

# Harvest Times



OCTOBER 2026

**“If we didn’t have access to these services, we would be in a very different situation right now.”**

**A Fresh Start  
Supported by  
Community...  
page 2**



**NORTH YORK  
HARVEST  
FOOD BANK**

## **What's Inside...**

One Fund, Ongoing Impact...2

Summer of Fresh Food...3

Kindness Kitchen...4

# A Fresh Start Supported by Community

## Finding stability and belonging through steady assistance

When Sonya\* and her 11-year-old son, Eric\*, first stepped into the Bathurst Finch Community Food Space, they were navigating the challenges of being in a new country all alone.

**What they found was a room filled with nutritious food and a community ready to stand with them as they rebuilt their lives.**

As a single mother learning a new language, searching for housing, and trying to access basic supports, Sonya worked hard to ensure her son had enough to eat. At our Food Space, she found much more than a meal. She received support with clothing, immigration papers, documentation, and applying for ODSP. Soon after, she met Elis, who became a steady presence for her and her son.

As our Service Navigator Manager, Elis plays a vital role in connecting families to resources that help them move from crisis to stability.

For Sonya and Eric, that support opened doors to subsidized housing waitlists, lower-income TTC Presto cards, and even a free A/C unit during the summer. These resources made all the difference.

But like many families across Toronto, Sonya and Eric are still navigating rising living costs. With rent and food prices continuing to climb, North York Harvest Food Bank remains an essential support.

*“If we didn’t have access to these services, we would be in a very different situation right now,” Eric says. “Everything that the food bank provides helps us a lot.”*

This remarkable story shows how your gift to North York Harvest provides far more than short-term relief. Your caring contributions help build long-term stability, showing up not just once, but for as long as it takes.

*\*Names have been changed to protect client identity.*

# One Fund, Ongoing Impact

## Jessica’s donor-advised fund helps her support her neighbours all year long

As a resident of North York, Jessica has witnessed food insecurity becoming one of the greatest challenges facing her community.

Through her work in the charitable sector and in the classroom with children, she’s seen how not having enough to eat can affect every part of a person’s life, especially a child’s ability to learn and thrive on a day-to-day basis.

*“I was inspired to support North York Harvest after seeing one of their campaigns on social media,” says Jessica. “Knowing the incredible work they do in my own community, it felt like a meaningful opportunity to help neighbours who may be facing difficult circumstances.”*

Jessica chose to make her gift through a donor-advised fund (DAF). She used to assume DAFs were only for people with significant wealth, but providers like GiveWise have shown her how accessible and flexible they can be. She likes having one place to organize her charitable priorities — keeping track of the causes she cares about, setting up recurring support, and planning her giving throughout the year.

*“My experience has been seamless,” says Jessica. “If you’re considering supporting North York Harvest Food Bank this way, I would encourage you to do so.”*

Elis, Service Navigator Manager





## Summer of Fresh Food

You're helping families feel seen, nourished, and cared for

Summer is one of the hardest seasons for food banks. Non-perishable donations drop sharply, and shelves become bare just as families face rising food costs. **But at North York Harvest, summer is also a season of creativity — a time when partnerships, community events, and innovative programs connect families with the fresh, healthy food they need.**

Here's some of what you helped to make possible this summer:

### Fresh Food at Foodie Fest

At the annual Foodie Festival, hosted by Rexdale Community Health Centre and Albion Public Library, we distributed 2,945 lbs. of corn, apples, oranges, kale, plantain, and sweet potatoes to families living with food insecurity.

Rexdale CHC purchased \$6,000 of fresh produce through **FoodReach**, our social enterprise that uses our collective buying power to lower food costs for schools, libraries, shelters, drop-ins, and food banks.

### Summer Green Market

At the Summer Green Market at Albion, we were able to sell fruits and vegetables to families at 60% less than grocery store prices! This wouldn't have

been possible without a grant we received from the Toronto Public Library — thank you!

*"Any surplus revenue FoodReach generates from a sale goes directly into North York Harvest's community programs," says Lianne, Senior Manager of Social Enterprise and Community Wealth Building. "This includes our workforce development program, sustainable livelihoods program, and our food spaces. All these initiatives support building community wealth and strengthen our communities."*

### Fresh Food Donations

We're so grateful to local producers who sprang into action to help us fill the summer gap. Thanks to their support, we were able to distribute fresh food to families across northern Toronto — produce that would have otherwise been out of reach for many.

**But space limitations in our current warehouse mean we still have to turn away thousands of pounds of fresh food every year.** Our community needs this support, and we're determined to expand our capacity. Our new Community Food Hub will include nearly 5,000 sq. ft. of refrigerated space, dramatically increasing our ability to store and distribute fresh produce, dairy, and culturally relevant foods year-round.

# Kindness Kitchen

It started with a comment: a neighbour told Isabella they only ate one meal a day — that's all they could afford.

A recent high school grad, Isabella wanted to spend her summer giving back. Through Volunteer Toronto, she found Youth Fund Canada, applied for a grant, and received \$5,000. She partnered with North York Harvest Food Bank — timely, since summer donations often dry up while need stays high.

The food bank connected her “Kindness Kitchen” project with Mount Zion Filipino Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which serves 300+ people monthly. Using her grant, Isabella made biweekly purchases through FoodReach, the food bank's social enterprise, asking community members what they needed most. *“One thing I learned is most people need oil to cook — it's a gold mine to have at the food bank,”* she says.

Each order included canned protein, fruit, snacks, and staples. *“It feels nice to know I'm making an impact,”* Isabella says.

**“I wanted to relieve some of the burden on families — especially with food. It's something everyone needs.”**



## The Gift of TIME is Yours to Give

*“My favourite part about volunteering is having a great feeling that I help out and being able to tell my friends about my experience and ask that they help out too.”* – Chloe

On December 21 & December 28, we'll be opening our doors and welcoming our community to help sort essential food for our neighbours facing food insecurity. Join us for a family-friendly, fun, and meaningful opportunity to give back.

**Volunteer for the Holiday Food Sort by contacting Judy at [judithreda@northyorkharvest.com](mailto:judithreda@northyorkharvest.com)**



**North York Harvest Food Bank**  
**116 Industry Street, Toronto, ON, M6M 4L8**

Charitable Registration Number: 11906 2495 RR0001

If you have any questions or are interested in supporting North York Harvest Food Bank please contact:

**Natasha Bowes, CFRE, MFA-P**  
**Director of Development and Marketing**  
**[natasha@northyorkharvest.com](mailto:natasha@northyorkharvest.com)**  
**416-635-7771**