

Annual Report

2022-2023





Land Acknowledgment

North York Harvest Food Bank acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional and ancestral territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and that the land on which North York Harvest is located is the home of many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge the historical impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples, including the historical and ongoing intersection of food security with the legacy of colonialism.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that colonialization in Canada resulted in the involuntary intrusion of external policies and practices into Indigenous ways of life, drastically affecting individual and communal control of local food systems. Harvesting, hunting, gardening, and most cultural and spiritual practices were regulated or banned. The resulting loss of access to and practice with Indigenous foods has eroded community knowledge about food and relationships with food, weakening cultural resilience and local health and food security.

We wish to emphasize our commitment beyond rhetorical gestures of inclusion and commit to continually work to build strong relationships and community resilience together, with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike. We invite you to reflect on the unique connection that Indigenous peoples have had with this land for thousands of years and on the relationship with the ecology that provides all we need for life.

Food sovereignty is generally understood as a shift away from food commoditization and a shift towards culturally appropriate systems and policies that places an emphasis on peoples' autonomy. By extension, Indigenous food sovereignty demands responsibility and requires action of us all to repair and strengthen relationships to Indigenous homelands that have been eroded by colonialism, globalization and neoliberal policies.

We recognize that food sovereignty furthers restoration and reconciliation in Canada.



Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

To engage our community in meeting the food needs of northern Toronto by providing dignified food assistance, education, focused advocacy and long-term food solutions.

Vision

A community where all members are able to meet their food needs.

Values

Access and Inclusion

We strive to ensure that diverse members of our community have full, fair and unbiased access to our services and are included in decision-making.

Collaboration

We are dedicated to understanding, learning from, and working cooperatively with community members.

Integrity

We recognize the importance of being accountable and transparent in our actions and decision-making processes.

Excellence

We strive for the highest quality in all our work and for the most effective use of our resources.

The Road We Travel

In every Annual Report we have published since the pandemic began, we have used terms like ‘unprecedented’ and ‘record-breaking.’ Every year we are reaching horrible new milestones while we grapple with surging demand, exhausted resources, and a sector that has been overwhelmed while trying to meet the growing need of our communities. We have known for a long time that we can’t continue down this same road. Among the many challenges facing our community, it’s easy to overlook that this year also brought hope. Hope that comes from systemic change, which moves us in the right direction toward addressing the root causes of poverty. We have been reminded of what is possible, together, as we work toward the long-term food solutions desperately needed in our city.

This has been another record-breaking year, as we are seeing more clients and more need than we ever have in our 38-year history. This year we saw a 30% increase in client visits, with nearly 300,000 visits to our food spaces and member agency community food banks. In fact, new clients visiting our services in North York outnumbered existing clients, when historically that number has been much lower. We’ve been using the word “unsustainable” all throughout the pandemic but it best reflects the reality we face.

Every day, we are seeing greater numbers of people having to turn to a food bank for support. Families who have to make impossible choices between paying rent or buying groceries. People on social assistance who have next to nothing to work with each month after bills are paid. People who are working, but are still unable to make ends meet because of precarious, low-wage employment opportunities. It was once believed that if you worked a full-time job, you would earn enough money to steadily put food on the table, or if you had postsecondary education you could land a secure, well-paying job. This year has laid bare that this is not our reality.

The ever-climbing cost of living is ensnaring more people in poverty, while simultaneously making it harder for those already trapped within the poverty cycle. And there are many other people in our city living on the edge of food insecurity, neighbours who are just one misfortune away – an injury, an illness – from falling into poverty. If we look at social supports like a net, meant to catch our community’s most vulnerable, we can clearly see it is riddled with holes.

Toronto has always been a beacon for people from small towns or other countries, coming here to

work hard to build a life for themselves and their families. But this dream is challenged by its brutal expenses, with skyrocketing rents, grocery and utility costs. In October 2023, CBC News reported that Toronto sees the average cost of a one-bedroom property now at a shocking \$2,614 a month. That’s more than double the median income for a food bank user, which is \$1,131, according to our 2023 Who’s Hungry report. After paying rent and utilities, food bank clients have a median of \$6.67 left per person, per day for food and all other necessities. Last year, it was \$8.01.



The Power of Community and Collaboration

Our communities cannot continue like this and frankly, neither can we. Food banks have been stretched to their breaking point yet despite all of this, we remain resolutely hopeful. We have no other choice. Every person who enters our doors is someone who needs support, or someone committed to providing that support, or sometimes both. Every donor, every volunteer, every food-drive organizer, every member agency is someone who shares our vision of a community where everyone can meet their food needs, someone adding their voice to ours. Every day, we see the power of community and collaboration in creating a roadmap to that better future.

