

York Region

Food Network



FALL 2006

NEWSLETTER

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.

Annual Creative Colours Fashion Show

Mark April 18th in your calendar as the date of the Creative Colours Fashion Show. YRFN is delighted once again to be the charitable beneficiary of this outstanding event. Call 905-967-0428 to book your table!

PLEASE NOTE NEW EMAIL ADDRESS:
4moreinfo@yrfn.ca

Editor: Kirsten Eastwood



**United Way
of York Region
Member Agency**

YRFN Joins the United Way of York Region

This year the United Way of York Region (UWYR) added three new Member Agencies – including York Region Food Network – to its roster of more than 40 regionally based agencies delivering over 100 human care critical programs.

The funds provided by UWYR to the Food Network will be used to support the production and distribution of more than 200,000 York Region specific food drive bags. We are proud to join the United Way of York Region family.

Food For Thought

A message from the Executive Director

Each October, the semi-annual food drive keeps us all hopping in the office. The phones ring off the hook and our email and voicemail boxes fill up with requests from York Region residents seeking to make food donations in support of the drive.

Together with the Directors of each York Region food bank, YRFN sets a collection goal for the drive. This number represents the total number of pounds of food needed to feed those who are hungry from now until the next food drive.

Thanks to the generosity of the residents of York Region, the annual Fall Food Drive collected 152, 250 pounds of food! Sadly, we were 16,650 pounds short of our goal. What does this mean?

In the short-term it means we will cross our fingers and hope for more food donations over the holiday season. Does it mean that, in the long-term, there will be food shortages at the food banks? Yes, there might.

Ironically in the autumn of 1990, a total of 227, 500 pounds of food were collected in York Region. The Regional Municipality of York is the fastest growing region in Ontario and has the reputation of being a wealthy community. So, why the decline in food donations over the past 16 years? I do not know the answer. I suspect that in 1990 the food drive was still a fairly recent program. Similar to food banks, food drives started as short-term temporary measures to alleviate hunger in the community. Now, more than 20 years later, we still hold drives for food and food banks are still operating. What concerns me most is that the number of hungry residents increases annually. Page 4 of this newsletter shows a graph depicting food bank use versus supply of food; as you can see, these food banks will soon be very short of food. In the short-term we need more food; in the long-term, we need food security for every resident of York Region.

...the voice of hunger in York Region

Politicians play The Poverty Game

Marie Jennerich, YRFN Board Member

On Wednesday October 18, YRFN hosted an event to which York Region candidates running for municipal office were invited to play The Poverty Game. In the Poverty Game, each participant is provided with an identity and a profile. Each profile is a typical situation of someone on a low income; participants are asked to stay in character throughout the game. They are provided with a monthly income based on current social assistance and minimum wage rates and are asked to pay monthly and weekly expenses from that income. As players move along the board, they are challenged by real life situations, such as unexpected medical expenses and transit costs.

Sixteen politicians representing eight municipalities attended the event at the Magna Room in the Aurora Public Library. Representatives from print and electronic media attended as well, which resulted in a front-page article in the Era Banner on October 22, 2006.

Here's what the October 18th participants told us about playing the Poverty Game:

'I felt depressed at not being able to afford a simple luxury such as a cup of coffee with a friend in a restaurant.'

'I felt isolated and ashamed because of the stigma attached to being a social assistance recipient.'

'I felt guilty that I couldn't provide my children with the money for school events, supplies and activities.'



YRFN continues to raise awareness about how difficult it is for York Region families living in poverty. We need feedback and ideas on how we can address this issue. We would be pleased to provide facilitators to groups in the community who are interested in playing The Poverty Game and in spreading this message.

It all adds up

Catherine Cook, Program Coordinator

How does one quantify the value of such things as the semi-annual food drive, community gardens, backyard gardening kit program, and the backpack program?

Statistically speaking, sticking to the numbers is one way to do it. The residents of York Region generously donated over 225,000 pounds of food during the spring and fall food drives this year. This food was distributed to the food banks of York Region, helping out thousands of families.

Over 160 families were provided with the opportunity to plant and tend to their own gardens at the YRFN community gardens located in Aurora, Newmarket, and Markham this past season. Come harvest time, the community gardeners donated more than 3,000 pounds of their fresh fruits and vegetables to the local food banks and social service agencies.

The backyard gardening kit program reached out to a record 67 young families in York Region. Many of these families were introduced to gardening for the first time.

This past August, as families with school-aged children were preparing for the new school season, YRFN's backpack program distributed 380 backpacks and supplies to families through York Region food banks.

