



Youth Take Action: Food Banks and Fundraising

For most university students, September means buying textbooks, figuring out class schedules, and finding their way around campus. But some of these students may also find their way to a food bank.

Since 2005, North York Harvest has partnered with Food 4 Thought, a food bank at York University that provides nourishing options for students struggling to get enough to eat. While it's a popular myth that students eat poorly, it can go much deeper than the 'freshman fifteen.' Campus food banks instead speak to the issues of student debt and the rising cost of living.

Niraj Maharaj is part of the York Federation of Students, the group running Food 4 Thought. He explains: "Students move on average every six months. This limits access to community service agencies and government support programs besides OSAP – which in reality does not meet the cost of living in Toronto. This, coupled with the difficulty of finding suitable employment in the city, puts students in the precarious position of having to rely on food banks to meet their basic needs."

At Food 4 Thought, students provide their student number, receive a membership card, and can then access the service once per week. Maharaj explains that the program is available to all enrolled at York University and serves a demographic "reflective of the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the City."

Over the last number of years, food banks have become a fixture on campuses across Canada. Niraj says the number of visitors at the York location continues to grow as well, with nearly 300 students coming through their doors in both May and June this year.

Another group of students at York is also concerned about rising food bank use, but from a slightly different angle. This summer, a sociology class taught by Professor Peter Dawson elected to partner with North York Harvest for their class project.

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— Amanda, York University student

"We agreed as a class that hunger was one of the basic concerns that need to be addressed before a person can dream of accomplishing anything else," explains Edith, one of the students. Her classmate Amanda adds: "In order to help with

social change and to impact society, we need to start in our own backyard."

With this vision, the students embarked on a fundraising and awareness campaign that included a bake sale,



organic produce donations, volunteering at the food bank's community garden, and representing North York Harvest at summer events.

Students also took on individual challenges, with one young woman running food drives at the schools where she works, and many others asking family, friends, and workplaces for pledges.

During the final class presentations, students explained that this hands-on activism made a big difference in their own lives. It opened their eyes to the issues as well as the possibility for change. One student stated it succinctly:

"We cannot change the world if we don't first change ourselves. People who spend a few hours participating in one of the many food bank initiatives will experience things they did not think possible, and may feel inclined to think differently and act more positively."

By the Numbers

235 average monthly visits to the Food 4 Thought campus food bank

1,900 lbs average amount of food distributed through Food 4 Thought each month

75% portion of this food that is provided by North York Harvest

11,000 lbs amount of organic fresh food donations that Professor Dawson's students secured for North York Harvest this summer

\$1,227 donations raised by Professor Dawson's students this summer

STWM: A Race for Food and Funds!

The annual Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon is a fun and active way for the whole family to support North York Harvest. On October 14, 2012, individuals and teams can run or walk in the 5km, half marathon, or full marathon. Weaving through vibrant communities in Toronto, take in the scenery while getting a workout for a good cause. Last year, we raised \$35,000. This year, our goal is to secure at least 50 participants and \$50,000, which will help us to provide dignified food assistance – a need which continues to be on the rise.

Registration closes as soon as the roster is full, so sign up soon! You can

also volunteer with North York Harvest leading up to the event, on the day of the event, and even after race day. We welcome you to be part of our cheering squad at the finish line!

You can also donate funds to those lacing up to make a difference. We've posted our team captain profiles on our website, so feel free to browse and choose your winning team: www.northyorkharvest.com/stwm.

We look forward to seeing you there and making this year's race the best one yet!

For more information or assistance, please contact Tanya Thomas at 416-635-7771 ext. 59 or tanya@northyorkharvest.com.

Introducing TangoTab

This fall, North York Harvest will embark on a delicious new partnership. TangoTab is a free service that offers deals at restaurants in the GTA and donates directly to North York Harvest each time you dine out. "When you eat, they eat" is TangoTab's slogan, and they have already provided almost 100,000 meals to people in need. Win a \$100 Visa Gift Card just by signing up at <http://sweepstakes.tangotab.com/nyh> and watch for the official launch over the next few weeks.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

"We hope that everyone enjoys a safe and happy Thanksgiving and encourage our community to ensure that everyone facing various insecurities finds support this holiday."

– Niraj Maharaj, Food 4 Thought program, York University

Thanks for a Bountiful Season

This summer, fresh food donations contributed to healthier, more nourishing food hampers and brought a smile to our clients' faces.

We appreciate our home-grown partnerships with: Forsythe Family Farms, Reesor Farm Market, Toronto Botanical

Garden, Whittamore's Farm, York University, and individual and community gardeners. A special shout-out goes to the PACT Grow to Learn program which donated bushels of veggies and provided a great volunteer experience for people visiting North York Harvest.

Our six community gardens flourished thanks to generous support from the RBC Foundation and the Home Depot Canada Foundation.



RBC Foundation



Donated produce from Reesor Farm Market

FALL FOOD DRIVE

SEPT. 13, 2012 - OCT. 12, 2012

Nutritious, non-perishable food such as whole grains, canned goods, cooking oils, rice, and baby food can be dropped off at donation bins at major supermarkets and fire halls – or drop by our office at 640 Lawrence Avenue West.

To give online, visit www.northyorkharvest.com.

To give by phone, call 416-635-7771.

To give by cheque, please mail to the address on the coupon below.



PACT Grow to Learn staff & volunteers



☒ **YES! I want to help people right here in my community!**
HERE IS MY CONTRIBUTION OF:

☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Please print your name and address clearly:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____

I prefer to receive newsletters electronically ☐ Yes ☐ No Email address: _____

Please mail your donation to 640 Lawrence Ave. West, Toronto, Ontario, M6A 1B1.

Privacy Statement: North York Harvest respects your privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. The information we collect is used to process donations, keep our donors informed about our activities, and ask for your support.



☐ I have enclosed my cheque payable to the North York Harvest Food Bank.

☐ I prefer to charge my donation to:
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____

Charitable registration no. 11906 2495 RR0001
All donations of \$20 or more are tax-creditable