With food security being increasingly challenged by a multitude of factors, we recognized that we needed to provide food assistance to people who needed it while also addressing the root causes of food insecurity. We began working on long-term solutions for our clients, digging into the roots of the problem, and building a model of social enterprise and workforce development that we call Community Wealth Building. Our Leadership in Logistics program began in 2017 and has been providing job-enhancement training, practical skills development and employment opportunities to community members to help break the cycle of poverty and strengthen our communities.

In 2018, we began working with other food banks and institutions in the non-profit sector to leverage our buying power and purchase food at a lower price through our social enterprise, FoodReach. Through FoodReach, we’ve helped provide community agencies like shelters and child-care centres with lower prices and timely delivery of affordable, quality food, while returning any funds back into the emergency food system.

In 2021, we set up our Community Capacity Building fund to assist our network and community in this very difficult time. For the second year in a row, we distributed funds to our member agencies and engaged them in a participatory budgeting process,

asking them how best to use these funds to support their critical frontline programs. Our agencies opted for direct funding, a crucial support especially for many of our grassroots members who may not be eligible for traditional grant opportunities. From culturally appropriate food to diapers, from grocery gift cards to shelving for food storage, each agency was able to use the funds to best meet the needs of their specific programs and communities.

Change happens when we include our community members in the decision-making process, when we listen and collaborate with the people directly affected by these issues every day. It hasn’t always felt like it this year but real change is possible and there is reason to hope. North York Harvest has grown louder in our advocacy, asking various levels of government to make long-overdue policy changes around affordable housing, decent work, and social assistance. After years of pushing for increased supports for persons with long-term disabilities and illnesses, the Canada Disability Benefit was finally passed into law in June. It is a triumph for all who have spoken up about the insufficient social supports for persons with disabilities, and we are hopeful the new year will see collaboration with the disability community to co-design a benefit that is inclusive, fully funded and will not be clawed back from existing benefits.

Change happens when those in power are engaged in looking clearly down the road we’ve been on, and taking actionable steps in enacting policy that leads to real solutions. The situation is dire, there’s no escaping that truth. Yet as long as we continue pushing for these systemic changes, we are altering our course from trying to work within a status quo that is failing everyone, to charting a new way forward.

Working with our clients, staff, donors, volunteers, community members, and our member agencies, we are more determined than ever to bring our vision of ending food insecurity to life, step by step, as we pave this new path together.

Habon Ali

Habon Ali
Chair

Ryan Noble
Executive Director

Impact by Numbers - Our Clients

291,725

Total number of
Clients Served (2022-2023)

47%

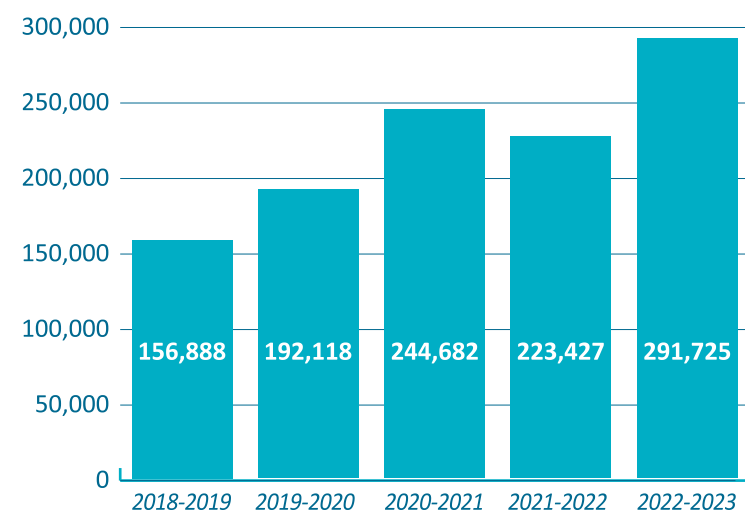
of individuals were
new clients

Number of first-time
clients (Individuals)

