

York Region

**Food  
Network**



FALL 2005

# NEWSLETTER

## Donate your HBC Reward Points to the York Region Food Network!!

The HBC Rewards Community Program allows supporters of the York Region Food Network to take an active role in YRFN's fundraising efforts. YRFN will use the donated HBC points to support various community initiatives such as the Back-to-School Backpack project and the Winter Needs program.

If you would like to donate your HBC points to the Food Network, please complete the following six easy on-line steps:

- Go to [www.hbc rewards.com/community](http://www.hbc rewards.com/community)
- Click on 'Donate to a community group'
- Under 'What would you like to do?', click on 'Current Community Donations'
- Enter your HBC rewards number found on your HBC card
- Click on 'Search for a Community'
- Enter York Region Food Network under Community Name

If you wish to make a one-time donation by transferring all or a portion of your accumulated points, please call the HBC Rewards Office at 1-866-746-7422 to request a lump sum donation to the York Region Food Network.

*Thank you!*

## Food for thought

Executive Director's Message

There are eight food banks currently operating in York Region. Annual statistics from five York Region food banks (Aurora, Georgina, Markham, Newmarket, and Richmond Hill) indicate that between January and December 2004, these five food banks fed **43,951** people, of which **19,527** or **44%** were children. These numbers do not include those individuals served through the many community lunch or dinner programs offered across the region, or the additional food banks and food access programs. What do these numbers signify? They tell us that as the number of low-income and working poor increases, food security becomes a larger problem.

At the Food Network, we see this issue daily as our client base increases. It is important to remember that food banks and food access programs were started as temporary short term measures to alleviate poverty. Yet York Region food banks have been in operation for decades, and more have opened in the past year. Volunteers continue to donate more hours and resources to keep up with demand. Food drives last for longer and we receive more requests for assistance each season. This past summer, as expenses such as hydro and rent continued to increase individuals and families struggled to meet basic needs and turned to the food banks for support. It is important to remember that food banks provide an emergency supply of food only – three days worth. What happens after that? Unfortunately there isn't one easy answer. We must advocate ensuring that all York Region residents have access to food. Food policies and programs must be in place to support those struggling to make ends met. Together, we can make a difference.

Elizabeth Brims

*...the voice of hunger in York Region*

Our vision is to ensure that all residents of York Region are food secure. Food security is the assurance that all people, at all times, are able to acquire nutritional food in a way that upholds basic human dignity.

Our mission is to increase access to affordable, nutritious food for York Region residents. York Region Food Network will:

- Raise awareness and promote food security issues and policy change in our communities.
- Support community-based food security programs and services.

## Spring Fundraiser

**Mark Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in your calendar! Creative Colours Fashions in Aurora will be hosting their annual fashion show. All proceeds from this prestigious event will go to the Food Network. The Junior League of Newmarket/Aurora Branch will be supporting YRFN with this event.**

**Tickets are \$50. Call 905-967-0428 to book a table, to volunteer, or for more information.**

Editor: Kirsten Eastwood

# Another successful season at YRFN Community Gardens

Catherine Cook, Community Garden Coordinator.



Someone once said, "Where you stand depends a lot on where you're sitting". What happened this year in our community gardens was very dependent on which of the three community gardens you were a part of.

At our Newmarket Community Garden, the rich soil once again brought forth a bountiful harvest this season; unfortunately it also brought an unprecedented number of weeds. As a result, the Newmarket gardeners were forced to spend many a long day toiling in the hot sun to rid their gardens of the unwanted intruders. Fortunately for most, their perseverance paid off in the end with another excellent crop.

While it was weeds that were abundant in Newmarket, it was faces that were new in Markham this year. The Markham Community Garden welcomed a whopping twenty-nine new families to the garden in 2005. Most of us can still recall the first year of community gardening and the many challenges we were presented with, but hats off to this group who seemed to know exactly what they were doing, right from the start. Both new and experienced gardeners from Markham enjoyed a year of warm weather and full baskets.

Gardeners at the Aurora Community Garden began their second season with vivid memories of last year's rainy weather, rocks, and clay soil. Almost any sort of vegetable yield this year would be an improvement and reason for celebration. Few would have believed the second-year garden could make such a significant turn-around, as a summer of warm weather and a second season of compost made a world of difference. Of course soil doesn't just improve overnight; the hard work of the individual gardeners contributed to the improvement in gardening by adding valuable amendments to the soil.

