

## Brothers trick or treat for the hungry

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Like many Toronto kids, the Casale brothers will be going door to door Halloween night collecting goodies.

But instead of chips and mini chocolate bars, they are gathering donations for the North York Harvest Food Bank.

"We didn't want just candy for ourselves. We don't go out asking for candy. We go asking for food," said 16-year-old Alex, pointing out this will be the third year for the brothers' Trick or Treat Food to Eat campaign.

Alex, his 14-year-old brother Lucas, and 19-year-old brother Chris first came up with the idea while sitting around the dinner table with their parents in the family home in the Yonge Street and Lawrence Avenue area.



**Brothers trick or treat for the hungry.** The Casale brothers will be going door to door Halloween night collecting donations for the North York Harvest Food Bank.

"When you think of the homeless, you think Africa or Asia but it is pretty bad here," said Alex, a Grade 11 student at Crestwood Preparatory College, a private school in the area of York Mills Road and the Don Valley Parkway.

The brothers, with help from their friends, put up flyers in their neighbourhood advertising the food drive in the days before Halloween and spend the evening of Oct. 31 collecting non-perishable food items.

The response from neighbours has been overwhelming.

The first year, they collected 900 pounds of food. Last year, neighbours donated 1,200 pounds, a total the brothers hope to top this year. For the first time this year, they will also be collecting food in the area of Lawrence and Bathurst Street.

For the last two years, the RBC Foundation has agreed to donate to the food bank one dollar for every pound of food collected.

"That is a lot of food. It is awesome. The end result is unbelievable," Alex said.

"It's amazing knowing all the food is going to feed the hungry."

Anette Chawla, executive director of the food bank, praised the brothers for the campaign, which is needed more than ever during the recession.

"We think it is fantastic. It is wonderful when children and youth put creativity to mind and raise food for the food bank and for people who are hungry. And there are a lot of hungry in our community," she said.

Demand is up 24 per cent this year over the same time last year, Chawla said.

Other children and youth in the community also raise donations for the food bank, including collecting food while trick or treating at Halloween, she added.

"Any community support is greatly appreciated," Chawla said.

The Casale brothers have been raised in a household that strongly believes in the spirit of giving.

In 2001, their family, founders of MAC Cosmetics, launched the Toskan Casale Foundation.

The foundation supports community-based groups which provide at-risk people with immediate relief and long-term stability.

One of the foundation's programs is its \$1-million annual Youth and Philanthropy Initiative, established by president Julie Toskan-Casale, the brothers' mother.

Grade 9 and 10 students in Ontario, Vancouver and England try to convince a panel of judges why their chosen charity deserves funding. The winner in each school receives \$5,000 to donate to their worthwhile cause.

When he was in Grade 9, Alex debated the merits of donating to the food bank.

Although he didn't win the award, Alex said he feels good knowing the Trick or Treat Food to Eat campaign is putting thousands of dollars worth of food on the shelves of the food bank.

"You want to improve the lives of people in your community. By doing this, you're directly improving their lives. It is upsetting there is such a need," he said.

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