

JAN & FEB 2019



EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

2019 marks the one-year anniversary of our Sort & Learn workshops! We initially aimed them at school group to teach students about the root causes of food insecurity and poverty through activities, and motivate them to get involved with their communities. We received lots of positive feedback and decided to extend the workshop to our corporate volunteer groups, which has been successful.

Consisting of a classroom lesson and a sort session in our warehouse, the Sort & Learn workshop gives both school groups and corporate volunteer groups a valuable hands-on experience. The workshop helps participants develop a deeper connection with their peers and the work we do at North York Harvest.

To date, 40 groups have visited, with more scheduled in the months ahead. We are excited by the enthusiasm of our participants and look forward to fostering a stronger, more connected community this year.

BUILDING FOR A BETTER YEAR

Welcome to our bimonthly Connections newsletter. As we enter into a new year, North York Harvest has a lot to be thankful for - we ended 2018 on a high note as the community responded generously to our *Reach for a Million* winter fund and food drive. You can read about the campaign in this edition. Volunteers, young and old, remained the backbone of our organization by providing much needed support in our operations. Our staff have also gone above the call of duty to ensure our organization maintains its high standard of excellence.

2019 promises to be an eventful year for North York Harvest as we continue to strengthen different parts of our organization so we can better meet the needs of the community while pursuing longer-term solutions.

One of our key initiatives is the launch of an Agency Council to strengthen our connections to our member agencies. We work closely with all our agencies to ensure the needs in each local area is addressed. More important, a strong network will facilitate sharing of resources and best practices among members.

We also want to expand the reach and impact of North York Harvest. We announced our partnership with

FoodReach last October. Leveraging our bulk purchasing power and expertise in logistics, we are helping non-profit agencies across Toronto timely access to nutritious food. With an infrastructure in place, we can deliver food to more people while allowing these client agencies focus on delivering their programs.

The migration of poverty into inner suburbs is a trend that won't be ending anytime soon. This means that we must continue to grow as an organization - both in terms of the amount of food and funds we raise as well as the breadth of operations which can address the root cause of food insecurity.

Growing needs coupled with disproportioned available resources presents a daunting challenge. We are, however, laser-focused on our mission. With a comprehensive plan, and most importantly the support from the North York Harvest community, we are determined to execute our deliverables.

With Respect,



Ryan Noble,
Executive Director

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Join us for our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, February 26 6:00 pm at 116 Industry Street, Toronto, ON, M6M 4L8.

This will be a great opportunity to meet the member agencies and our Board of Directors so you can see how your impact is helping your community.

Please contact jane@northyorkharvest.com for more information.

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

99: CELEBRATING A LIFETIME OF GREATNESS



To most Canadians, ‘99’ is synonymous with grace, brilliance and excellence. To North York Harvest, our 99 also embodies the same qualities and more.

One of our most ardent supporters, Anne Carr, celebrated her 99th birthday in mid-January. A resident of North York, Anne first reached out to us after seeing a report on children and hunger during the summer when school meal programs were not available. She has now been a supporter of our cause for over a decade.

“When we deprive our children of food, we are also depriving them of their future,” Anne explained. Reflecting on her own childhood, Anne recalled that her father made a point of teaching his children the importance of providing food for people in need. Even though they were a working class family, her father never hesitated to provide a stranger with a meal.

We thank Anne for her continued support and we look forward to her centenary celebration!

DIVERSE COMMUNITY HELPS RAISE NEARLY 800,000 DOLLARS AND POUNDS OF FOOD FOR WINTER FOOD DRIVE

We kicked off the New Year by wrapping up our *Winter Food Drive: Reach for a Million*, which ran from November 26 to January 11. The original goal of the campaign was one million - the combined total of funds and food raised. It was an ambitious goal for us but one we boldly took on because of the rising need in the community.

The campaign ended with a combined total of close to 800,000 dollars and pounds of food raised. We are grateful for all the individual donors, community organizations, schools and volunteers who selflessly contributed their time, effort and money. Of course, a number of supermarkets and fire halls also played a key role in helping us collect mountains of non-perishable food.

Meeting emergency food needs absolutely requires a community. If you visit our website, you’ll be able to see an extensive list of supporters behind this campaign. We are touched by our supporters’ stories and their motivation to help.

For instance, **Active International** has run an annual winter food drive for the past five years. This year they have gone above and beyond through their new Active Cares Employee Giving Program, which encouraged their staff to provide both food and cash donations. They understand that North York Harvest relies on cash donations to purchase fresh produce as part of our food distribution.

Young adults also played a key role in our campaign. The students from **Cameron Public School** raise both food and funds every winter, and each year they challenge themselves to surpass the previous year’s results. In total, 74 schools participated which is the most we’ve had.

Throughout our Winter Food Drive, we had corporations, faith groups, and schools visit our warehouse on a daily basis to drop off food and cash donations. It touched us greatly to see how galvanized the community was in supporting this cause; people from different stages

in their life, religions, and industries all congregated in one place to ensure that our community would be fed.

Even our Board got into the act as our Chair, Josh Neubauer, reprised his role as the “Radish Commuter”. He would commute to work in his radish suit for every thousand dollars he raised. During the holidays he honoured his commitment by dressing up twice, traveling on public transit from his home in Hamilton to his office in downtown Toronto. The Radish Commuter had previously raised \$9,000 for North York Harvest last summer.

Once again, we cannot thank everyone enough for their support during *Reach for a Million*. While we are grateful for the support and are proud of the results, we recognize that there is much work to be done in addressing the root cause of hunger - poverty. Many activities have been planned in the coming months to ensure we can continue to fight hunger in our community.



MYTH DEBUNK: WHY ARE PEOPLE HUNGRY?

People who are food insecure buy less food, lower-quality produce, or resort to skipping meals altogether. Unfortunately, for many of North York Harvest’s clients, food is the **only** part of their budget that they can cut. Here’s some research from the *Who’s Hungry* report about people experiencing hunger in Toronto:

- **69%** of their income is already spent on rent and utilities.
- **68%** receive social assistance as their main source of income.
- **\$4.80** is the amount of money per day that North York Harvest clients have left to pay for food after non-negotiable expenses.