

# FEED SCARBOROUGH

## Scarborough Food Security Initiative



December 6, 2023

Dear Community members and friends of Feed Scarborough,

Last week was a tough week for us at Feed Scarborough. There were lies, misinformation and serious allegations spread against Feed Scarborough about our financial credibility for political gains. As you know, running for City Counsellor was a personal decision in order to give even more to the community. This is what I am passionate about - community building and continuing to operate Feed Scarborough which has filled a huge need in our community for the past three years.

It is disappointing that some people would use a local charity who has been there for this community through thick and thin, and attempt to discredit and threaten the organization's survival with lies and misinformation.

These people compared Feed Scarborough with other organizations who are very different. Feed Scarborough is Scarborough's largest Food Security organization, and not one food bank running one day a week. We run 6 food banks with operations of 16 food bank days per week. We operate healthy meal programmes, community gardens, career development programmes, business incubation programme, research, policy development programmes with a mission of not only serving the community with "band-aid" solutions but to also create long term and systemic solutions to end hunger in Scarborough.

In three short years, Feed Scarborough has grown from a back yard food drive to be Scarborough's largest food security organization, and it would not have been accomplished without the tremendous support of our community. All of you who have diligently donated to support our community. All of you who came out every week, year over year to volunteer your time to make sure our neighbours don't go to bed hungry. I am so proud that our team has been fiscally very responsible and has ensured that we are able to grow. It is disappointing that political campaigns will use the most vulnerable and all your hard work for mere political gains.

We are already facing the affects of what some people have tried to do to destroy us. In only one week since the story came out in a political blog, we have lost donors and we have lost volunteers. We have community members (clients) coming to us with tears and asking us to make sure we are still there for them. And WE WILL BE. But this is going to be very hard. This year will be our first year that we will NOT be able to do a turkey drive for our community members. And I am worried that this is just the beginning of a downward spiral of support. The good news is that our community partners such as The City of Toronto are right behind us, they have received answers to all of their questions and they are satisfied that we meet all the criteria necessary for continued support.

I wanted you all to know first, that we are re-building our reputation. We will not let lies and malicious intent destroy this important organization, Feed Scarborough.

Here are some of the most important points I want to communicate to you today about our current strategy:

They referred to our account balance being too high. A bank balance for a non profit organization means that you are successful in fundraising. We actually now have funds for much needed renovations.

As many of you know, we have to vacate our kitchen and warehouse space very soon (it was supposed to be by the end of this year), and our new space needs a lot of renovations which cost a lot of money. We cannot work with debt on our head, so we actually saved money to start the renovations.

We were also challenged with the question of what we spend on programs as a percentage of our budget. They mentioned that we spend only 8% on our programs. This is incorrect. We spend 93% on our programs. In March 2020 (in the beginning of pandemic) when the community was in disarray and we started, we were all volunteers trying to serve our community and so were our book keepers. In the interest of time and resources, we did not specifically classify all our expenses. We bought trucks so our foodbanks can get food, we built a commercial kitchen so our community can receive meals every week. We build community gardens, we purchased walk in fridges and freezers so we can serve fresh food to our community. All these are "startup costs" that are necessary to running our programmes. And these were classified as "other expenses" until we could get professional financial services completed.

I am putting this call out today : if anyone in the community has any questions or want to understand any part of our operations and finances, my door is open. Please call : 416-936-3975 or email me directly : [suman@feedscarborough.ca](mailto:suman@feedscarborough.ca)

I sincerely hope that you all will see through these lies and misinformation and will continue to support our community and the most vulnerable.

Thank you,

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