

CONNECTIONS

SPRING • 2013



Building Healthy Communities through Food

It's only nine in the morning, but volunteers are already busy stocking the shelves at the Oriole Food Space. With a community food bank drop-in session set for the morning, a cooking workshop later in the day, and other food programs still to follow, this 500 sq.ft.-room will be bustling with activity all day long!

For more than a decade, residents of the Don Mills and Sheppard area have been fighting for food support programming in their community. The neighbourhood faces above average levels of unemployment and is home to a large concentration of low-income households. In the past, families in need of food support have been forced to travel long distances to reach their nearest food bank. And unaccustomed to the variety of produce in stores, many residents new to Canada find it a struggle to create familiar meals from home

The Oriole Food Space is a step that North York Harvest Food Bank has taken to address this growing, critical need for better-connected, more accessible food programs and services. Key to effective programming in the space is our partnership with Flemingdon Health Centre and Working Women's Community Centre.

Supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and other generous donors,

this initiative aims at bridging the food service gap evident in this northern Toronto community.

"We had one client who had been nervous about using the food bank, but returned to thank us for the respectful and friendly treatment he received. It is this form of dignified community space that we would like to make available to the community members through our various programs," says Kristin Wheatcroft, Manager of the Oriole Food Space.

With a wide variety of food and health-based programming running alongside the more traditional food hamper distribution, it is a strong example of how North York Harvest is re-imagining what a food bank can be.

On a typical day, volunteers and staff provide low-income families with food assistance. In no time, tables and chairs are rearranged and the community food bank drop-in space transforms into a community kitchen.

The area will then fill with a strong aroma of flavourful dishes that community members prepare.

"We all can cook, clean, eat and joke together," says an excited community kitchen participant and neighbourhood resident.

The week still has two more food bank drop-in sessions, an after-school kids' kitchen program, language-based and peer-led community kitchen programs, and a 'Good Food Box' pick up program – all taking place in this multipurpose space!

Many of these programs are geared towards equipping community members with skills in preparing affordable, healthy meals. For participants, such innovative programming offers new opportunities to learn, connect and grow while building stronger connections with their neighbours. All thanks to food.

...North York Harvest is re-imagining what a food bank can be.

The Oriole Food Space community advisory council plays an important role in promoting community food solutions. Comprised of a well-knit group of local service providers, residents and community organizations, this council empowers community members with a voice in the direction and programming of Oriole.

Through the Oriole Food Space, North York Harvest uses the power of food to bring people together across ethnic and economic lines to build a healthier, more food-friendly neighbourhood.



The Oriole Food Space, a multipurpose facility that supports community food programming in the Don Mills and Sheppard area, opened in February 2013



Participant at one of the Oriole Food Space's community kitchens

Volunteer Awarded Diamond Jubilee Medal



Richard Kennard proudly displaying his medal

For the past 19 years, Richard Kennard has been our “Master Food Sorter”! He is an exemplary volunteer who teaches by example not only the importance of giving back to the community but also the importance

of community engagement. We were very proud to help present him with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal that recognizes significant contributions of Canadians to their communities. Congratulations Richard!

Don't Forget!



It's Mother's Day on May 12th and Father's Day on June 16th. Are you looking for a meaningful to show how much you care? A donation to North York Harvest will help provide low-income members of our community with good, nourishing food.

Arrange a donation now and we will mail a lovely card to your Mom or Dad! Call Leslie at 416-635-7771 x33 or email leslie@northyorkharvest.com.

Exceptional Giving Award

In recognition of their 26 years of steadfast support, North York Harvest was proud to present CCL Industries Inc. with our 2013 Exceptional Giving Award at our Annual General Meeting earlier this year.

CCL has been an important part of the North York Harvest community since our very first days in northern Toronto, and their on-going support has been integral to our success. A big thank you to everyone at CCL Industries Inc.!



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Spring Food Drive



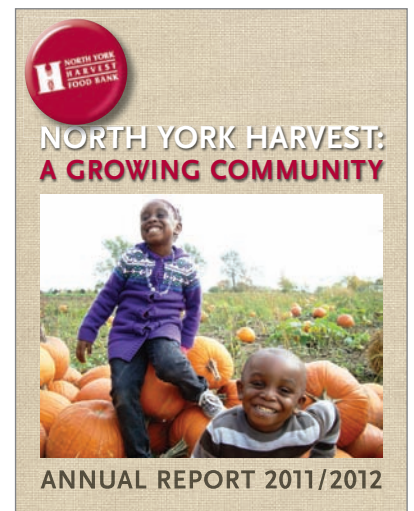
Thanks to the Microsoft Store in Yorkdale Mall for hosting our Spring Food Drive launch event

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this year's Spring Food Drive. Your time and effort will help thousands of people receive dignified food assistance through the long summer months when demand remains high, despite the seasonal dip in donations. And of course, North York Harvest welcomes your support all year long! You can always drop off nourishing food donations at your local fire hall and participating grocery stores or contribute financially by mail, phone, or online.

Visit www.northyorkharvest.com or call us at 416-635-7771 to donate today.

Hot off the press!

Be sure to download our latest Annual Report (2011/2012) from our website. Contact Leslie at 416-635-7771 x33 or email leslie@northyorkharvest.com for a print version.



YES! I want to help people right here in my community!
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