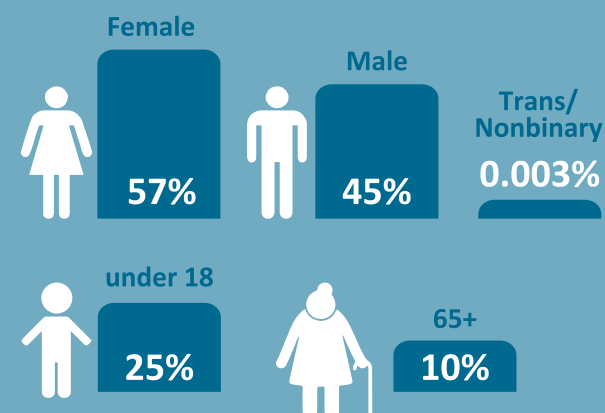


30%
Increase in clients served

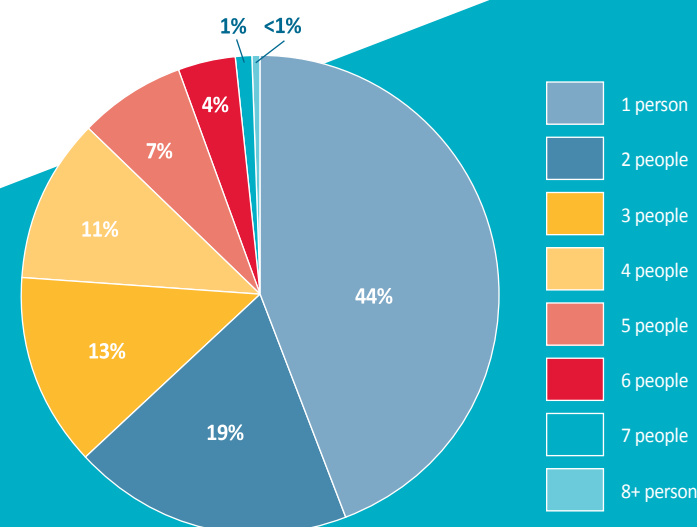
Rise in clients served (2018-2023)



Our Clients



Household Size



Education Level

59% have completed postsecondary education

Employment

47% of clients have at least one employed household member

Housing

89% live in unaffordable housing

23% of clients spend 100% of income on housing

*Data from 2023 Who's Hungry Report

Behind the Numbers: Sandra's Story

In 2022, we started our Photovoice project, drawing from a participatory research method that uses photography and stories to provide a platform for community members to voice their lived experience around food access. Sandra is a North York Harvest client who agreed to share her story. She is passionate about her work with children with special needs but with rising costs, her income and benefits are not sufficient to ensure food security in our city.

"I Choose Hope"

My name is Sandra, and I am a resident in the Lawrence Heights area for the past 25 years. I am a few minutes away from the food bank, which makes my journey so easily accessible. I very much enjoy the walk.

North York Harvest plays a vital role in meeting my food needs. I started coming here a year ago and I am able to meet my needs with the help of North York Harvest. The staff are very kind and friendly and give their time to meet their community. They are very welcoming and

they always have a few minutes to chat and want to know how you are doing. After a long day of work, it makes your day to see a friendly face here at North York Harvest, so I always welcome it.

With the pandemic and high cost of living, you would not believe how many of my clients I've lost. It's so hard to make ends meet and I'm trying hard to make it work. Sometimes when you struggle, you keep it quiet inside – but things can get better with help.

If you look, you can see this community faces problems everywhere. On the streets, on the TTC, and it really scared me. But then I thought: do I choose to live in fear? This is my life. Do I choose to accept what life is or be hopeful changes can happen?

The pandemic made it hard for a lot of people. I was not working and it was getting to my head. But I said, am I going to allow this to destroy me? No, I'm bigger than that. I choose hope.



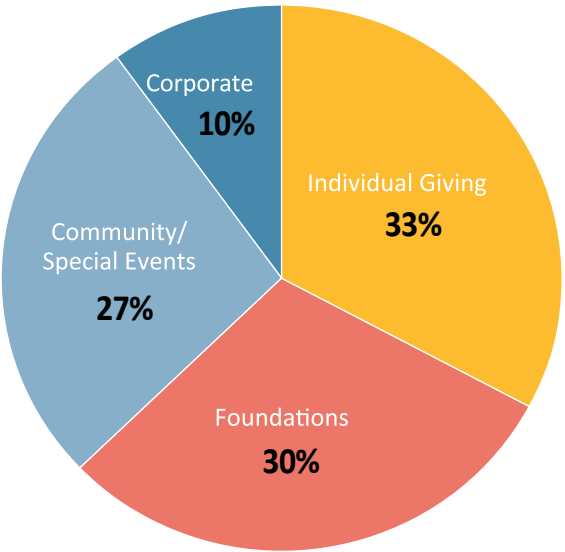
"After a long day of work, it makes your day to see a friendly face here at North York Harvest, so I always welcome it."

