York Region Food Network

Food for Health ... Food for All

Network News

Fall 2018

Food for thought

The holiday season encourages charitable sentiments and acts of giving. People in our community are generous, supporting our friends and neighbours by donating food and holiday hampers. Everyday more and more people attend community meals out of desperate need and new emergency food distribution points open to offer a short-term response to food access. Inequality is growing in our communities and those struggling to make ends meet are falling further behind.

We know from research that poverty is bad for your health. People who are food insecure are much higher users of our healthcare system, and childhood food insecurity increases the likelihood of developing chronic diseases. Food insecurity is caused by a lack of money and will only be solved with income responses, such as increasing minimum wage, stable employment, basic income and increasing social assistance rates.

At York Region Food Network, we use food programs to build healthy communities, from fostering relationships and community connectedness, to stewardship of the land and environment. Food is an economic driver and can be used as a tool to deliver community benefits.

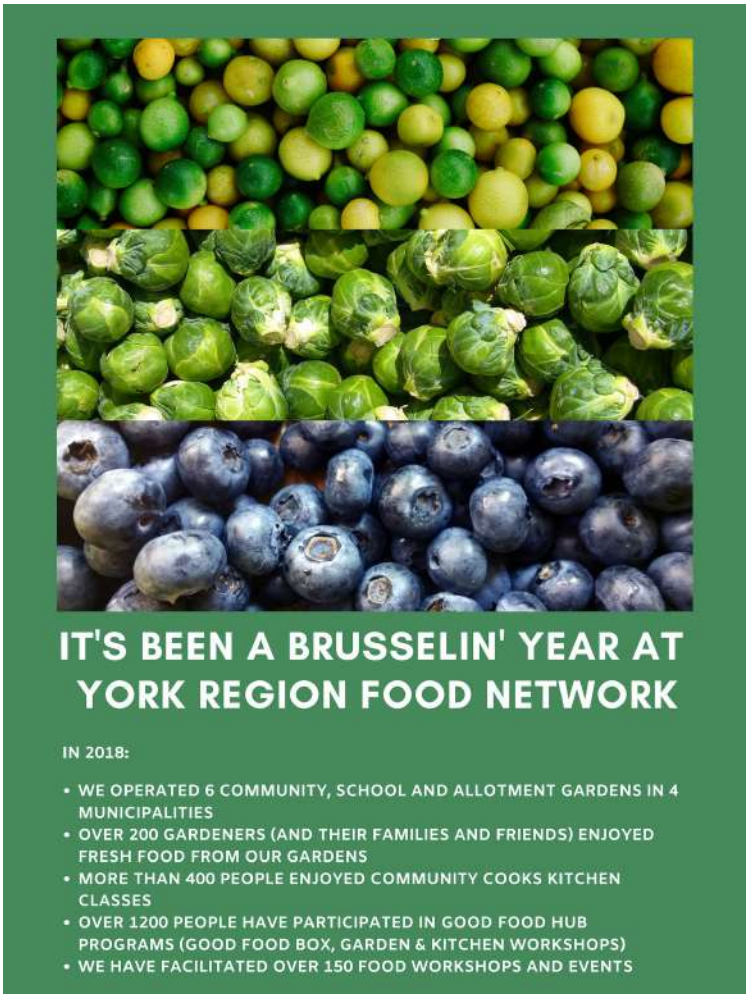
This season we invite you to pause and take meaningful actions in your community:

- Spend a little extra to buy from local businesses and York Region growers and producers
- Raise funds for your local school's Food for Learning breakfast or snack program
- Be infuriated that not everyone in our community has a roof or food this festive season. Recruit family and friends to write emails to municipal/ regional officials, and elected MPPs and MPs to let them know that poverty is not acceptable in our communities
- Learn about issues of equality, exclusion, and truth and reconciliation in our communities and talk about it.

As we collectively continue to push for a system that will ensure people's basic right to food is met, our programs create a welcoming and inclusive environment for people to come together, foster friendships, build skills, and create space to break down barriers.

We couldn't do this without your support and donations.

