

BUILDING LONG-TERM FOOD SOLUTIONS

“While there have been so many new challenges over the last year, I feel incredibly privileged to have had the opportunity to work alongside North York Harvest staff and board members to accelerate our work together.” says Habon Ali, North York Harvest’s new board chair. Though much of the last year has meant slowing down, Habon believes that in several ways the team at North York Harvest has been able to speed up.

Habon has been an urban and city building planner in Toronto for nearly a decade. She joined the North York Harvest Board of Directors three years ago to learn more about community-based food models and to support organizations and agencies working directly on food related causes in her neighbourhood.

As board chair, Habon is working with board members to ensure the principles and values of the organization are reflected in decision making. “One of the areas we are focused on is internal board education and board recruitment. We are looking closely at the skills and experiences that we have at the table” she explains, “along with being best positioned to support the organization we also want to ensure that our board reflects the community we serve.”

We recently caught up with Habon for her perspective on the issues surrounding food security post-Covid, and how community partnerships are key to moving forward.

North York Harvest: Food insecurity has become a real-life focus for so many in the past 18 months. As a leader, what learnings have you been able to take away from these times that will continue to strengthen North York Harvest moving forward?

Habon Ali: North York Harvest’s ability to pivot and be resilient will continue to build strength. It was incredible to see the Toronto Public Library partnership happen and the connections formed between services that many people see as sometimes operating in silos. We hope we will see more opportunities to leverage these types of partnerships and with connections outside of the food space. The issues and challenges we are facing touch on many other areas, and we are starting to really lean into new synergies and opportunities for cross sector collaboration.

NYH: In what ways can all levels of government, business, and non-profit ensure equitable access to healthy affordable food options?

HA: Part of the work we are seeing is better recognition of the reasons why people in our communities face food challenges which is linked to a lack of sustainable incomes, affordable housing, transportation and childcare. So the conversations we are having are not just about getting food in our warehouses but also about looking at what is keeping people in food insecure positions. By looking at policy decisions and collaborating with other social agencies we are able to take a holistic approach and can work towards creating more equitable and inclusive communities. It’s a big conversation that requires everyone to be involved.

NYH: What excites you most about NYHFB’s future, in particular in a post-pandemic world?

HA: I have been encouraged by conversations about race and anti-oppression and what we can do to support those who have historically been underrepresented in our community. There is an openness and a desire to have tough conversations and integrate what we learn into the work we are doing. I’m excited about the direction these conversations are taking us, and the eagerness to keep this moving forward.



GIVE 30 MOVEMENT



During the season of Ramadan Give 30 encourages individuals and families to support local food banks in their communities. The Give 30 movement is open to the support of people from all faith groups and provides organizations who support individuals and families in meeting their food needs. This year, we are pleased to join the movement, and it's not too late for you to make a difference. With the campaign running until August 31, there's still time for you to join. Learn more about Give 30 and make your donation at northyorkharvest.com/give30.

BE A HERO

During the pandemic you have helped make the Hamper Hero Virtual Food Drive a major success! While in-person food drives were not possible, the generous support North York Harvest received from families, schools and community groups was incredible. As we head into the summer months, the positive response continues with an increasing number of community members participating in virtual food drives. Our community continues to need your support, and we're pleased to be able to help families with your contributions. Are you interested in hosting a virtual food drive with your friends and family? Find out how you can get involved at northyorkharvest.com/food-drive.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Family, friends and relaxation, that's what summer should be all about. But for many families in our community, summer adds a significant stress as they grapple with additional food costs. In fact, summer is the time of year when our community's food needs are at a peak, yet we receive our lowest level of donations. With your support, we can continue helping nourish families who turn to North York Harvest to meet their food needs.

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

As an agency providing food to more than 150 families weekly, Community Share Food Bank would not have been able to meet the needs of residents without the support of North York Harvest. As a partner agency with North York Harvest, during the pandemic Community Food Share relied even more to get up and running quickly. Beginning with getting access to the Toronto Public Library's Don Mills location to developing the infrastructure needed to operate safely, past chair Diane Enhorning credits the partnership with North York Harvest as being a major contributing factor to the ongoing success of Community Share's programs. "Being able to lean on North York Harvest's expertise as a larger, parent agency that has emergency plans in place and the resources available, we can grow, build and move forward in a much stronger way," she says. Now with a program manager in place, policies and procedures and the connections Community Share has established as a North York Harvest partner agency, Enhorning is looking forward to continuing to work, learn and grow together as a partner agency. Go to communitysharefoodbank.ca to find out more about the programs and services offered.



community share

FOOD BANK



CELEBRATING OUR TEAM



Recently celebrating 15 years with North York Harvest, Lisa Anderson is the organization's longest-standing team member. As the Manager, Volunteer Services, Lisa is the first person many people connect with when they arrive at North York Harvest. She has provided thousands of volunteers with an orientation to our organization, helping many obtain practical experience by making a meaningful contribution through a volunteer experience. Volunteers play an integral role in the programs and operations of North York Harvest, one Lisa keeps in mind by ensuring every volunteer has the appropriate training and skills required to do their jobs. We are thrilled to celebrate Lisa's contribution to North York Harvest and look forward to her ongoing support in the lives of so many in our community.

CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS

We are pleased to have Homeless Cars join with our partner organizations in support of North York Harvest's fighting food insecurity. This Foundation accepts used vehicle donations, and gives funding directly to charities. Donating your undrivable vehicle is easy. Homeless Cars offers free contactless pickup of your vehicle and provides a tax receipt for a minimum of \$500. Making a vehicle donation to Homeless Cars, is one more way of making a big difference in the lives of our community. Find out more about how you can make your donation at homelesscars.ca.



BY THE NUMBERS: A SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY VACCINATIONS

“When the vaccine rollout began, we saw the same patterns of inequity preventing those most in need from getting the vaccine. When the vaccine rollout began, we saw the same patterns of inequity preventing those most in need from getting the vaccine.”

—Chiara Padovani, Manager Community Engagement, originally appeared in article, *Stepping Up for North York's Under Served on Toronto.com*



In the past year we have pivoted at North York Harvest, most recently in the areas of vaccination. By working together with our community partner organizations, we continue to successfully help individuals in our community access vaccinations who would not otherwise be able to do so on their own.

1,817 Number of vaccination appointments booked by North York Harvest to date

3,000 Number of contacts made to schedule appointments by North York Harvest

29 Member agencies having received vaccinations by accessing appointments through our vaccination booking team

700 Number of vaccinations administered to community members and agency partners through a one-day clinic in May, working with our health care providers

