should</p>	

register for dinner and soup day before attending.

YWCA subsidized family memberships, walk in and ask.

Brenda Boothby -705-645-2412x467 Children's Services community facilitator - Muskoka Community Services for possible baby needs not supplied by The Nest.

Muskoka Family Focus - occasional parenting groups.

APPENDIX G

Other Gravenhurst Programs - NO FOOD

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	LIBRARY OPEN 10-5PM	LIBRARY OPEN 10-8PM	LIBRARY OPEN 10-8PM	LIBRARY OPEN 10-8PM	LIBRARY OPEN 10-5PM
9-12pm		Salvation Army Family Services 9-12 pm	Senior (+55) Gentle Exercise Granite Ridge- 10:30am 1097 Bethune Rd South	Salvation Army Family Services 9-12 pm	S. A. Family Services 9-12 pm
		Senior (+55) Gentle exercise Gravenhurst Manor - 9am 300 Muskoka Rd North	Hope Chest free clothing Anglican Church 9:30-12:30	Hope Chest free clothing Anglican Church 9:30-12:30	
	Employment North 8:30-4:30pm 2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet	Senior (+55) Gentle exercise Granite Ridge- 10:30am 1097 Bethune Rd South	Employment North 8:30-5pm 2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet	Senior (+55) Gentle exercise Granite Ridge- 10:30am 1097 Bethune Rd South	Employment North 8:30-5pm 2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet
12-4pm	Senior (+55) Gentle exercise Gravenhurst Manor - 1pm 300 Muskoka Rd North	W.I.S.E. Clubhouse. (55+) Severn Bridge Community Hall 10-12pm, 2nd and 4th Tuesday workshops/wellness/activities	Senior (+55) Gentle exercise Gravenhurst Manor - 1:15pm 300 Muskoka Rd North	Employment North 8:30-5pm 2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet	
	Senior (+55) Gentle exercise Granite Ridge- 2:30pm 1097 Bethune Rd South	Employment North 8:30-5pm 2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet			
5-7pm			Craft night - knitting etc. 1st and 3rd Wed each month Gravenhurst Library - 6pm		

Senior Gentle exercise - 705-787-1996 - register 1st time you go. Free to drop in. May need to buy a \$2 band...but only one time. Open all year.

Library open all day - internet free for everyone, no library card required. Adult programs held throughout the month....check website or visit.

Sarah Sharp 705-681-0673, for programs for metis people. Also offers programs for non-metis.

Rebecca's home care loan cupboard - Jennette Cook 705-687-3169, or Olive 705-687-3768

Legal Clinic - @ The Nest - call 705-645-6607

Farley Foundation for emergency pet help

Dental needs - 1-866-721-7520 Tele Health 1-866-797-0000

Learning for Living (literacy programs) 705-687-9323 - 690 Muskoka Road South- Unit 2

Check out Ryde Co-op if you have transportation...lots of great programs - \$10/ year membership fee. But some programs available to everyone. The Bukers - Free Stuff 4 daily needs - community services book

Call 211 Community hotline for any request

Saturday **Sunday** LIBRARY OPEN 10-3PM Employment North 10-3pm 2-410 Muskoka Rd. S. job help/internet