Joan Stonehocker, Executive Director



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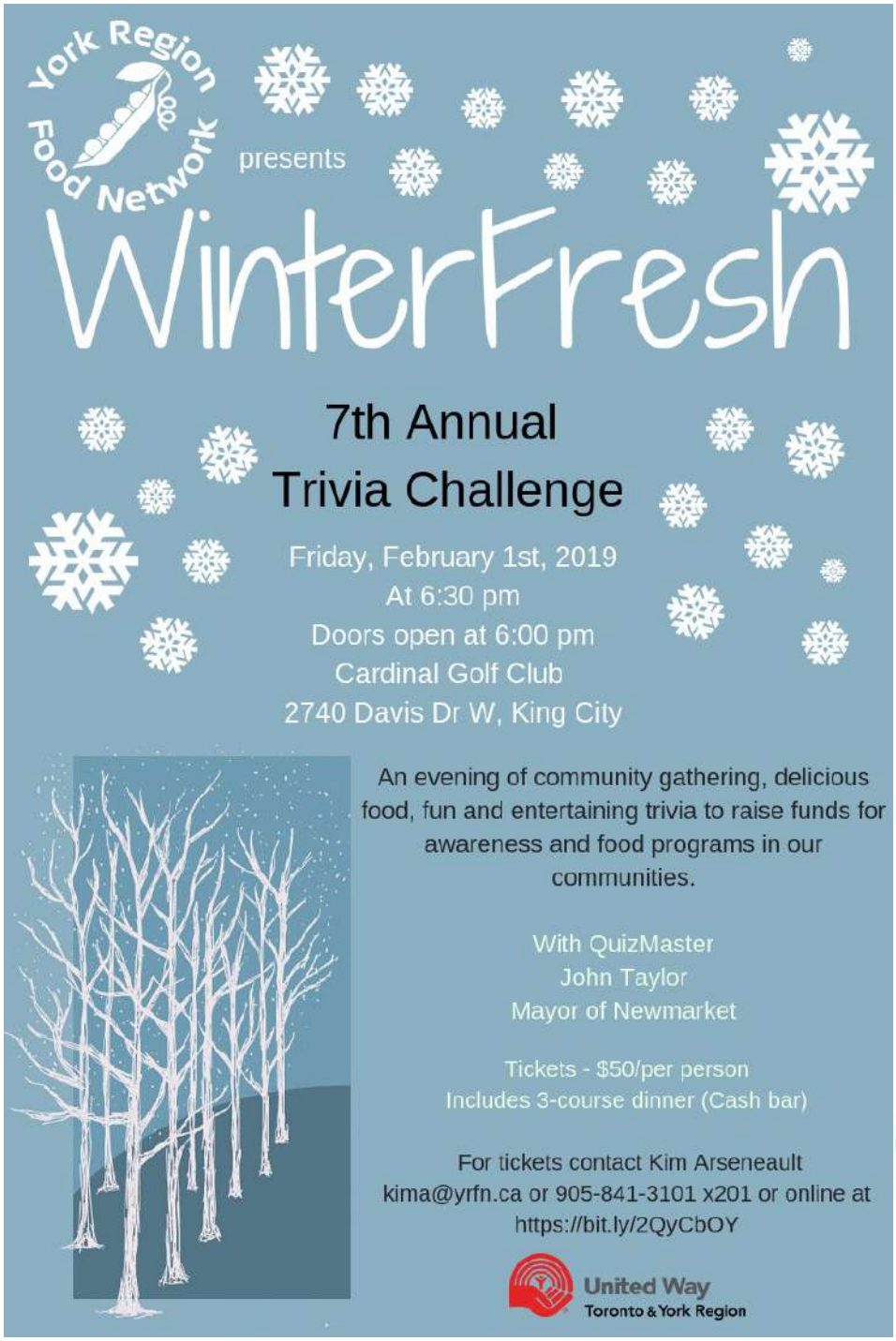
It's here....

It's been a long time coming, but York Region has a Food Council! With support from United Way Greater Toronto, York Region Food Network is spearheading a broad, system approach to tackling issues in our food system. The York Region Food Council brings together folks from different backgrounds, disciplines, lived experiences and values to build a food system that works for everybody. The commitment to working together and building common ground on issues that are huge, is what sets the Food Council apart. Within the food sector, all issues from food access, land access, food education, racism, and classism intersect. A primary goal of the York Region Food Council is to deconstruct these issues from all angles, to create something that is inclusive to all people in our communities.



The York Region Food Council is currently seeking members involved in the food system (that includes eaters!). To get involved, contact Kate at kateg@yrfn.ca.

Kate Greavette
Food Charter Coordinator

YORK REGION FOOD COUNCIL

Thank you to our funders!

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An agency of the Government of Ontario / Relève du gouvernement de l'Ontario

