

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.



Join us on National Hunger Awareness Day

June 2nd, 2009, is National Hunger Awareness Day, coordinated by Food Banks Canada and food banks across the country to highlight the needs in our communities. Over 4000 York Region residents are helped by food banks every month and more than 40% are children. As you can imagine, the economic downturn and job losses are impacting many members of our community and people who had never expected to need to turn to food banks for help are having to do so. Others assisted may be seniors, people with disabilities and even people with full time jobs who need help to make ends meet.

York Region Food Network is hosting a Lunch and Learn event for Hunger Awareness Day from 11:30 to 1:30 at our location at 510 Penrose Street in Newmarket. Our event will be one of many happening all across the country on June 2nd. We will raise awareness of the difficult choices faced by people who turn to food banks for help, and we will ask York Region residents to make the choice to take action to help reduce hunger in our community. Food bank clients face difficult choices on a daily basis, often having to choose between paying rent and bills or buying food. Many Canadians have a much easier choice: choosing to donate food, funds, or time, to help those in need.

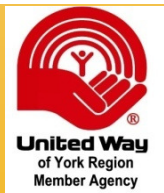
During the summer months, donations typically fall off, and two initiatives are being launched on Hunger Awareness Day to try and help alleviate this situation. Nationally, Kraft Canada is matching cash donations to food banks made between June 2 and June 10, 2009. They have designated \$27,000 for Ontario and it would be wonderful if we were able to receive our share in York Region. Locally, we are launching our Give and Go campaign to encourage cash and food donations directly to your local food bank during the summer months.

We hope you can join us on June 2nd. RSVP to kima@yrfn.ca or call 905-967-0428 ext 201.

...the voice of hunger in York Region

510 Penrose St.
 Newmarket, ON
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Phone:
 905-967-0428
 or
 1-866-454-9736



Editor: Kim Arseneault

How Does Your Garden Grow?

As Program Coordinator with the York Region Food Network I get the opportunity to work with a dynamic group of volunteers. While most volunteers help out at our community gardens, others participate in support of our local food banks by volunteering their time to conduct Annual Food Bank Surveys or lend a hand preparing school backpacks for families in need. Whatever the volunteer experience, this position has enabled me to be a part of some great conversations with our volunteers.

When chatting with garden volunteers at the community gardens our discussions typically start out with the focus on the garden or the weather, but I am often struck by how often the discussion seems to be a reflection on something more than just gardening, that what we seem to be discussing is more about our own growth rather than that of the plants, reflecting on our own disposition, rather than what the weather brings.

What follows are not direct quotes, but rather interpretations of some conversations I have had with volunteers who have helped out with the various volunteer opportunities YRFN offers.

“How Does Your Garden Grow?”

“My garden grows through thoughtful planning, nurturing, hard work and sharing my bounty with others.”

“My garden grows through volunteering my time in support of a worthy cause. Knowing that at the end of the day I have made a difference, whether big or small.”

“My garden grows through my ambitions guiding me to create opportunities that make life a little easier for others.”

York Region Food Network Annual General Meeting

June 11, 2009

7:30pm

510 Penrose Street, Newmarket

Business Meeting followed by
Refreshments and Networking

RSVP: kima@yrfn.ca or 905-967-0428 ext 201



Students from Pickering College assist in preparing the York Region Food Network garden plot.

“My garden grows through discovery. Each day I am presented with the chance to learn through my struggles, and the struggles of those around me.”

“My garden grows through opportunity. Opportunity that is in every basket of vegetables I take to the food bank, or in every backpack I fill for a child.”

Hopefully this summer I will have the opportunity to chat with many of you on a warm, summer day when the garden is in full bloom and we are enjoying everything that the community garden offers us. Take a moment to say hello to a fellow gardener and ask them how their garden is doing. Odds are there will be more to their response than just an update on their first ripened tomato. Until then, enjoy the springtime weather and I'll see you at the garden.

Catherine



Andrea DiBlasio hands Joan Stonehocker, Executive Director, a generous donation on behalf of Leapfrog Business Networking

Cooking Healthy Together

Do you want to learn to cook? York Region Food Network now has a full kitchen! The kitchen provides an opportunity to pilot a new "Cooking Healthy Together" program.

Cooking Healthy Together is a monthly program that brings people together to prepare and share a healthy meal. Participants learn basic cooking skills, prepare healthy & affordable recipes, plan meals and practice safe food handling and preparation. Each of the sessions is facilitated by a Nutrition Educator with York Region Community & Health Services.



Just one of many delicious meals cooked up in our Community Kitchen program

There are many rewarding aspects in this program. First of all, most of the excitement is in the kitchen! It is amazing to see everyone coming together, working and helping one another to prepare a meal. Not only are participants learning new cooking skills but this program provides social interaction. Everyone gets excited when it comes to food!