Adding up these numbers reflects one measure of success. What is missing, however, are the stories that go beyond the numbers. Stories about the Aurora children who wanted to help a local charity. They set up a Kool-Aid stand to raise money to purchase food for donation to the Aurora Food Pantry. They raised over \$150.00, which they used to purchase food at their local grocers. When it came down to their final few dollars, they had to make a choice between buying yummy granola bars or more practical items such as baby formula. Their mother was proud to say they made a good choice.

Another story is about the woman who shared with me her appreciation for the fresh produce that our community gardeners donate to the food banks at harvest time. In the past, she has counted on that fresh produce to nourish her own family and this year, she decided to grab a shovel and become a community gardener herself.

There are numerous other stories to be told, but I will finish with this one. Imagine seeing the elementary school children lining up for the school bell on the first day of school. A child is proudly wearing a backpack and matching lunch bag she received from the York Region Food Network Backpack program. Just a few steps away is another child who volunteered to help pack that very same backpack with schools supplies just a few weeks earlier. Both children are unaware of the connection they share.

It all adds up.

4th Annual Charity Golf Classic

Terry O'Brien, Corporate Liaison



A number of new events at our 4th Annual Charity Golf Classic created a great deal of excitement among our 70 golfers and allowed for greater participation from over 40 corporate sponsors. This resulted in a record breaking \$9,400 of fundraising!

In particular, YRFN would like to thank the following corporate sponsors for their support:

- Dymin Steel and Everest Supply sponsored lunch and dinner for all involved
- Markville Toyota arranged for Hole-In-One events with a 2007 Toyota Camry and a trip to Atlantic City up for grabs
- Royal Bank of Canada sponsored a Beat-the-Bank event challenging players to be Closer-To-The-Pin
- Pine Farms Orchard and Fruit Winery featured a wine tasting
- Shoeless Joe's of Sharon featured a Shrimp/Caesar tasting

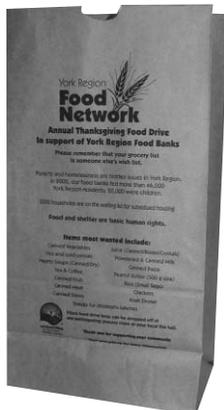
Silver Lakes Golf & Country Club were great hosts, even holding off the rain for our golfers. Next year's tournament has been moved up to Wednesday August 29th, 2007, and promises to be even more successful.



In a new twist to fundraising, we will be launching our first Christmas Poinsettia Fundraiser at Upper Canada Mall. Over three weekends, six community groups will staff the YRFN booth and face off in a friendly competition to sell the most poinsettias.

York Region Food Network would like to thank all the sponsors of the 4th Annual Charity Golf Classic

- AGS Contract Glazing Limited
- Allied Int. Credit
- Alwind Industries Ltd.
- Andy Dislich - RE/MAX Omega Realty
- Angeline Navarra - R.M.T.
- Art Source
- Belinda Stronach, MP Newmarket-Aurora
- BLAIR Technology Solutions Inc.
- Creative Colours Fashions
- Creative Headlines Hair Design
- Crosspoint Software
- Direct Energy
- Dr. Raymond Wong Dental Clinic
- Dr. Vicky Pringle - Veterinarian
- Dymin Steel Inc.
- Everest Supply Inc.
- Henry Equestrian Insurance Brokers Ltd.
- Hill Hunter Losell Law Firm LLP
- Hood Packaging Corp.
- Howard Johnson Hotel
- I Love Rewards Inc.
- Instant Custom Signs - Brampton
- Little Caesars Pizza - Newmarket
- Mark's Choice Ltd.
- Markville Toyota
- Newmarket Food Pantry
- Ontario Snowmobiler and ATV World Magazines
- Paul Cappuccitti Mortgages, Insurance & Annuities
- Phil's Haulage and Excavating Ltd.
- Pine Farms Orchard & Fruit Winery
- Potruff & Smith Insurance Brokers Inc.
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- Sheraton Parkway Toronto North
- Shoeless Joe's - Sharon
- Spa Eden
- Ted Kurello - Dundee Wealth Management
- Tie Rack
- Town of Markham
- Town of Richmond Hill
- VandenBosche Jewelers
- Virtual Ranch
- West Photo Inc.