Impact by Numbers - North York Harvest

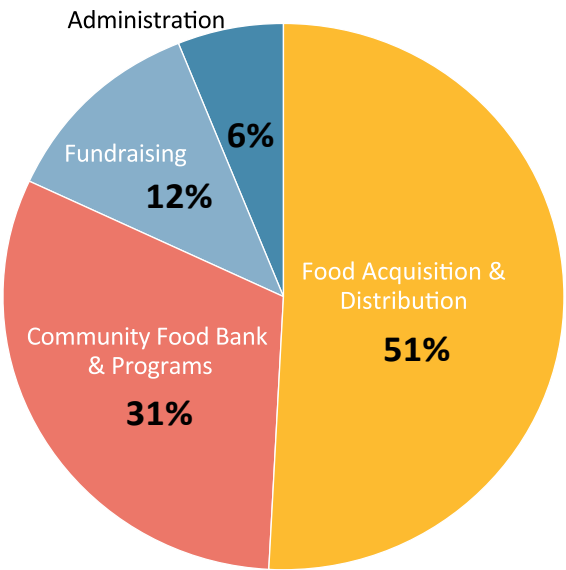
1.4
million lbs

Total amount of donated food

Source of Donations



Resource Allocation



Social Enterprise: FoodReach

- 2908 deliveries
- 37% increase in purchase orders
- 6% growth in sites reached
- 25% growth in food bank customers

Sort and Learns

Held 90 sorting events



Volunteers

- 160 core volunteers
- 667 weekend and special event volunteers
- 26,000 volunteer hours worked



Leadership in Logistics Program

6 cohorts of students graduated

Moving Forward in Our Mission

This year's statistics are grim, and when you are only looking at the numbers, the big picture can look hopeless. But each of these numbers is a person with a story, a neighbour more complicated than any statistic. Every day, we talk to these members of our community and every day, we make important steps forward together. Despite facing the most challenging year in our history, despite our resources and abilities being stretched thinner than we ever could have imagined, we've been providing North Toronto with dignified food assistance, education, focused advocacy, and long-term food solutions.

Leadership in Logistics

Over the past year, we have graduated six cohorts from our Leadership in Logistics program, an opportunity for community members to access meaningful employment after completing a four-week program in warehousing and logistics. Upon graduation, students have earned a forklift license and are offered full-time employment, with benefits, at a Canadian Tire warehouse. Not only does this provide vital education and employment opportunities, it moves more people out of the poverty cycle and away from their reliance on food banks.

For James and Anna, the LIL program helped them overcome some of the barriers newcomers face in Canada.

"This program really gave us a boost," says James. "We had so many challenges, so many worries, but this program really helped us. We are so glad we got the opportunity to get trained here. Now we are working at Canadian Tire and we're forever grateful."

Sort and Learn workshops

One long-term solution to food insecurity is educating the public on how and why it's happening and encouraging them to get involved. This year, we hosted 90 "Sort and Learn" workshops for various organizations and community groups. We invited people to help our warehouse team sort food for distribution, while learning about what we do, why we do it, and the root causes of poverty.

Enrique Jose Robert, Product Manager at Questrade, has attended three Sort and Learns with his colleagues since 2022.

"I found it to be a fulfilling and fun activity, categorizing and organizing various food items, checking expiration dates, and making sure pallets are stacked correctly," he says. "The atmosphere is bustling with volunteers and staff working towards a common goal. It was a great hands-on opportunity to contribute to our community."

Community Engagement

North York Harvest ramped up our advocacy and engagement efforts this year alongside our community members in an effort to amplify their voices on issues that affect them every day. We joined the Rally for ODSP

event at Queen's Park to stand with our community in demanding an increase to social assistance rates for individuals on the Ontario Disability Support Program, and we started a new project called Dear Councillor, engaging clients at our community food spaces in an effort to promote access and inclusion into the democratic decision-making processes during the Municipal election. More than 150 people in our community wrote letters to their incoming city councillors to share their perspectives and concerns.

We spoke alongside our program participants making deputations to the City Budget Committee and joined with other organizations to advocate for a Budget with Heart, asking Council to fund a city that works for all. Historically, many of our communities in North York have a lower voter turnout so in June, we organized a Get Out the Vote BBQ to bring our neighbours together around food while encouraging them to exercise their democratic rights and get their voices heard in the mayoral by-election.