One thing all three gardens shared was their spirit of giving. The Newmarket, Markham, and Aurora Food Pantries gratefully received a combined amount of produce that weighed in at over 1000 pounds.



Lauren Cook, Junior Gardener &  
Catherine Cook, CGC

No matter where you are sitting, this is a tremendous contribution.

I would like to thank all the gardeners, not only for their generous donations of food, but also for their invaluable donation of time and effort to make each of the community gardens a special place.

## Hungry in York Region – People like you and me

Each year, York Region Food Network participates in the survey of People Accessing Emergency Food Programs in the GTA<sup>1</sup>. This survey is conducted annually by the Daily Bread Food Bank and associated agencies. York Region Food Network assists by collecting York Region specific data in order to provide a snapshot of the situations and circumstances faced by food bank clients in the region. What follows is a summary of what was learned about York Region food bank clients.



Photo by Kathy Dunn

- **Education:** the majority of food bank clients have graduated high school and a quarter have a college/university degree – just like you and me.
- **Employment:** 2 of every 3 clients are from employed households – just like you and me.

What is different?

- **Housing:** Only 8% own their own home, while 9 out of 10 live in rental housing. About two thirds of food bank clients are paying 50% or more of their income towards shelter.
- **Hunger:** 41% of respondents reported being hungry as they didn't have enough food, at least one day a week.
- **Income:** The average annual income of respondents ranged from **\$8700** per year for a single person to **\$17,000** per year for a family. In comparison, the average annual York Region household income in 2001 was **\$91,800**.

***The York Region food bank client could be you.***

***Hunger in York Region is a reality.***

***How can you help?***

***Support your local food bank – donate, volunteer, or advocate!***

1. For the comprehensive report Hungry in York Region: Results of the 2005 Survey of People Accessing Emergency Food Programs in the GTA, please visit our website [www.yrfn.ca](http://www.yrfn.ca).

# A tale of two community dinners

Christine Woodley, Volunteer Reporter

Descend the modern, clean steps and already the pungent smell of warm garlic bread fills the air. Enter the sunny, spacious room and see an array of round tables and a fantastic spread of soup, salad, and pizza. Your favourite Italian restaurant? No – it's the Welcome Table, the weekly community supper held at Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora.

Each Wednesday, upwards of 50 people, many of whom are regulars, gather here to enjoy a healthy meal. But, there's another benefit that has grown from these gatherings. People are here to see friends, meet new ones and connect with people who understand and never judge. And, that is just as important as the delicious food.

As the crowd gathers, volunteers keep pace by carrying large bowls and platters from the sparkling kitchen to the serving tables. They've been working since mid-afternoon, cooking and preparing the room for the regular Wednesday dinner.

An hour or so after things get started, a large family with several small children arrive. Without blinking an eye, the volunteer staff roll out another large round table, set it, and the new group is quickly settled in to supper.

Volunteer Graham vouches for the food. "On other nights we've had lamb dinners, briskets and more. It's always very good food," he says.

Amid the happy chaos, one can hear comments like "good salad," and "well, hello there," driving home the fact that it's the mix of good food and good company that make The Welcome Table a very special place indeed.

On a different evening a few kilometres away, another community dinner is underway. The Crosslands Church community dinner operates every Thursday evening at 5 pm at the old hydro building at the end of Main Street near Fairy Lake.



Janet Rodger, Chef & Beth Mocherniak  
Volunteer at The Welcome Table

The space is cozy, with seven tables of six and serving tables in one room, and the entrance and kitchen in the other. Tonight, there is chicken, rice, ham, salad and devilled eggs on the menu. And, a special dessert of homemade carrot cake is served to celebrate the birthdays of two of the volunteers.



Crosslands Community Dinner Volunteers

Before everyone begins eating, Carol Cologna from Crosslands Church speaks to the group, telling them about some of the church's other activities. Soon, everyone has received their meal and begins to eat, accompanied by a live band consisting of a keyboard player, violinist, guitar player and singer.

Volunteer Beth Leech has been here for two years. "You just don't realize the need in the community until you see it for yourself," she observes. "I really enjoy meeting the people."

This is the fourth year for Crosslands Community Dinner and they count on their volunteers as well as local food retailers like Vince's Country Market and Reed's Dairy for donations.