When all the recipes are prepared, the complete meal is shared with the participants. This is truly a special time to "taste and talk". Discussion takes place on how tasty the recipes are, how much the meal costs and what will be on the menu the next month.

This program not only provides new ideas and recipes that you will be taking back to your family but it also creates a sense of belonging in the community. If you would like more information on the program, please contact Yvonne Kelly at York Region Food Network at 905-967-0428 ext. 205.

YRFN's New Program Coordinator!



My name is Yvonne Kelly and I am pleased to join the York Region Food Network as their newest staff member. I currently live on a small acreage just outside of Tottenham with my husband, 3 boys and numerous farm "pets". I enjoy living in the country and the commute to and from work in Newmarket is actually very enjoyable.

In my former life, I worked with a wide variety of community based health promotion projects in at-risk communities in Toronto. My background is Social Work and my love is community development and that has guided my various career choices. In several of my work experiences, I have had my hand in the development of student nutrition programs, community kitchens and other initiatives centered around food.

I continue to have a strong interest in the continuum of opportunities that are either available to us, or that need to be created, in order to address the complex issues of food, and food access, in equitable and sustainable ways. The opportunity to explore some "out-of-the-box" approaches and initiatives to this most holistic of issues, food, is very exciting and is what attracted me to the position with YRFN.

My position as Program Coordinator will involve working in partnership with the Food Banks in York Region and supporting them in carrying out their work at the local community level. I am excited to also work in partnership with Blue Door Shelters to create the Nourishing Change Program that will support individuals and families as they leave the shelter system, and with the Women's Centre of York Region on their Bridging the Gap Program. I will also be playing a key role in the Back Pack Program, Gleaning Program, and Community Kitchens.

I'd like to say that it has been a very enjoyable start to my new job. Thanks to the staff at YRFN and many of the volunteers and community partners that have made me feel very welcome, and part of your team.

GIVE AND GO Summer Food Drive

In support of York Region Food Banks

As you head into the Summer and prepare to go on vacation, please remember that we have many residents in York Region, almost half of them children, who rely on your generous food donations through the summer months as well as throughout the rest of the year.

- In 2008, our Food Banks served more than 42,728 York Region residents; 17,730 of those were children. The number of individuals and families who are forced to rely on Food Banks is on the rise.
- Given the current economic situation and increasing number of job layoffs we expect to see, the number of food bank visitors will increase over the summer months.
- The summer is not typically a time when people think to donate to the Food Banks but it is definitely a time when we continue to need your help

FOOD DONATIONS	YORK REGION FOOD BANKS
Rice, Crackers, Macaroni and Cheese Juice (Canned/Boxes/Crystals) Hot and Cold Cereals Canned Pasta Canned Vegetables Canned Meat Canned Fruit Tea and Coffee Powdered and Canned Milk Hearty Soups Peanut Butter	Aurora Food Pantry Georgina Community Food Pantry King Township Food Bank Markham Food Bank Mount Albert Food Pantry Newmarket Food Pantry Richmond Hill Community Food Bank Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank Vaughan Food Bank
** Also Toiletry Items are appreciated	Please go online to www.yrfn.ca for contact information.

Between June 2-10th, the Kraft Challenge will be matching your cash donations to the Food Bank of your choice. Simply go online to www.foodbankscanada.ca to make a donation or contact your local Food Bank to make a donation. For further information, call York Region Food Network at 905-967-0428 ext. 205

FORE!!!!

York Region Food Network
7th Annual Charity Golf Classic
Wednesday, August 26, 2009
Silver Lakes Golf & Country Club

We are inviting local golfers and businesses to participate in our 7th Annual YRFN Charity Golf Classic.

There are a number of different ways you can participate:

Play! Enjoy a fabulous day on the links! (\$185/golfer)

Sponsor a hole! We provide a prominent sign. (\$200/sign)

Donate items to our prize table or auction.

Sponsor one of our unique competitions during the day.

The day includes: BBQ lunch * Arrival Gift Bag * Warm up on the Aqua Driving Range * Shot Gun Start * 18 holes of golf * Power cart * Raffle * Longest Drive Competition * Beat the Pro * Closest to the Hole * Hole-in-one * Putting Competition* Full course dinner at Silver Lakes Clubhouse * Prizes for everyone!

We appreciate your support and hope to see you on the links!

Join York Region Food Network's Fundraising Campaign

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

I have enclosed my donation of: \$20 \$50 \$100 Other

Please make cheques payable to York Region Food Network.

YRFN will issue a charitable tax receipt for all donations over \$20.

Name: _____

Address: _____

To donate by credit card, visit our website at 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.

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