

?Plan to Save? challenge aims to reduce food waste in DC

By Mike Baker

Four local ?community champions? have shared details about a successful eight-week ?Plan to Save' challenge initiated by the County of Dufferin.

Orangeville Coun. Lisa Post was joined by Phil Dewar, who previously operated the popular restaurant Soulyve on Mill St., Tina Thorpe and Sara Wicks in completing the challenge, which included activities such as measuring edible and inedible food waste, and uncovering the costs of throwing away edible food. Participants were also asked to plan meals using leftovers and understand the difference between best before and expiry dates.

The quartet engaged in weekly challenges and shared their progress with the public through online video updates. The project itself was organized by Dufferin Waste and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health to address issues of food waste in Dufferin County.

?Participating in the challenge really helped me understand my food waste habits,? said Coun. Post. ?An activity that motivated me to keep going was the very first challenge, where I measured my edible and inedible food waste. I was throwing away about 30 percent of my groceries that could have been eaten. I decided to decrease that amount, and this challenge helped me do that.?

She added, ?I highly recommend this activity to anyone wanting to actively reduce food waste.?

Various resources were provided to participants to assist them in completing the activities. Each of them received a ?Plan to Save' kit, which included a variety of educational materials. A refrigerator infographic helped explain how food should be stored in the fridge and crisper drawers, while a produce storage guide helped uncover how specific fruits and vegetables can be preserved through proper storage in the fridge and pantry.

One of the tasks carried out by the participants centred around tracking the types of food they were wasting. The majority edible food waste is made up of fruits and vegetables.

According to the County, the Plan to Save campaign not only aimed to help residents reduce food waste, but also encourages healthier lifestyles by pushing participants to consume nutritious foods instead of throwing them away.

?As a father and a community organizer, I believe it's important to encourage healthy eating,? Mr. Dewar said. ?Nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables are better on our plates than in the green bin. We can reduce food waste by being more mindful of what we're throwing away and learning how to preserve the food we buy.?

Although the challenge is now over, residents can continue their efforts to reduce waste by visiting joinindufferin.com/plan-to-save-reduce-food-waste, for resources, including the ?Plan to Save' kits, weekly challenges and informational videos about food waste. For more information about the food waste campaign ongoing in Dufferin County, contact Dufferin Waste at 519-941-2816 ext. 2620, or WDGPH at 1-800-265-7293.