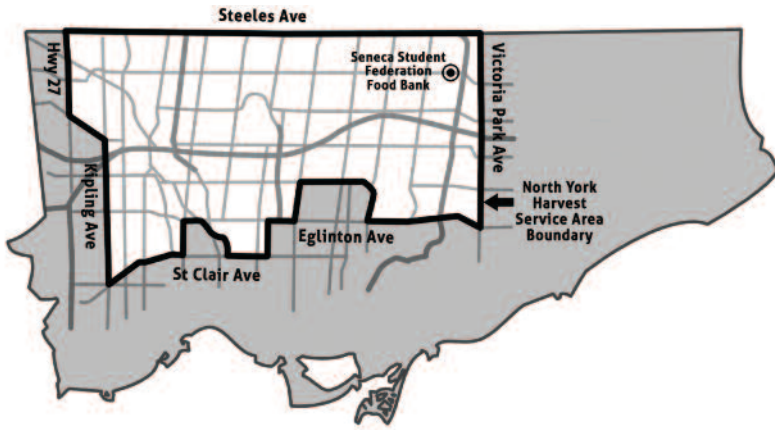


Agencies In Focus

Seneca Student Federation Food Bank

As part of our ongoing focus on our member agencies, in this issue, we profile the Seneca Student Federation Food Bank.



Over the years, the notion of the carefree campus life has given way to the reality that students are not immune to the pressures of the outside world. Complex issues such as mental and sexual health, debt, and unemployment have all managed to penetrate the safe and welcoming halls of academia. So, too, student hunger has landed hard at Toronto campuses, riding a tide of rising tuition fees and escalating living costs.

The North York Harvest Food Bank provides food deliveries and support to four campus food banks in northern Toronto. Together, they receive upwards of 2,000 visits each year. The Seneca Student Federation Food Bank at the Seneca College Newnham Campus is the newest of these programs, having opened its doors in 2007. “We provide food for individuals and families who are experiencing a shortage,” says Randy Richardson, a student who has been staffing the food bank over the summer months.

Indeed, there are few differences in the needs and circumstances of student food bank users compared to the general population who access food banks. “We see people from different countries, old and young, and evenly split between male and female,” says Richardson. “Probably the largest single group

is single mothers.” However, overcoming stigma appears to be a particular barrier for the younger set: “The students who are 25 and under don’t want to be seen coming to a food bank. I have friends who tell me they want to come [but they don’t]. Many are living away from home and just have enough [money] for their studies.”

It is easy to see how academic expenses can quickly outstrip living expenses. For a single student, the maximum allowable student loan is \$11,900 per year and for a married or single parent student, that allowance is raised to \$18,530. Students are not eligible for social assistance. Subtract tuition, accommodation, books, and transportation and suddenly there is little left for food.

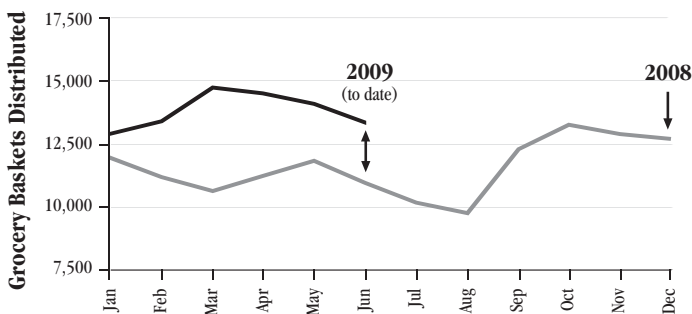
Student expenses

| | Single | Single Parent |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Maximum student loan | \$11,900 | \$18,530 |
| Tuition | \$2,500 to \$7,500 for college programs \$4,500 to \$10,000 for university programs | |
| Rent | \$400 to \$700 per month for shared living or residence | \$750 to \$1,000 per month for a one bedroom unit |
| Books | \$1,000 | |
| Transportation | \$100 per month | |

The Seneca Student Federation Food Bank is operated entirely through student support. During the school year, the 11 Student Federation council members and other volunteers rotate shifts to keep the food bank open five days per week. In addition to the food provided by North York Harvest, a couple of faculty departments run collection drives during the year. The Student Federation also offers an incentive to staff to purchase discounted TTC Metropasses in exchange for four non-perishable food items.

Looking ahead to the coming year, Richardson is concerned about the demand facing the food bank in the months to come. “This summer has been heavier [than expected] and we know we’ll see even heavier numbers in September since a lot of people will be staying on for the fall semester.”

Hunger On The Rise



The demand for food bank services in northern Toronto has continued to rise dramatically. Over the first six months of 2009, our member agency network distributed 22% more food hampers than the same time in 2008. With unemployment expected to continue to rise in the latter half of the year, North York Harvest is bracing itself for an even greater demand on its services. Visit our website at www.northyorkharvest.com for updated figures and information about hunger in Toronto.

Exciting Partnerships & Programs

Walk Or Run Against Hunger

Lace up your sneakers and start pounding the pavement for the North York Harvest Food Bank during the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon Charity Challenge! Join us on September 27, 2009 for either the 5k walk, or full or half-marathon events while raising funds to support our year-round programs and services.



To begin, register online at www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com and enter the Charity Challenge PIN: DISCCHARITY. Then create your own personal fundraising page by following the Charity Challenge instructions on the website. The online software is free, interactive, and easy to use!

You can also sponsor walkers and runners by visiting the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon website and searching by charity.

Harvest to Hand Garden Program

This summer, North York Harvest expanded its garden support program to five member agencies: Ernestine's Women's Shelter, Beatrice House, Syme-Woolner Neighbourhood & Family Centre, Jane/Finch Community & Family Centre, and the Community Action Resource Centre.

Supported by a seasonal, full-time gardener, the program offers assistance and expertise in developing community garden projects alongside

conventional food assistance programs. The gardens provide a reliable source of fresh produce for our member agencies at a time when our summer inventory of non-perishable products is traditionally limited. In addition to the nutritional benefits, the gardens offer opportunities for community members to socialize, share skills, and participate in their local food programming.

The environmental implications of local food production were also recognized by the Jane/Finch Community & Family Centre which incorporated their garden into their "Green Change Project", an initiative that seeks to engage residents in environmental issues and action.

North York Harvest looks forward to growing with our member agencies and expanding this program further in the 2010 growing season.



Dine Out For Hunger

From September 21st to October 18th, thousands of Ontarians will Dine Out For Hunger at hundreds of participating restaurants to benefit food banks across the province. North York Harvest will be partnering with local area

restaurants to support hungry individuals and families in northern Toronto. For a listing of participating restaurants, please visit www.northyorkharvest.com/dine-out-for-hunger for locations and additional information.

Fall Food Drive

When: September 18th to October 16th

What: Non-perishable foods

Much needed items

- ✓ canned fruit and vegetables
- ✓ canned fish and meat
- ✓ canned or dried beans
- ✓ baby food and formula
- ✓ canned stew and hearty soup

Where to give:

Visit our website for drop-off locations at participating supermarkets and local fire halls.

To give a financial donation:

Call 416-635-7771

Give online at www.northyorkharvest.com

Mail a cheque to

North York Harvest Food Bank
640 Lawrence Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario M6A 1B1

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