Like the Trinity dinner, the chatter is friendly as regulars and newcomers alike partake of food and friendship. And that is a powerful and meaningful combination.

## 3rd Annual Golf Tournament a fundraising success!

Terry O'Brien, YRFN Chair

The 3rd annual Charity Golf Classic for YRFN was an overwhelming success. Fifty-five golfers attended the function at Silver Lakes Golf & Country Club for a terrific day of golf, prizes, fun, and fundraising.

\$5000 was raised to support various Food Network programs. We would like to thank the many volunteers who made the day run smoothly, the golfers who graciously attend each year, as well as our wonderful hosts at Silver Lakes. In addition, we would like to thank the generous hole sponsors and donors who continue to support the tournament. We would like to give special thanks to Hood Packaging for their sponsorship of the tournament dinner.



Hood Packaging Representatives

*Thank you to the following for their sponsorship:*

- AJS Direct Sales & Marketing Ltd.
- Alwinds Industries Ltd.
- Barney Cummings & Associates Ferrier Inc.
- Great Earth Cleaning
- Hill Hunter Losell Law Firm LLP
- Instant Custom Signs, Brampton
- O'Neil Electric Supply Ltd.
- Paul Cappuccitti Insurance
- Phil's Haulage & Excavating Ltd.
- Rogers Cable Communications Inc.
- St. John Chrysostom Parish, Newmarket.
- Talbot Park Homes
- Ted Kurello – Dundee Securities
- Whitchurch Riding Academy

**Dinner Sponsor**  
Hood Packaging

# New Community Partner

Andrea Armstrong, JLT

Since 1926, the Junior League of Toronto (JLT) has made a positive impact on the quality of life for thousands of residents of the GTA by contributing millions of volunteer hours and over \$4 million to the community. Throughout the years, the JLT has been committed to empowering trained volunteers to be a leading force in meeting critical community needs through direct projects and service programs. The Junior League of Toronto welcomes all women interested in volunteering time to improving the community and making a difference. The Junior League of Toronto – North Group – is proud to be part of the York Region Food Network and Creative Colours Spring Fashion Show Fundraiser. We look forward to seeing you there!



Earl Dusek, Regional President, presents over 30 filled backpacks to Elizabeth Brims, YRFN

## Back to School backpacks

This year York Region Food Network and local food banks distributed over 335 new backpacks to children of low-income families. Each backpack was filled with essential school supplies such as paper, pens, crayons, markers, and binders. Through the generous support of the Food Network's new corporate partner - Rogers Cable - over \$5000 worth of school supplies was collected from the community through local Rogers Video locations and York Region Newsgroup locations.

# Over 150,000 pounds of food was collected during the Fall Food drive!



Megan Howe, YRFN's youngest food drive volunteer, helps to empty out the collection bins.

The Food Network would like to extend sincere thanks to the 35 high school students who volunteered 187 hours handing out food drive bags at grocery stores across the region.

If you would like to earn community service hours during the Spring 2006 food drive, please leave your name on our volunteer hotline - 905-967-0539.



The Aurora Tigers Minor Pee Wee 'A' Hockey team and their parents gleaned 41 bushels of fresh produce at 'Round the Bend farm. Carrots, potatoes, beets, cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli were distributed to a variety of food access programs and services in York Region. If you would like more information on how your organization can participate

### Join the YRFN's Fundraising Campaign

I support the YRFN's work to improve access to affordable, nutritious food for all people of York Region.

I have enclosed my donation of \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$35 \_\_\_\_\_ other.

Cheques should be made payable to York Region Food Network YRFN will issue a charitable tax receipt for all donations over \$10.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

To donate by credit card, visit our website at [www.yrfn.ca](http://www.yrfn.ca), and click on the link to CanadaHelps.org; a secure website where you can make a tax-deductible credit card donation to YRFN. Your privacy is important to us, and we are committed to protecting and safeguarding your personal information. We do not rent, sell or trademark our mailing list, but rather use it to keep you informed of York Region Food Network's activities, services, and programs. Please contact our office to update your information or to be removed from the mailing list.



194 Eagle Street, Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 1J6  
Phone: 905-967-0428 Toll Free: 1-866-454-YRFN (9736) Fax: 905-967-0097  
Email: [yrfn@bellnet.ca](mailto:yrfn@bellnet.ca) • [www.yrfn.ca](http://www.yrfn.ca)  
Registered Charity # 89229 6369 RR0001