FoodReach

With grocery prices surging, many of our agencies, and food banks across the city, are struggling to keep up with demand. Finding an affordable, reliable vendor to purchase food from is critical and our social enterprise FoodReach has been able to fill that need for many of Toronto's non-profits by utilizing our collective purchasing power to lower the cost of wholesale groceries for all. For instance, we were able to leverage the increased volume to reduce prices by an average of 35% on seven high-need food products like canned beans and fish, a huge help to FoodReach's clients. The program continued to expand in this past year with a 37% increase in purchasing orders, as more food banks and other non-profits ordered through the FoodReach portal.

Solutions to the most complex challenges facing our community are all around us and North York Harvest has been dedicated to creating tangible change. Each new idea and collaborative solution leads us forward in our mission.

2022-2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Year ended August 31, 2023

Statement of Financial Position

August 31	2023	2022
Assets	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash	895,029	1,297,788
Short-term investments	1,040,121	807,517
Receivables	160,635	142,107
Prepaid expenses	109,533	202,760
	2,205,318	2,450,172
Capital Assets	514,707	446,483
	2,720,025	2,896,655
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	261,467	318,913
Deferred revenue	458,242	586,552
Current portion of obligations under capital leases	19,051	18,047
	738,760	923,512
Obligations under capital leases	35,629	39,121
Deferred capital contributions	391,219	313,320
	1,165,608	1,275,953
Net Assets		
Community Capacity Building Fund	200,000	300,000
Contingency fund	810,000	810,000
Unrestricted	544,417	510,702
	1,554,417	1,620,702
	2,720,025	2,896,655

Statement of Operations

	2023	2022
Revenue	\$	\$
Individual donations	1,228,544	1,287,237
Services	1,127,036	847,783
Foundation donations	1,116,909	1,302,647
Community donations	859,353	524,593
Government grants	480,776	493,294
Corporate donations	366,791	283,017
Interest & other income	224,160	124,143
Special event donations	139,632	143,670
COVID-19 funding from Food Banks Canada and Feed Ontario	-	413,345
	5,543,201	5,419,729
Expenditures		
Food distribution operation	1,710,966	1,567,002
Community food banks and programs	1,670,244	1,629,927
Food distribution - food and gift card purchases	1,114,516	687,783
Fundraising	675,446	610,382
Administration	338,314	278,179
	5,509,486	4,773,273
Excess of revenue over expenditures from operations	33,715	646,456
Less: Grants to member agencies	100,000	98,125
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	(66,285)	548,331

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended August 31	2023	2022
	\$	\$
Cash was provided by (used in)		
Operating Activities		
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	(66,285)	548,331
Adjustments required to reconcile excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures with net cash provided by operating activities		
Amortization of capital assets	108,516	106,617
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	(77,651)	(73,121)
Changes in non-cash working capital balances		
Receivables	(18,528)	1,697
Prepaid expenses	93,227	(141,549)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(57,446)	(60,001)
Deferred revenue	(128,310)	(544,455)
	(146,477)	(162,481)
Investing Activities		
Purchase of capital assets	(176,740)	(109,240)
Purchase of short-term investments	(232,604)	(602,279)
	(409,344)	(711,519)
Financing Activities		
Capital contributions received	155,550	79,735
Payments of obligations under capital leases	(18,743)	(18,429)
Proceeds of obligation under capital lease	16,255)	-
	153,062	61,306
Decrease in cash during the year	(402,759)	(812,694)
Cash - beginning of year	1,297,788	2,110,482
Cash - end of year	895,029	1,297,788



Thank You

North York Harvest would not be able to provide critical support to the growing number of community members in need without the dedication and generosity of our donors, volunteers, partners and staff. This is a partial listing of those who have contributed \$1,000 or more at the time of printing.

Individuals

Anonymous
Karen Rosen and Andrew Bernstein
Jessica Armstrong
Harris Athanasiadis
David Atkinson and Sarah Joy Bennett
Joshua Auslander and Karen Glenn-Auslander
Karen and Bill Barnett
Merryl Bear
Paviter Binning
Kelly Blair
Susan Blue
Francesco Bonta
Mary Lou Bozin
Stanley and Doreen Broadbridge
Warren and Elaine Brown
John F. Bulloch
Tony Cancelliere
Rosanna Casella
Charles Caty
William Chan
David Chen and Alexandra Capper
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Tziporah Cohen and Jay Nathanson
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Khush Dadyburjor
Shaun Darchiville
Elisabeth and Jim Davis
Fred and Nelly de Jong
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Christina Prokos
Farhan Syed
Peter C. Tasker
Allan R. Taylor
Gary David Thompson*
Sally Thompson
Estate of Garbis Edmond Philipos
Torikian
Atul Verma
Will Wallace
Kirsten Weind and James Matthews
Jeffrey and Dianne Wendling
Lynn Wheatley
Barbara Woodcock McCaffrey
Dr. Kathy Yip
Dr. Paul R. Zalan
Peter Zissis

