

CONNECTIONS



During the coldest, darkest days of the new year, we've been keeping warm by keeping busy, as we continue to see increased demand for our services. We faced the most challenging year in our history in 2023, and while we prepare for what 2024 will bring, we're grateful to have a strong network of support to help us, in any way they can, so we can continue in our vital mission of providing dignified food assistance, education, focused advocacy, and long-term food solutions.



Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Linda

At North York Harvest, we couldn't do what we do without our volunteers. Every week, they give their time and energy to ensure our neighbours in need can have access to dignified food assistance, they help represent us as ambassadors at events, they help strengthen our relationships with our supporters, and so much more.

In short, there's too many reasons to celebrate our volunteers, including Linda!

Linda has been volunteering with North York Harvest for 15 years. As a North York resident since 1974, she wanted to get involved in making her community a better place for everyone. You'll find Linda at the warehouse twice a week, diligently sorting food to be distributed across our network.

Linda has volunteered with and supported various charities over the years. "I feel like I've been so spoiled my whole life. I've been very fortunate, so I've got to give some of that back," she says. "Volunteering is very rewarding. For me it's a peaceful place to go and you make a difference."

That compassionate mindset is something she has passed down in her family. Linda and her daughter have been volunteering with the Toronto Star's annual Santa Claus Fund for the past 20 years, helping to distribute gifts to children all around the GTA.



And when Linda took up running at the age of 54, it presented another opportunity for her to give back while staying active. She and her children have run in multiple charity runs, including the Bimbo Global Race in support of North York Harvest, where 20 slices of Dempster's bread was donated for every participant.

She even recruited her running group to come out for Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY), a fundraiser walk to raise awareness of food insecurity in our city.

"CNOY is another way to contribute and it's not as intimidating as it sounds! It's just a 5k walk and they had some games and prizes too, it was a lot of fun," she says.

Whether through volunteering, donating to support community members in need, or rallying friends and family to join events, Linda is a North York Harvest champion who exemplifies our values every day. Thank you Linda!



5 Reasons to join Coldest Night of the Year

Back for our third year, North York Harvest will again be participating in the Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) fundraising walk!

This event brings our community together, by raising awareness and funds, to fight food insecurity - step by step.

Join us on Saturday, February 24 2024 at our Oriole Community Food Space for a meaningful yet fun event.

Registration for individuals looking to sign up or donate is officially open, and we've compiled a pretty compelling list of reasons why you'll want to come for a walk with us next month.

1. Show up for your neighbours in need

North York Harvest is now seeing more individuals having to rely on our services than at any other time in our history, with nearly 30,000 clients a month needing food assistance. During the coldest, darkest days of the year, CNOY shines a light on compassion in North York. By braving the cold, just for one evening, you're standing up to poverty and making our city a warmer place for everyone.

2. Everyone is welcome

The event is family-friendly, and we'll have games, prizes, and snacks to warm up after our walk together. CNOY is also a great opportunity to teach kids about empathy, and the many challenges people can face that can lead to them being out in the cold. Above all, it's a great example of what is possible when people work together to face challenges as a community.





3. Receive a toque

For adults who raise \$150 (\$75 for kids!) in support of North York Harvest, you'll receive a beautiful CNOY toque to help you commemorate the event so you can stay warm and sport your support all winter!

4. Meet your neighbours

The past two years of holding events for Coldest Night of the Year has proven to be a great evening of connecting with your neighbours while you gather for good. Walk, talk, mingle and make friends!

5. Friendly Competition

Do you love to win? Does even a friendly game of Monopoly bring out your competitive side? Challenge your sibling or coworker to see who can raise more during Coldest Night of the Year! The best part? You're raising money for your neighbours who need support – so everybody wins.

Join a team or donate today at northyorkharvest.com/cnoy



Did You Know?

We offer Sort and Learn opportunities to corporate, community and faith groups to visit our warehouse at 116 Industry Street for a day of volunteering and learning! Groups come for half a day of sorting food for distribution, and learning more about the root causes of poverty and how food insecurity affects our city. Education is a key pillar of our mission, and we're always thrilled to answer the thoughtful questions we receive during these sessions. Over the past fiscal year, we hosted 90 sorting events, with some groups coming in for multiple sessions throughout the year!

If your corporate or community group would be interested in a half-day Sort and Learn, or just a sorting opportunity, we'd love to hear from you!

For corporate groups, please contact:
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