York Region Food Drive Bag

Terry O'Brien, Corporate Liaison

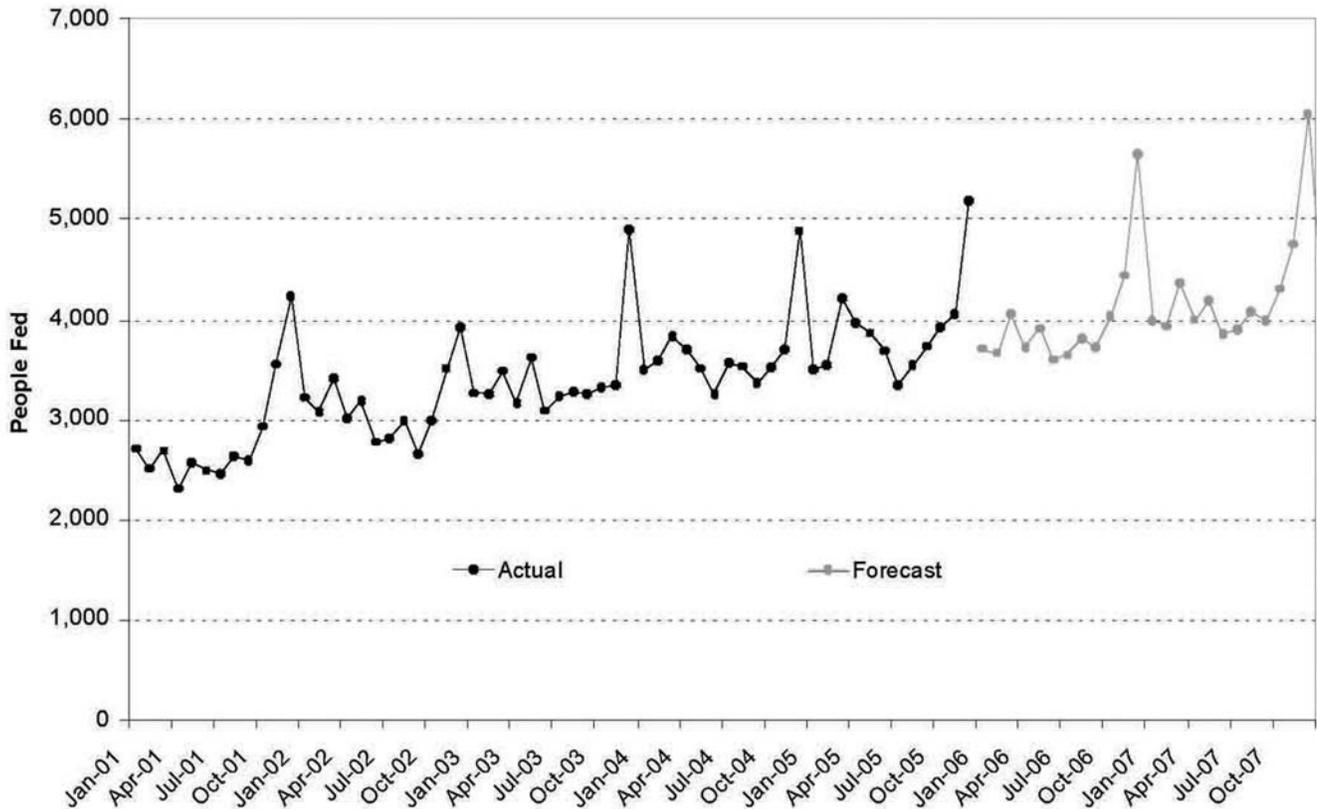
The York Region Food Drive Bag, funded by the United Way of York Region, gained essential additional support from the York Region Newspaper Group (YRNG). On very short notice they were able to distribute close to a quarter of a million bags through The Era-Banner, The Liberal, Economist &

Sun, Sun-Tribune, and the Advocate. Their phenomenal support resulted in immediate and significant increases in both donations and awareness.

Early in the drive, Rosanne Rodgers, Newmarket Food Pantry Director stated that "Having the paper bags in the Metroland papers has really paid off - just over 24,400 lbs as of this morning! And we are expecting more deliveries throughout the week." This is a good indication of the power and scope of the YRNG in our community!

Unfortunately food bank use in York Region continues to increase at an alarming rate – a 38% increase between 2001 and 2005. In 2001, fewer than 3,000 Region residents used a food bank each month; in 2005, this increased to almost 4,000 residents per month. In 2007, York Region Food Network predicts that 4,284 residents will be visiting banks each month. This represents an increase of 53% since 2001.

**Actual and forecast of people fed by food banks in York Region
2001-2007**



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, and click on the link to www.CanadaHelps.org, which is a secure website where you can make a tax-deductible credit card donation to YRFN, or contact our offices at 905-967-0428,

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, or email 4moreinfo@yrfn.ca with 'Unsubscribe' in the subject line.



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