*deceased



Organizations

- Anonymous
All Saints Greek Orthodox Church
Aon Reed Stenhouse Inc
Atrium II
Aviva Canada
Blackstone Energy Services Inc
Britton Smith Foundation
Cadillac Fairview Corporation Ltd
CarHub Automotive Group
CCL Industries Inc
Charles Tennant & Company
The Classics’ La Rose Community Giving Day group
The Clover School
Community Service Partnerships (City of Toronto)
Concert Properties Ltd
Dalton Pharma Services
Danish Lutheran Church of Toronto
Day By Day Christian Ministries - Canada
De Havilland Aircraft of Canada, Engineering
Delmanor Northtown Retirement Community
Devonshire Properties Inc
Don Mills Baptist Church
- Dorothy Klein Seniors Residence
Dr. Shourideh-Ziabari Medicine Professional Corp
Earl Haig Secondary School
El-Shaddai Worship Center
Fairview Church of God
Feed Ontario
Food Banks Canada
George Weston Limited
GreenShield
Havergal College
Intrepid Quantity Surveying Inc
Ken Shaw Lexus and Ken Shaw Toyota
Lansing United Church
Loblaw Companies Ltd
Metro Inc
Mondelez Canada
Morguard Investments Limited
Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries
Mulvey & Banani
Noor Cultural Centre
North Toronto Group of Artists
North York Visual Artists
Northcrest Developments
Ram Iron and Metal Inc
Rama Gaming House Toronto East



- Sisterhood of St. John the Divine
Sone Rovet Chasson LLP
St. John’s York Mills Anglican Church
Steelworkers Humanity Fund
Summit Height Public School
Sunnylea Homes Ltd
Temple Emanu-El
Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
Toronto Accolades
UNIFOR - Local 112
University Women’s Club North York
Walmart Canada
Willowdale Middle School
York Lions Club
- The Light Foundation
Mackenzie Together Charitable Foundation
MAZON Canada
Nathan and Lily Silver Family Foundation
Ontario Trillium Foundation
The P. Austin Family Foundation
Rana Family Charitable Foundation
The Sam Sorbara Charitable Foundation
The Schulich Foundation
Seeger Family Foundation
St. Andrew’s Charitable Foundation
Tippet Foundation
Toronto Regional Real Estate Board/Ontario REALTORS Care® Foundation
William Birchall Foundation

Foundations

- Anonymous
Canada Healthy Communities Initiative
The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation
Clark Family Foundation
CP24 CHUM Christmas Wish
Edwards Charitable Foundation
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation
George Lunan Foundation
Grant Thornton Foundation
Homeless Cars
Lee Tak Wai Foundation



North York Harvest Members

ANIDA (All Nations International Development Agency)
Apostles Continuation Church of Canada
Canadian Red Cross
Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples
Community Share Food Bank, Inc.
Delta Family Resource Centre
Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women
Ernestine’s Women’s Shelter
Eva’s Initiatives
Falstaff Food Bank
Horizons for Youth
Jane Finch Community Ministry
Jane/Finch Community & Family Centre
Mount Zion Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church
North York Community House
North York YMCA
Rexdale Women’s Centre
Room to Grow Food Bank
Seneca Student Federation Incorporated
Sick Kids Centre for Community Mental Health
Society for the Living Food Bank
St. Alban’s Boys and Girls Club
St. Stephen’s Anglican Church
St. Thomas Aquinas Food Bank
Syme-Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre

Thistletown Food Bank
Tobermory Food Bank
Trethewey Tenant Group
Unison Health and Community Services
Weston Area Emergency Support
Weston King Neighbourhood Centre (Mount Dennis Neighbourhood Centre Satellite site)
York Federation of Students
York University-Glendon Women and Trans Centre
Youth Without Shelter

North York Harvest Community Food Spaces

Albion Library
Bathurst-Finch
Lawrence Heights
Oriole

Board of Directors 2023

Habon Ali – Chair
Christine Farrugia - Vice Chair
John Lee - Treasurer
Casey Ramsaran
Kelly Jackson
Sharmini Fernando
Robert Vincent
Darrick Li





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