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York Region

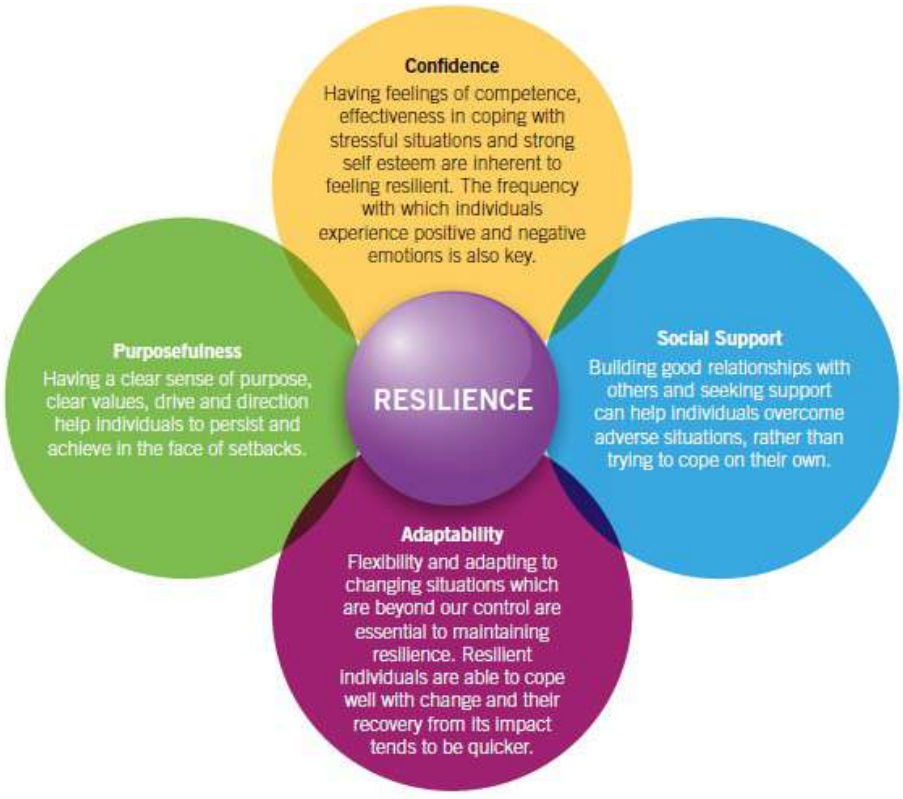
Catering for the Self
food is more than fuel

TO BE PREPARED IS HALF THE VICTORY

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

We run a lot of programs here at YRFN, with a wide variety of food-based topics. We know that food is so much more than just fuel. While participants in our programs enjoy cooking and eating together, many mention a lack of motivation/inspiration/ desire to cook at home for just themselves.

Not everyone is naturally a cook, far less a chef, but we all need to eat several times a day. For some people, this is a real challenge. We recently tackled this issue in a popular program, *Catering for the Self*. This program was aimed at individuals living alone, mainly because of bereavement or separation, but some of its principles can also be used for family cooking.



If you have a plan in any area of your life, you can be prepared. In the kitchen, this may mean meal planning and making food in advance to freeze. This gives a feeling of being in control and being strong – the opposite of feeling high and dry, wondering what to do. This is the basis for resilience, a useful attribute in winter!

The program has three overall objectives:

Fostering Resilience - It does not happen by itself. There are various techniques and practises that can make it easier to cope - not just in the kitchen, but in other areas of life as well.

Coping with a new reality - Losing a partner is a truly life changing situation that can leave people feeling stranded and lost, without appetite or any desire to cook. Loneliness and depression can lead to poor eating habits and even malnutrition.

Knowing what is coming next -. We cannot deal with all areas of life but, as far as food is concerned, we can cover many eventualities. It may sound small, but if you know what your next meal will be, it is one less thing to worry about. Making meals and preparing food, whether it is for one person or several, can give a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction to any day. This is facilitated by knowing where you are at and what you are doing.

At the end of this successful program, participants reported excitement about new ideas for ingredients and methods, as well as a greater mindfulness of the sources of their food and its uplifting effects. They also reported feeling inspired and having an increased desire to go home and cook!

We hope to run this program again early in the new year.

David Lightwood
Food Hub Coordinator

Addressing Food Security - Opportunities for Youth

Over the past few weeks, York Region Food Network has been actively planning and creating opportunities for youth engagement; our new youth programming includes an arts-based social justice series, movie nights, baking workshops and social justice groups. We are presently welcoming youth who are interested in learning about issues related to food security to join our Youth Advisory Board.

The purpose of the Youth Advisory Board is for youth to explore issues of Food Justice, Food Security, and Food Sovereignty. This group is open to anyone ages 15-25 who would like to meet once a month for (2-3 hours) to discuss these topics with other youth and move towards identifying personal, political, and institutional solutions to improve food security and strengthen food systems in the region. It is our aim that, together, we can center issues of equity and social justice to create spaces for dialogue, learning, and democratic process.

This is a great opportunity for individuals who would like to deepen their leaderships skills, build relationships, and develop a rich understanding of the many parts the food system.

If you are passionate about developing sustainable food systems, concerned about growing hunger in our communities, and would like to work with other youth to identify solutions for strengthening food security, this is an opportunity for you.

Please contact Sarah, Youth Engagement Coordinator, at SarahE@yrfn.ca to participate in this and other opportunities for youth.

Sarah Epp
Youth Engagement Coordinator

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 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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