

## The power of good food

Food is a connector and our Community Food Hub programs demonstrate this every week. At our Tuesday morning breakfast drop-in, folks enjoy a delicious, hearty and healthy breakfast and finish by enjoying a coffee and chatting with old friends and new acquaintances.



On Wednesdays, our Common Stock Community Kitchen participants often contribute special ingredients to help make a delicious lunch to share. We enjoyed Chinese, Russian and Iranian cuisine with group participants from the Newmarket Welcome Centre this past summer. Conversation is lively and fun although the atmosphere can quiet down as people are tucking into a good meal. Our commercial kitchen is a great place to offer a variety of hands-on workshops like preserving and pickling, food safety, and seasonal cooking.

Our monthly Good Food Box program is a way to purchase fresh produce at warehouse pricing. We have a seasonal local box, as well as year round small and large 'regular' boxes that can include imported products. This popular program is an affordable way to boost consumption of those nutritious vegetables and fruits and introduce new options to participants.

We have a roster of dedicated volunteers who contribute to the success of all of these programs and we are increasingly being asked to expand our programs out into the community: more pick-up locations for Good Food Boxes; more workshops and cooking programs that increase food skills; and more opportunities for people to connect over healthy, local food.

We had hoped to be able to start 2016 with expanded capacity to support healthy eating in our communities, but are instead in the unfortunate position of having to lay off staff as a result of reduced funding. Our precarious position of trying to grow (pun intended) our services without the fertile ground of core funding

for our basic needs leaves us scrambling to even maintain our current programs in the coming year.

We are optimistic that this setback is temporary in nature. Now, more than ever, we are asking for your support to continue our work to ensure that healthy food is on the menu for everyone.



*YRFN is delighted to be a Good Food Organization*

## After two decades, Markham garden closes

After over 20 years of continuous use as a community garden, the Markham garden has come to an end. The privately-owned land has been sold to a developer and will be made into houses sometime next year.

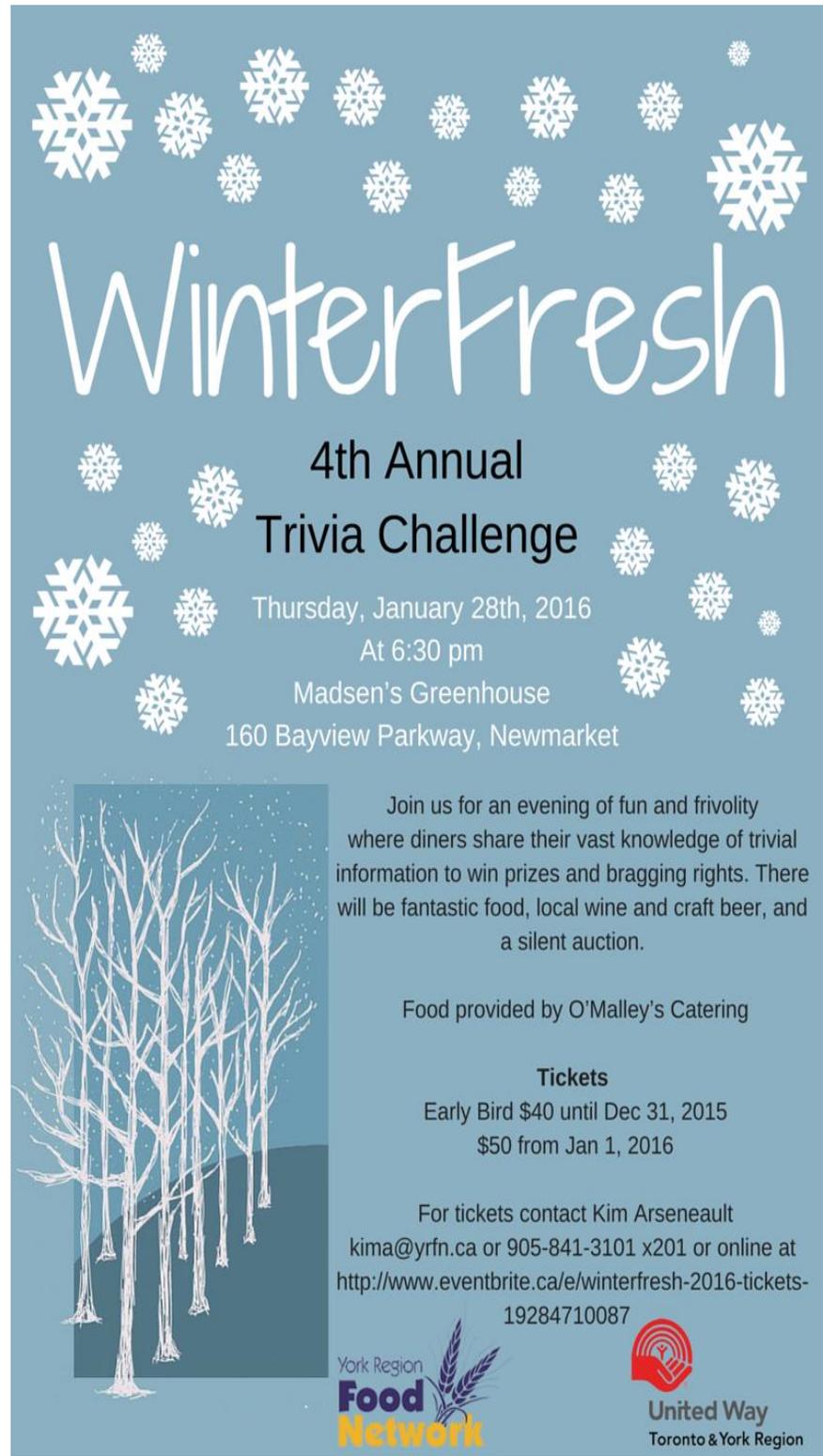
From the moment Carman Lewis first offered to share his farmland with the community, the Markham Community Garden has been a meeting place for people from all walks of life. People have made friends and bonded through gardening with people they may not have met otherwise. Seniors groups, community groups, new immigrants, parents and children have all found community in this small patch of land.

