

SEPT & OCT 2019



OUR COMMUNITY'S VOICES

Back in April, the Ontario provincial government announced their plans to cut \$1 billion to Toronto Public Health over the next decade. The proposed cuts would disproportionately impact low-income citizens, especially those who rely on Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

Chris, a North York Harvest client finds that the social assistance he receives can barely cover the cost of his rent. With rent rising astronomically in Toronto, Chris has next to no affordable housing options that could improve his predicament.

"It's hard to get out of the hole when you're in the hole," said Chris. After paying rent, I'm left with less than \$100 a month to spend on food."

Like Chris, many of our clients come to North York Harvest as a last resort to meet their food needs. Living pay cheque to pay cheque, any unexpected stoppage to their income puts them in an insurmountable position.

Studies have shown that people who struggle with low income are more likely to experience health, mental, and legal problems. The adverse consequences of poverty puts a strain on our society and impacts all of us.



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!

FALL FOOD DRIVE KICKOFF!

With fall already in full swing, there is much work to be done to meet the rising demand in our community. Higher rents and costs of living have both contributed to an overall increase in the amount of food bank visits in northern Toronto. North York Harvest currently receives over 16,000 visits across our network of food spaces each month, with many of our clients being children, seniors, and post-secondary students. This is a great time of need where we need all the support we can get to ensure our shelves are stocked with nutritious food.

So no one in our community goes without food, we're kicking our fall Fund & Food Drive off with a bang to make an impact. The Global Energy Race by Dempster's is an annual run that celebrates Canadians getting active together and giving back to people in need. For two years, North York Harvest has been the beneficiary of the event, and we receive 2 slices of bread for every kilometer completed by participants.

This year, Team North York Harvest has branched out to our neighbours and their networks to be the biggest and best team yet. We've challenged our team to reach greater heights than before and raise nearly triple the amount from last year. With participation and enthusiasm for the Global Energy Race at an all-time high, we're hoping the event sets a strong precedent for our fall drive.

Coming off the summer months, our shelves are traditionally understocked as a result of fewer donations, which puts us in a tight spot for the fall. September

marks the start of a new school year, and it's an especially challenging time for many students.

Whether it's a child entering elementary school or a young adult attending university, going to school on an empty stomach is a reality that affects all age groups. Students already experience enough anxiety and pressure from their course loads, but the added stress of wondering when their next meal will come can have detrimental effects on their well-being. Hunger impacts both growth and learning, and many students this fall will rely on our food bank to get through the semester.

The success of our fall Fund & Food Drive really depends on the help from both the corporate and grassroots communities. There are many practical ways that organizations, community groups, and individuals can make an immediate difference:

Donate Online: One of the best ways to support people in need is to make a donation directly on our website. North York Harvest relies on funds to purchase fresh produce to ensure our shelves remain stocked for the season. Please visit www.northyorkharvest.com to help.

Register a Fund & Food Drive: By hosting your own drive to collect cash and food donations, you can help over 24,000 people who rely on North York Harvest. Our organization can send you a food collection bin and arrange for a pick-up after your drive is done. Visit www.northyorkharvest.com/register to register your drive for the fall today!

GROWING OUR COMMUNITIES

EMPOWER YOUR ORGANIZATION TO DO MORE WITH OUR EDUCATION WORKSHOPS!



Education is a core component of our mission at North York Harvest, and we’re always looking for ways to best engage our community so that they can help us make a difference. Last year we pioneered a series of education workshops called “Sort & Learn” for school groups to teach students about the root causes of poverty and food insecurity. The workshops received lots of positive feedback and we have since extended the program to corporate volunteer groups.

Consisting of a one-hour interactive classroom lesson and a one-hour sort session in our warehouse, the Sort & Learn workshop aims to teach groups about issues related to food insecurity while empowering them to help people in need. Participants are taught by our staff and volunteers about the root causes of hunger and poverty in northern Toronto, giving them a better understanding of our food bank clients’ current situation.

To help participants build empathy with our clients and their daily struggles, we have them partake in practical exercise. The activity places participants in the shoes of a person with only \$4.80 a day to spend on food (the amount our clients

have after accounting for non-negotiable expenses such as rent, transportation, and hydro), and helps them understand just how difficult it can be to get through a week without the aid of a food bank.

We also welcome schools and corporations to our warehouse to participate in a hands-on food sort. Not only does this session provide groups with a fantastic opportunity for staff/ student engagement, but it allows them to see firsthand the impact of North York Harvest on the community. Donated food that groups help sort is then packaged into boxes and sent on our delivery trucks to our programs.

At the end of the workshop, groups can walk away knowing that they’ve played a part in helping over 24,000 in our community. They are also empowered to enact positive change within their own communities.

A new year of Sort & Learn workshops has begun for corporations and schools to register. There are limited spots left for the workshop so please contact us at **info@northyorkharvest.com** to book your session today!



WHAT DOES “FILL RATE” MEAN TO US?

An important metric for ensuring that we are providing the correct support to our community is our fill rate. Fill rate refers to the percentage of needed food that our food bank is able to distribute to our food spaces. As we support a diverse community with their own distinct food needs, each of our food spaces requests different food.

For example, if one of our food spaces requests 100 cans of fish but our food bank only receives 70 cans, then our fill rate would be 70%.

To help our food bank best meet the unique food needs of our community, there are 5 food items that our clients urgently need to prepare their meals: **Canned Tomatoes, Canned Fish, Canned Beans, Cooking Oil, and Rice.**

These food items can be dropped off at participating supermarkets and fire halls. Please refer to our website for a list of locations where you can drop off food donations.