

Impossible Choices Made Possible



At North York Harvest we recognize that removing barriers to improving food security for our clients are a major part of providing long term food solutions. During Hunger Action Month, we are focusing our efforts on advocating for affordable housing and improvements in social assistance programs, along with food security in order to end hunger and poverty in our communities.

Over the past eighteen months, we have seen the increased need in our community. Through North York Harvest's four food spaces alone we have been serving 2,500 individuals weekly while working outdoors throughout the winter and summer. We are also grateful for the partnership, especially our member agencies that are able to remain opened. As a result of our partnerships, many have been able to extend their services compensating for the closures of some of our

agencies. In failing to address the root causes of poverty, the cost to our community impacts everyone. A 2019 study from Feed Ontario estimates that provincially we lose up to \$33 billion every year due to increased health care expenses, education, and the justice system, largely due to current policies that sustain poverty. As North York Harvests continues creating more

partnerships, we are taking the opportunity to build capacity not only for our community to gain a better understanding of the larger issues many of their neighbours may be facing but also to develop the essential resources that help individuals and families overcome barriers to long term food security.

Making the impossible choice between paying rent and buying groceries should not be a decision anyone needs to make for their family. By taking action and raising awareness, about the barrier to food security for all, North York Harvest strives to remain a voice for the most vulnerable in our community. To find out more about Hunger Action Month and other initiatives we are working on and how you can get involved check out our social media and weekly blog posts at northyorkharvest.com.

Show Your Gratitude

As the harvest season continues, we are all reflecting on the reasons we are all grateful. At the same time there are so many in our community who need ongoing support. While we are still uncertain of what this new reality will bring, one thing we can be certain of is that more families, in particular ones with seniors, are experiencing food insecurity this year than last.

Although many may be having a challenging time making ends meet, most senior community members are struggling more than most. For Dianna, a life-long North York community resident these past months have been isolating. With the additional food she received from North York Harvest, Dianna was able to supplement her meals and maintain a healthy diet. **“Knowing I have nutritious ingredients to cook healthy meals, even after paying my rent and other bills, makes me feel very safe and secure living on my own.”** You are not only helping to provide food, you are also helping families who have seniors—parents and grandparents, live independently with dignity on a fixed income.

Find out more about how your donation today can help Diana at northyorkharvest.com during this season of gratitude.



DoorDash Delivers for Students

As students return to campuses everywhere, many are on even tighter budgets than usual. In some cases students didn't have the same job opportunities during the summer months, making it even more challenging when they return to school. As a result, some of our busiest member agencies operate on university and college campuses. Over the past year, many of us have enjoyed ordering takeout from our favourite restaurants and dining in the comfort of our homes. These days the simple luxury of ordering takeout after a long week, may not be in the budget for many of our friends and neighbours. Over the past year, DoorDash recognized the need for additional support in communities nationwide, and has partnered with a number of organizations nationwide to make takeout delivery easier for families and individuals nationwide. At North York Harvest, DoorDash's donation of \$10,000 worth of gift cards was distributed to Seneca College students in September. For budget-conscious students, having access to a \$25 DoorDash gift card, was a wonderful way to give a healthy and hopeful kickstart to the upcoming school year.



Building Your Community

Operating a food bank has many unique challenges, many of which has been further amplified because of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Once COVID hit, North York Harvest was put into a position to change how business was done,” says Dianna Stapleton, volunteer and board chair at Weston Area Emergency Support (WAES). Stapleton has worked in the food security industry for more than 30 years, with much of her time spent volunteering with WAES which means she understands the unique needs of small food banks. At the beginning of the pandemic, WAES would not have been able to keep its doors open and support families, and individuals in need had it not been for North York Harvest. “We spent a lot of time with the team at North York Harvest trying to figure out how to get food so that we could assist the community,” she says. It was through this support that enabled WAES to access alternative avenues for food and donations that would not have been possible for a small organization.

“Sometimes we get into a routine and may not think there’s a better or different way to do things,” she explains. “Having the other members in North York Harvest’s Agency Network to tap into their expertise, is one of the biggest benefits.” Without the traditional networking opportunities that many other types of businesses have, Stapleton and her colleagues at WAES value the regular meetings with other professionals in the food security space for the chance to also share experience and celebrate shared success. As we all work towards basic income that allows for affordable housing and accessible food many would agree with Stapleton, “Food banks are an emergency room in a hospital, you don’t want to use it but you are glad when it is there.” At our core, it’s important for community member to not feel a stigma around needing their support.



Business That Benefits Everyone

When Phil began planning the grand opening for his new Fresh Co. location at Jane and Denison, he knew he wanted to make an impact in the community. As a lifelong North York resident, Phil knew a lot about the unique needs of community members and the ways in which North York Harvest was helping support residents. Through the efforts of Phil and his team, the grand opening gave customers the opportunity to purchase \$5 or \$10 shopping bags with the proceeds going to North York Harvest which were a sell-out success within a few days of the opening. Fresh Co.’s support didn’t end there with a generous donation of \$2,500 in gift cards for the North York Harvest community. Find out more about the ways local businesses are supporting the community at northyorkharvest.com.



Hunger Action Month



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.

The Problem: 735,000 Ontario households needed housing
The Solution: 55,300 households supported by affordable housing programs as of 2027.

We need more Ontarians to help close the housing gap. Find out how you can learn more and take action.

feedontario.ca/housing-gap.

1 out of 2 food bank visitors are worried about eviction or defaulting on their mortgage in the next 2 to 6 months.

93% borrowed money from friends and family, accessed a payday loan, or used a credit card to help pay for monthly necessities

(Source: Feed Ontario Hunger Impact Report)



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