Obviously, reactions to this news have been mixed. Some gardeners have been growing there for the entire time the garden has been open. For them, especially, the loss has been acutely felt. While we mourn the loss of the old garden, we also look forward to creating new growing opportunities in Markham. At this point, there is no clear replacement for the 85 plots Markham residents have cultivated over the years. However, new gardens have sprung up recently that can partially help to meet demand. The Kirkham garden, on Kirkham Road at Markham Rd, is a community garden run by the City of Markham. On the southwest corner of the Markham Fairgrounds sits a small community garden that has been there for about two seasons, providing another option. Although they can't replace the closing garden, each of these is a chance for some gardeners to find a new place to grow in new neighbourhoods.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Webster family and Uncle Carman Lewis for sharing the land with us and brightening the lives of so many for so many years.

To see the Markham garden, please click on our video at <http://vimeo.com/33303844>

*Bronwen Fitzsimons, Urban Agriculture Coordinator*



The poster features a light blue background with several white snowflake icons scattered throughout. At the top, the word "WinterFresh" is written in a large, white, cursive font. Below it, "4th Annual Trivia Challenge" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The event details are listed in a smaller black font: "Thursday, January 28th, 2016", "At 6:30 pm", "Madsen's Greenhouse", and "160 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket". On the left side, there is a vertical illustration of several bare, white trees against a dark blue background. On the right side, there is a block of text describing the event, followed by ticket information and contact details. At the bottom right, there are logos for the York Region Food Network and United Way Toronto & York Region.

WinterFresh

4th Annual  
Trivia Challenge

Thursday, January 28th, 2016  
At 6:30 pm  
Madsen's Greenhouse  
160 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket

Join us for an evening of fun and frivolity where diners share their vast knowledge of trivial information to win prizes and bragging rights. There will be fantastic food, local wine and craft beer, and a silent auction.

