



***Our Mission: upStream is a unique urban agriculture site that promotes innovative methods for food growing. We cultivate community by providing opportunities for engagement, education and inspiration. upStream improves the world around us...one bit, one bite, one belief at a time.***

upStream is an urban agriculture facility in Newmarket that grows a variety of greens using aquaponics. Aquaponics is a small ecosystem where plants and fish can thrive together in a symbiotic relationship. upStream is an exciting place to see agri-innovation in action.



The last twelve months have been exhilarating as we continue to learn and improve our system. Our harvests have quadrupled with great success being had with a variety of lettuces, Swiss chard and Pak Choi. This month will be our first planting of tomatoes and we hope to start a variety of culinary herbs.

Our 'Open Door' events have provided opportunities for people to come from all over to learn about aquaponics

and to see the facility in action. Due to the colder months ahead, we will not be opening the door up wide but if you are interested in volunteering or learning about aquaponics, please contact us to arrange a tour.



Through funding from VentureLab in Spring 2014, we were able to gain the expertise of WaterFarmers, Toronto's professional aquaponics consulting group. Through this support, our fish have become even happier, our space is becoming more efficient, and we are swimming in heaps of fresh leafy greens!

To keep this space a hub of volunteers and a place for Newmarket-grown lettuce, we need your financial support. You can donate to upStream directly through York Region Food Network, or show your support for this project by purchasing some hyper-local, organic greens. Contact us at [4moreinfo@yrfn.ca](mailto:4moreinfo@yrfn.ca) to find out dates and locations to buy our greens.

**Tricia Richens, upStream Coordinator**

**Stay connected:**

Facebook: [upStream-Aquaponics](https://www.facebook.com/upStream-Aquaponics); Twitter: @upstreamAP

## Incremental Curry (or chili, or soup, or stew)

Do you wonder what to do with vegetables that are past their best but not yet ready for the compost heap? Or with small amounts of left overs? If you have a freezer and a large plastic or glass storage box the answer is easy, **Incremental Curry!** (or chili, or soup, or stew).

It couldn't be simpler to make; when bruised vegetables are crying out for attention, cook 'em! Don't worry about a recipe, put the cooked vegetables into the box in the freezer and let it accumulate to the level of three or four varieties. Before long there will be enough for a meal. It doesn't take much practise to find out which items work together and should be saved together.

When there is a good amount of food in the box thaw it out and add some fried chicken or beef with some curry paste or powder or jarred sauce.

There is an infinite amount of variety possible with this thrifty technique, a partner to our program "Make a little go a long, long way."

Before freezing, beans can be mashed or pureed as they make a nice thickener for sauce. So do potatoes, lentils and peas.

Old ice cube trays can be used to store a variety of very small amounts of things in a compact way: for example tomato paste, a piece of ginger, cream, cooked rice, or grated cheese.

A variation on this theme is to store vegetable peels and bones in re-sealable bags to use for robust soup/stew stocks.

Avoiding waste is a smart thing to do for the sake of family finances, but it also a great contribution to protecting our environment. Waste disposal has become a major issue in many municipalities and avoiding the need to dump in the first place will help keep some of the heavy trucks off the roads and the air a little cleaner.

**David Lightwood, Community Hub Coordinator**



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual WinterFresh – Trivia Challenge

Thursday, February 5, 2015 - 6:30 pm

Madsen's Greenhouse

160 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket

*What is WinterFresh? It's an evening of dinner, trivia, team building, fun and laughter.*

*There will be prizes, a fantastic dinner and silent auction. Tickets are \$40*

*Watch for more details on our website at [www.yrfn.ca](http://www.yrfn.ca)*

**Thank you to our funders!**



## Volunteer with YRFN!

There are so many exciting ways to participate in our work here at YRFN.

### **The Ripe Idea Steering Committee:**

We are looking for a group of talented, energetic, strategic thinkers to help shape the future directions of our new community fruit picking program. If you're motivated to help us figure out exciting ways to pick more fruit and share it with more people, please get in touch! Email [bronwenf@yrfn.ca](mailto:bronwenf@yrfn.ca)

**Events:** Do you like to tell people about good food? Are you an organized and good planner? Consider volunteering a few hours of your time manning a table at one of our promotional events or helping to organize Seedy Saturday 2015. There is frequently office work to be done

for Seedy Saturday, with the most work needing to be done between January and March.

