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Food and sustenance."*



If kindness is food for the soul than Helen Weber is good for body and soul. Helen always enjoyed making food for others. Today you could call her a 'foodie' but Helen scoffs at the word. "A foodie?" Helen exclaims with a throaty chuckle, *"Food is just practical if you know what I mean. It fills you up. If someone makes it for you it fills your belly and it fills your heart too. It's not fancy but it's important."*

Helen Weber has lived in Preston, Ontario for all but a few months of her 70 years. Her roots in the community run deep. The Pautler Center is named after her great uncle. The Centre is also where Helen worked as a Senior Cook for most of her career. Helen loves her community but she isn't blind to its problems.

Upon retirement a couple of years ago Helen looked around 'for something to do'. She remembered Langs staff coming to the Pautler Center to buy some of her lunches. *"I just fell in love with the people who worked at Langs. They were warm, they were loving and they were grateful. And all that they do for the people over there. I just wanted to help them."* Once volunteering Helen was quickly put to work with the Breakfast Club. She also helps to plan and run the holiday dinner and the summer carnival. She has difficulty putting into words how it makes her feel to help out.

"I love to see their faces, people enjoying it, being happy. I think if a kid or a person is full they can think better, they act different, wouldn't you agree on that?"

In breakfast club Helen looks at the faces of the children she is feeding knowing that for some, this may be the only meal they get all day. During the Summer Picnic feeding a family a simple, healthy meal for only \$5's can only be described as 'so satisfying'. Helping to make the Holiday Dinner a reality is very special for Helen, *"it creates a time to celebrate, break bread and be with the others."*

"There's a lot of people out there that use this facility. If they run out of food they have access to food. I've never seen anything like that. It's so hard for me to realize that kids actually go hungry. People in our community actually go hungry" Helen says incredulously, *"that's not ok."* Volunteering with Langs has allowed Helen to get as much as she gives. She says she feels 'useful', she's making a difference and that has helped with her own confidence and self-esteem.

"It's a fundamental, building block for life. Food and sustenance. You gotta meet this need first whether it's eating right, or making your own food, or just getting food. You have to start there if you're gonna help people."