Food provided by O'Malley's Catering

**Tickets**  
Early Bird \$40 until Dec 31, 2015  
\$50 from Jan 1, 2016

For tickets contact Kim Arseneault  
kima@yrfn.ca or 905-841-3101 x201 or online at  
<http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/winterfresh-2016-tickets-19284710087>

York Region  
**Food Network**

**United Way**  
Toronto & York Region

[Click here to buy WinterFresh tickets online](#)

## Thank you to our funders!



## Three times a day

Three times a day we make a statement about what is important to us – through our food purchases and choices. These are simple, everyday decisions which seem mundane and insignificant in many ways, but in reality, every single purchase made, makes a big statement to governments, companies and our neighbours about what is important to us. We know eating locally and seasonally is the best thing we can do for the economy, our environment, and our health and wellbeing – we also know that eating locally and seasonally can be tricky (to say the least!) as the days get shorter and shorter, and colder and colder. It's not necessarily easy to eat locally in the winter – but it is possible, and it becomes easier as you start to know what to look for. Lots of local veggies are available year-round, including potatoes, parsnips, cabbage, mushrooms, onions, carrots, greenhouse cucumber/peppers/lettuce, to name just a few. Try out this yummy parsnip fries recipe, adapted from [Foodland Ontario](#) (and check out Foodland for lots of tips to eat locally and seasonally!).

*Kate Greavette, Food Charter Coordinator*

### Parsnip Fries (serves 4-6)

- 2lb (1kg) Ontario parsnips (or Ontario sweet potatoes, potatoes, beets)
- 1 tbsp oil
- ¼ cup water
- Salt and pepper (optional)
- Seasoning such as rosemary, oregano, cayenne pepper (optional)



1. Peel (optional) and cut parsnips (or other Ontario root vegetables) into long skinny fries.
2. Heat oil in large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add parsnips, toss well and cook uncovered until lightly browned, about 5 minutes, stirring often. Add water and continue to cook, uncovered, until parsnips are tender, golden brown and liquid evaporates, about 10 minutes. Season with salt, pepper and seasoning to taste.

## Catch and Release



upStream Aquaponics has been growing greens in downtown Newmarket since August 2013. The hyper-local produce has been shared with food banks, meal programs, and sold direct to our community. However, the most successful aspect of the upStream project has been our community engagement. We have fostered urban agriculture and innovation; taught about system inputs vs. food waste; intrigued people to consider their own food sustainability and were able to participate in a variety of food security discussions with people that we would have never met had it not been for the 'hook' of aquaponics.

The upStream project will be coming to an end this year. We hope to continue inspiring people with aquaponics and will endeavor to build smaller systems in other institutions such as schools and York Region Food Network's head office in Aurora.

If you are interested in building your own aquaponics system, please contact us soon. We have tilapia, lights and other miscellaneous items to sell. There will also be volunteer opportunities to help with the shutdown process. Contact Tricia at [triciar@yrfn.ca](mailto:triciar@yrfn.ca) for more information.

## Food for thought

Food Secure Canada, Food Banks Canada, and Community Food Centres Canada are all supporting a BIG policy. BIG is an apropos acronym for a Basic Income Guarantee to replace social assistance programs. These programs have become administratively onerous and keep recipients trapped in deep poverty. Social Assistance programs are beyond repair. It is time to at least test a new model.

With consistent endorsements from Medical Officers of Health, civil society groups, and you, there is hope that this could all happen relatively soon. Imagine the shift in our society when we ensure that there is an income floor that we will not let people fall under.

“The proper aim of giving is to put the recipients in a state where they no longer need gifts.”

- C. S. Lewis

GIVINGTUESDAY™

www.GivingTuesday.ca | Tuesday, December 1st, 2015 | #GivingTuesdayCA

Imagine a society where we don't spend countless hours of volunteer time, fuel and administration, schlepping around non-perishable and often unhealthy food items, to feed the most vulnerable in our communities.

Imagine a society where we value food as a vital part of not only an individual's health, but the health of our entire community. We would treat food throughout its lifecycle, from growth and production to consumption and disposal, as a vital part of good health and a way to celebrate and commune together.

Our vision of Food for Health - Food for All, can be realized with the generous support of donors and volunteers, bringing healthy food and food literacy to our communities and neighbourhoods. With your help and energy we can make change happen.

I wish you all the best as the holiday season approaches. Thank you for your past, present and future support.

*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.**

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