

NOV & DEC 2018



## CHOICE AT ANY SIZE

At North York Harvest, it is a key part of our mission to provide dignified food assistance to all of our clients. We always stress the importance of choice at a food bank, so that our clients feel good about using them.

Our Oriole Food Space is set up like a grocery store to give the feeling of supermarket shopping. Even our agencies with smaller spaces and capacity find ways to serve our community's diverse food needs; Delta Family Resource Centre offers a choice model "pop-up" food bank, despite not having a permanent space.

Regardless of the size of the food space, we believe people should have the right to choose the food that best meets their family's needs.

## FALL FOOD DRIVE WRAP UP

Since 2008, the demand for food banks has increased by 61% in the inner GTA suburbs. At North York Harvest we see this increase first-hand, every day, across our many food programs. People in our community grapple with the daily reality of being unable to put nutritious food on the table for themselves and their families.

With October drawing to a close, we are proud to announce that through our Fall Food Drive, many families and individuals in our community were able to enjoy their Thanksgiving without hunger. Running from September 16 to October 26, our Fall Food Drive supported more than 16,000 people in the North York area – people that rely on food from 77 community programs in the city.

Our Fall Food Drive brought in 227,465 pounds of food from corporate and individual donations. On behalf of our community, we cannot thank them enough for their generosity. We would also like to extend our sincerest gratitude to our wonderful team of volunteers, who gave so much of their time to help us sort all the food we received.

From the get-go, our Fall Food Drive was filled with spirit. We kicked things off at Ashbridges Bay on Sunday, September 23rd for the Global Energy Race. North York Harvest volunteers, staff, and their family and friends ran in the race to raise bread for our community. Two slices of bread were donated by Dempster's Bread for every km completed by a race runner. By the end of the race, our group raised close to 16,000 slices of bread!

Over the weekend of October 6 - 7, we held our annual Thanksgiving Family Food Sort to package food received from our Fall Food Drive. 68 of our volunteers took time out of their Thanksgiving weekend to sort 13,000 pounds of food, ensuring many families and individuals could meet their food needs over the holidays.

The food raised from our Fall Food Drive will allow us to deliver food to 77 community programs in northern Toronto, which includes shelters, schools, and health centres. We want to extend a huge round of applause to our incredible volunteers, donors, stakeholders, and staff for their ongoing efforts in making our Fall Food Drive goals a reality.

## REACH FOR A MILLION!

Our Winter Food Drive campaign runs from November 26 to January 11 and seeks to **raise a combined total of food and funds that equals a million!** This will help us provide meals and food to our community, as well as raise awareness and address the issue of food insecurity.

In addition, we have a public food sort scheduled for the weekends of **December 15 & 16 and December 22 & 23**. We encourage anyone who wishes to support families who rely on food banks to come out and participate in the sort.

If you would like to arrange your own food drive pick-up or run a community event in support please call Leslie at **416-635-7771 ext. 21**.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

**Become a donor** to help us provide immediate food assistance, education, and long-term food support.

**Sign up to volunteer** to support all of our community members.

**Visit our website to learn more!**



# GROWING OUR COMMUNITIES

PATRICIA DINARDO PROVES THAT IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Nothing pleases us more than to see members of our community take on leadership roles to help others meet their food needs. Patricia Dinardo, an 80-year-old lady from North York, has proven that it's never too late to make a difference.

Patricia started raising food for North York Harvest back in 2012. She independently organized her own food drive and got 125 units in her apartment building to participate. Patricia's first food drive collected 501lbs of food, and since then she has organized 12 more food drives over the years. This fall, Patricia collected and donated 720lbs of food; an incredible amount raised by any individual.

Even at 80-years-old, Patricia shows no signs of slowing down her generosity. Outside of her food drives, Patricia collects empty bottles and exchanges them for cash to buy food for those in need. She also supported the Indigenous community by donating hand-knitted scarves. We can't express our gratitude enough for Patricia's ongoing display of community leadership.

## UPDATE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome to the newly-revamped Connections. This bimonthly newsletter is one of our key tools to regularly share our initiatives and to give thanks to our stakeholders for our success.

The needs of our community are rapidly evolving due to changing demographics and social dynamics. In response, we have improved our ability to serve by maximizing resources and forming meaningful partnerships.

One of our recent partnerships is the Who's Hungry report, in collaboration with Daily Bread Food Bank. The report provides quantitative and qualitative data on the experience of hunger and poverty in Toronto. To address the root cause of food insecurity and enact change, we will continue to proactively work with community partners and all levels of government.

We are also in the midst of our holiday food and fund drive – *Reach for a Million!* Our goal is to raise a combined total of foods and funds that equal one million. Please lend your generous support so members of our community can enjoy this holiday season without hunger.

Ryan Noble,  
Executive Director  
North York Harvest Food Bank

## SORT & LEARN WORKSHOP

It was the genuine feeling of actively helping people meet their food needs that brought their team closer together. Back in October, Griffith Enterprises participated in our Sort & Learn workshop. This hands-on, corporate team-building program helped their group develop a deeper connection with each other and the work we do.

The first half of the workshop consisted of a classroom session. Our volunteer teaching instructor gave Griffith Enterprises an overview of North York Harvest's food services along with a discussion on food insecurity and the underlying causes of poverty. The session culminated with a tough exercise which required their team to step into the shoes of a family struggling to create a healthy meal plan using supermarket fliers. The catch was a daily budget of only \$8, reflecting the reality that many of our clients grapple with each day.

After wracking their brains, we had Griffith Enterprises work up a sweat by putting them to work in our warehouse. Armed with the knowledge of North York Harvest's food distribution channels, their group enthusiastically sorted through thousands of pounds of food collected from our Fall Food Drive. By the end of the 1-hour session, Griffith Enterprises had sorted an incredible 3,011 pounds of food – which will be sent out to schools, shelters, and families.

Many great organizations like Griffith Enterprises have taken part in our Sort & Learn workshop. Participants have expressed that the workshop has allowed them to forge stronger, longer-lasting relationships with their colleagues and increased their understanding of important social issues such as food insecurity and the underlying causes of poverty.

## MYTH DEBUNK: WHO USES FOOD BANKS?

A large misconception surrounding food banks is that people abuse their charitable services for their own gain. However, that myth couldn't be further from the reality that more than 16,000 people across northern Toronto face each day. To debunk that myth, here are some facts about clients who actually use North York Harvest Food Bank:

- **56%** have some form of post-secondary education, with **21%** having a bachelor's degree or higher.
- **62%** identify as having a disability.
- **22%** are employed.