



Harvest Share Community Food Programs
Annual General Meeting for 2024

Report from the Executive Director

Good Evening!

It is a pleasure to welcome you all to our Annual General Meeting tonight.

Harvest Share strives to meet our Mission Statement: To improve access to healthy, nutritious food for individuals and families to experience food insecurity in the District of Parry Sound.

As food needs of our community increase, Harvest Share rises to the challenge of meeting these needs in a non-judgemental, inclusive, compassionate manner. At Harvest Share we offer a hand up to those in need, not a handout. Our amazing team of staff and volunteers work diligently to ensure our visitors feel safe, welcomed and cared for. This group of people are some of the nicest, sincerely caring people I have ever met.

The successes we have experienced this past year are as follows:

- A focus on improving our Volunteer Program through the delivery of our Building Organizational Resilience through Empowering our Volunteers Project, funded by United Way from May of 2023 to April of 2024. The project included the hiring of a Volunteer Co-ordinator who ensured the implementation of the project's objectives to develop and improve policies, procedures and practices addressing Volunteer recruitment, training, communication and retention for one of our most valuable assets, our volunteers. We currently host over 40 volunteer placements in the areas of our food hamper services, Delivery Service, Community Dinners, Emergency Food Services, Food Rescue, Community Kitchen Classes, Food Requisition through Food Drives and special events.

Hiring of a Fractionated Fundraising Consultant to steer the development and implementation of a strategic Fundraising Plan to generate additional funds for Harvest Share to continue to address the increasing Food Needs of our Community.

Development of a Standards of Excellence Working Group who have been working toward developing, researching and implementing necessary documents, policies and practices to achieve accreditation through the Standards of Excellence of Food Banks Canada. Accreditation is expected to be achieved by March of 2025. Through accreditation our goal is to ensure improved services that are credible and aligned to ensure the highest standard of service delivery is achieved and maintained.

A Community Kitchen Program to provide an opportunity for community members to learn new skills, try new recipes and learn to improve their abilities to prepare and cook meals for themselves and their families. This program ran twice a month with Glenda Clayton as the instructor for 6 – 12 individuals. We received funding for this program through Feed Ontario, Feeding Possibilities grant, and through the support of the local North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, donating gift cards to assist with the purchase of food for the Program.

Receiving funding from Food Banks Canada through their Access Grant that provided funds to secure additional emergency food and food to address diverse diets of our food bank visitors.

Restructuring of Staff Team – this including the shifting of responsibilities and the introduction of new staff positions, a General Manager and a Communications Officer.

In response to the continued increase in need due to the high cost of living, rent, rising cost of groceries, food needs of the community is up 40% from this time last year, we have implemented increased appointment opportunities, additional Food Bank Days that includes an evening food bank for community members who are unable to access the food bank during the day due to work schedules.

Challenges we have experienced over the past year:

Due to the increase in food needs of our community , acquiring food to meet the growing need has become challenging to say the least.

Currently we address the needs of the community through partnerships with community businesses, restaurants, grocery stores, camps, service groups, other Food Banks, Churches, Schools, Feed Ontario Allocations, promotion of our Mosted Needed Items on social media and the generous support of community members who donate food, money and gift cards, conduct food drives in their work place, at school and among families and friends for special occasions to help their neighbours struggling with food insecurity. It is truly amazing to see the Community step up time and time again to help Harvest Share, help others.

Space – even though we are grateful to have the two locations, 93 James Street, and 72 Church Street to delivery our services from, working from two locations has its challenges. It is a dream of our staff and volunteers to have our operations streamlined and more efficiently housed under one roof in the future.

Even with the challenges we face, Harvest Share continues to meet food needs. maintaining quality and variety to meet the diverse food needs of our community. Food Diversity is offered for special dietary needs such as: clients that have health issues ie. diabetes, gluten intolerance, individuals under treatment for cancer and for newcomers to our Country.

Our Staff: consists of 3 Full time staff, 3 contract staff and the hiring of a consultant

The positions we employ are: An Executive Director, a General Manager, an Intake Worker/Admin Assistant, two Food Rescue Assistants, a Communication Officer and a Fundraising Consultant.

The staff have been preparing to introduce who they are and what their role is at Harvest Share for the past few days. I look forward to this part of our presentation tonight.

In Closing, I would like to thank the Board of Directors for the support, insight and commitment they offer on an ongoing basis, the staff and volunteers for their hard work as a team and individually, their contribution to provide a high standard of service to our visitors, their sense of humour and good hearts, and to the community of Parry Sound and surrounding area, for their generosity and ongoing support of Harvest Share and the community we live in. You all are truly inspirational.

Sincerely,

Wendy Pegahmagabow

Executive Director