**Aquaponics:** Interested in developing agricultural skills? Our Newmarket-based Aquaponics unit, upStream, needs regular volunteers to help with daily maintenance, harvesting, post-harvest; marketing and promotions. To sign up, email [triciar@yrfn.ca](mailto:triciar@yrfn.ca)

**Volunteer Drivers:** From time to time, we need assistance taking garden items or Good Food Boxes from point A to point B. If you are available to drive items on an occasional basis, please email [kima@yrfn.ca](mailto:kima@yrfn.ca)

**Garden Maintenance:** In the summer months, YRFN needs regular

help to maintain its plot at the Aurora Community Garden. This plot needs weekly weeding and harvesting for the duration of the growing season. If you would like to help care for the garden, please email [bronwenf@yrfn.ca](mailto:bronwenf@yrfn.ca)

If you have a great idea for another volunteer opportunity, please contact us and share your thoughts. Volunteers are a very important part of what makes YRFN successful. We couldn't do it without you!

In the meantime, please like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/yorkregionfoodnetwork](https://facebook.com/yorkregionfoodnetwork), and follow us on Twitter @YRFoodNetwork for updates!

**Bronwen Fitzsimons, Urban Agriculture Coordinator**

## A Healthier York in 2015

With the holiday season around the corner, it's time to greet 2015 with easy ways to be healthy!

To be healthy, communities need active and public transportation options, opportunities to play, and access to nutritious foods. Healthyork, York Region's Healthy Communities Partnership, focuses on two key priorities of healthy communities: physical activity and healthy eating.



Healthyork's physical activity work focuses on Building Healthy Communities through active modes of transportation including school travel planning, and community walkability and bikeability.

The healthy eating section focuses on the York Region Food Charter. Started in 2012, we are happy to announce that the York Region Food Charter has been endorsed by Council at the City of Markham, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Township of King and Town of Aurora. In 2015, we'll continue to use the Food Charter as a way to build partnerships and develop new policies and programs to strengthen the food system.

To start 2015 off right, here are a few ideas of how you can increase your veggie intake and contribute to building a healthier York:

- Commit to start a garden with at least 3 edible plants. Register your garden at [www.seedsforchange gardens.org](http://www.seedsforchange gardens.org) Once you register, you'll enjoy special discounts and offers from Seeds For Change and its partners.
- Order a Good Food Box. With location sites across the Region, it's becoming easier and easier to get a box of fresh and affordable veggies and fruits. Visit <http://yrfn.ca/programs/good-food-box/>
- Start a community garden in your neighbourhood. For things to consider, visit [http://seedsforchange gardens.org/images/uploads/SFC\\_Manual\\_Website.pdf](http://seedsforchange gardens.org/images/uploads/SFC_Manual_Website.pdf)

**Kate Greavette, Food Charter Coordinator**



## Food connects us all

As we enter the giving season, it is the perfect time to reflect on how our many food programs connect us. We work very hard in our organization to make sure everyone feels welcomed and valued; volunteers, staff and participants cook and share meals many times a week. Collectively, we've planted gardens and harvested the bounty nature provides. We've canned pickles, salsa, jam and tomatoes. We've fed and cared for the fish that provide the nutrients for our local greens at upStream Aquaponics.

Food is a connector. It provides the lubricant required to allow people to interact, enjoy the company of others and become involved in the community. Through programs offered at our Community Food Hub we connect people to a variety of resources and programs. We work collaboratively with many agencies and groups, sharing food and developing food skills. We encourage people to share their stories and connect to their community. Participants often return to tell of successes in finding employment after accessing our resources.

We are just wrapping up a strategic planning process that has identified the need for us to increase our capacity to move beyond our existing programs and provide more healthy food programming and education out in the community. We are fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers and donors, and we also receive funds from governments and foundations to provide specific programs. However, in order to increase our reach in the community, we will need your support.

Please think of York Region Food Network when you give this season. Together we can create healthy and vibrant communities across the Region.

I wish you all a fruitful and joyful new year.

*Joan Stonehocker, Executive Director*



### 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:     \$50             \$100             \$250             Other

*Please make cheques payable to York Region Food Network.*

YRFN will issue a charitable tax receipt for all donations over \$20. Registration 87044 7315 RR0001

**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.*

**350 Industrial Parkway S., Aurora, ON L4G 3V7**

**Phone: 905-841-3101 • Toll-free: 1-866-454-YRFN (9736) • Fax: 905-841-3789**

**4moreinfo@yrfn.ca • [www.yrfn.ca](http://www.yrfn.ca) • Facebook: York Region Food Network • Twitter: @YRFoodNetwork**