

NOV & DEC 2019



## IMPACT OF POVERTY & FOOD INSECURITY IN TORONTO

Following the launch of the 2019 *Who's Hungry* report, North York Harvest held a free interdisciplinary panel on the impact of poverty and food insecurity in Toronto. Hosted by 3 expert panelists, the room discussed topics such as what the contributing factors to food bank usage are and how food insecurity impacts our society.

The panel was well attended, with many participants eager to learn about the strain poverty and hunger place on Toronto's healthcare system and what the long-term solutions to these problems are.

CBC News also interviewed Ryan Noble, who spoke about the latest results from the report as well as the importance of affordable housing and increased funding into poverty reduction - both of which will help us achieve financial health in Toronto.



*North York Harvest Executive Director, Ryan Noble, speaks about the results from the 2019 Who's Hungry report and the impacts of poverty and food insecurity alongside Dr. Michelle Greiver (centre), University of Toronto, and Tai Huynh (left), University Health Network.*

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

**Make a donation** on our website to provide immediate food assistance for our community members during the holidays.

**Run a food drive** this winter to help us collect funds and food for people in need.

**Become a volunteer** and support our operations so we can get food out to people in need.

**Visit our website to learn more!**

North York Harvest Food Bank  
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# Who's Hungry

PROFILE OF HUNGER IN  
THE TORONTO REGION

## RIGHT TO FOOD UNFULFILLED

While the Right to Food is part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN that Canada signed onto in 1976, there were over 1 million visits to food banks in the GTA last year.

This staggering number paints a troubling picture in a region that is as prosperous as Toronto and it is clearly telling us that the Right to Food is not being realized in our communities.

The Right to Food means being able to feed yourself and your family in dignity. It is about creating an environment in which people have the physical and economic means to access adequate food. However, according to the latest *Who's Hungry* report, an annual update on the state of hunger and food security in Toronto, many households cannot afford life's basic necessities.

Food insecurity can have long-lasting impacts on an individual's mental, physical, and social well-being. Food insecurity in children contributes to both stress and anxiety, which can have a negative impact on growth and academic performance. For adults, food insecurity is associated with a higher risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes.

People who are food insecure report spending 74% of their income on rent and utilities, forcing them to buy less food, lower-quality produce or resort to skipping meals altogether. The amount of money food bank clients have left to pay for food after factoring in non-negotiable expenses such as rent, child care, and transit is \$7.83 per day. Simply put, many individuals and families in our communities cannot afford to eat.

Furthermore, our food bank faces the challenge of responding to a changing geography of hunger. As a result of rising costs of living and the lack of affordable housing options, Toronto has shifted from a city of mostly middle-income neighbourhoods to a polarized one with low-income neighbourhoods concentrated in the inner suburbs.

Low-income neighbourhoods are segregated by income, location and also their disproportionate concentrations of visible minorities and newcomers to Canada. Many people living in these neighbourhoods have fewer employment opportunities and experience greater social barriers, both of which prevent them from accessing and affording food.

As part of North York Harvest's commitment to providing dignified food assistance, education, advocacy, and long-term food solutions, we will continue to collaborate with other community organizations, the government, and our partners in the private sector to achieve our vision of a community where all members are able to meet their food needs.



# GROWING OUR COMMUNITIES

FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY NEED YOUR HELP THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.



With the release of the latest *Who's Hungry* report, it is staggering how many people in our community are food insecure. Our food bank helps over 24,000 people meet their food needs as we work towards addressing the root causes of poverty. However, as a food bank that is not funded by the government, we rely on philanthropic organizations and individuals to sustain our operations as the demand for hunger continues to rise; meeting emergency food needs absolutely requires a community.

With our fall Fund & Food Drive officially coming to a close, we are incredibly thankful to have so many generous supporters helping our cause. Our goal was to raise \$100,000 and 100,000 pounds of food to support the rising need in our community.

Our campaign ended with us raising over \$126,000 and 244,000 pounds of food - amounts that we couldn't have reached without our community. During this period, 73 groups, including local businesses, schools, corporations, and religious groups selflessly contributed their time, effort, and money to make a difference. We would also like to thank the supermarkets and fire halls who played a key role in collecting thousands of pounds of non-perishable food items.

We are incredibly touched by our supporters' motivation for wanting to help people in need. If you visit our website at

**northyorkharvest.com**, you'll be able to see an extensive list of supporters who made our fall campaign possible.

Due to the success of our campaign, we were able to keep our shelves stocked during the fall months. However, with winter on the horizon, the season places an immense burden on many families in our community. By the middle of December, children will be home for the holidays and many parents will now have to choose between feeding their kids or paying their bills.

So that families in our community don't have to decide between paying bills and skipping meals, we are once again revisiting our special Winter Food Drive: *Reach for a Million*. Running until January 10, 2020, the goal is to raise a combined total of funds and food that equals a million. But we can't do it without your support.

Please lend your generous support this winter, so that families in our community can enjoy the holidays without hunger. There are many ways you can get involved and make a difference:

- 1) Make a donation on our website at [northyorkharvest.com](http://northyorkharvest.com)
- 2) Host your own fund & food drive
- 3) Drop off non-perishable food at local fire halls and participating supermarkets across North York



## OUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

The 2019 *Who's Hungry* report captures the voice of people who live in the Toronto region to show the realities of hunger and poverty. The report contains many alarming statistics that can tell us why people are unable to meet their food needs.

### Why can't people afford to eat

Food bank clients report spend **74%** of their income on rent and utilities.

### Money per day left for food

After accounting for non-negotiable expenses such as rent and transportation, the average amount of money food bank clients have left per day to spend on food is **\$7.83**.

### Median monthly income

The median monthly income of food bank clients is **\$806**, with **79%** of respondents reported receiving social assistance as their primary income source.