

CONNECTIONS



Give Families A Healthy Start On Back To School

As we approach the new school year, families that are already experiencing food insecurity are facing additional challenges as they prepare their school-aged children for September.

Like many in our community whose employment was disrupted due to the pandemic, Christina lost her full-time position last summer. When she found out one of North York Harvest's food spaces operates from her neighbourhood community centre, she became a client.

"Those were trying times after losing my job and having a school-aged child idling at home throughout the summer," shares Christina.

"The Schulich Foundation, one of North York Harvest's long-standing supporters, wants to ensure the generosity of neighbours-helping-neighbours has an even greater impact and will match all donations, dollar-for-dollar up to \$100,000, until September 30."

Over the last decade, children have made up just over 20% of Canada's general population yet they represent more than 30% of our food bank clients.

Christina was appreciative of the additional food she got from North York Harvest every other week. "Not having to constantly worry about getting enough healthy food after paying rent and other necessities is a huge relief."

The North York Harvest strives to maintain an accessible and equitable network so that the most vulnerable, especially families with children and seniors, can receive the support they need. Currently North York Harvest is providing emergency food to more than 2,500 individuals each week.

Our service is made possible by the generosity of community members like The Schulich Foundation. Please join us in spreading hope, health and well-being for the community, and double your impact before the end of September.



Home Upgrades At No Cost to You

It won't be long before we're all thinking of ways to stay warm indoors but for many people heating costs are an added expense that can be challenging to fit into your budget.

North York Harvest is proud to work with Enbridge Gas once again, to help North York community members reduce their heating costs. Now in the second year of working with Enbridge Gas, the company's Home Winterproofing Program is assisting more families and individuals at a time when they need it most. At North York Harvest, we are strengthening our community by continuing to work together with partners such as Enbridge Gas.

If the cost of heating your home is stretching your budget, the Enbridge Gas Home Winterproofing Program can help. Whether you're a homeowner or renter, if you qualify, you'll receive free energy-saving upgrades to lower your natural gas bill and make your home more comfortable.

What can I receive?

The free upgrades include draft proofing to seal air leaks, new insulation to increase comfort and a smart thermostat to allow you to save energy easily, even when you're away from home. All upgrades will be installed by a professional, at no cost to you.

How do I qualify?

The program is open to Enbridge Gas customers who meet the income guidelines or if you already participate in a government assistance program such as Ontario Works. Your home also needs to be heated with natural gas and the account must be in your name.

If I rent my home, can I qualify?

Yes, if you meet the income guidelines. You'll also need written permission from your landlord before the upgrades can be installed.

Is this program really free?

Yes! If your household income qualifies, there's absolutely no cost to you. By helping homes reduce energy use Enbridge Gas is doing its part



in the fight against climate change. "It feels like my house has a warm blanket around it," Dwana, program participant.

How does it work?

If your household qualifies, you'll first get a free home energy assessment scheduled at your convenience from a trusted program delivery agent. Qualified contractors will then complete the installation of all upgrades, plus cleanup. A follow-up visit will also be scheduled to confirm that your home upgrades have been completed and that you're satisfied.

Please note that Enbridge Gas is actively monitoring the latest COVID-19 updates from public health and government officials. All program delivery agents follow the recommended guidelines during in-home visits, including physical distancing, personal protective equipment and sanitization precautions.

Sign up online by visiting enbridgegas.com/winterproofing to find out more and apply to the program.

Local Artists Showcase Support

In June the North Toronto Group of Artists held their second annual fundraiser in support of North York Harvest. This event features the work of more than 40 local artists showcasing their work through an outdoor art exhibit and walking art tour. For many community members, the exhibit provided an opportunity to engage with artists and purchase artwork while also supporting the work of North York Harvest. Bringing together the community, showing support on a local level, impact this group of artists continues to have on the North York Harvest Community is an inspiring example of what can be done with a little creativity and community spirit.



Network Agency

“As a smaller non-profit, North York Harvest gives us access to resources and supports we wouldn’t have without being a member of the Agency Network,” says Joyce, a community development coordinator with **Society for the Living**. Although the organization has been in operation for more than 20 years, it’s not always possible for smaller organizations to generate the financial support required to meet the community’s needs.

As a community development coordinator, Joyce works directly on the organization’s overarching goals of food justice and equity. Along with access to food, the organization has a community garden program that provides fresh produce to community members throughout the summer months. “Building community connections, whether that’s been access to grants and larger donations or helping us in advocating for a larger space, North York Harvest has helped us grow independently while staying connected.”



Supporting Families with Pets

Humane Society International/Canada and Friends of Humane Society International (Friends of HIS) recently partnered with North York Harvest to support local residents with companion animals through a pet food pop up. Through this partnership, Bathurst-Finch community members were provided with pet food and pet care supplies. Those who brought their pets also had the opportunity to have a professional photo taken courtesy of Humane Society International. With the success of this event, planning for upcoming dates is underway.



Making An Impact

Throughout the pandemic, our agency network has relied on the ongoing support of North York Harvest Food Bank. The onset of COVID-19 has led these organizations to make changes to their program to accommodate greater needs in the community. In the summer of 2020, North York Harvest provided our member agencies with funding in order to meet this increased demand. This summer, North York Harvest is once again hoping to distribute grants among our network to assist in their important work during a stressful time.



53

number of grants given to member agencies over the course of the pandemic



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