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For Immediate Release

## The Regional Municipality of York launches Thanksgiving food drive

*Community partnerships and collaboration help address local food shortages*

**NEWMARKET** – The Regional Municipality of York, in partnership with the York Region District School Board, the York Catholic District School Board and York Region’s nine local food banks, today launched the 2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive.

“Food banks work very hard to assist people in meeting their basic nutrition needs,” said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. “The depletion of supplies in our food banks means we all have an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people who need essential assistance right here in our own communities.”

The Thanksgiving Food Drive will take place from September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 16<sup>th</sup>, and will create awareness of the many issues that lead to hunger while enhancing efforts among the many partners who donate food, services and volunteer time to York Region food banks.

“Given the current economic climate and knowing that food bank use has increased, it is extremely important to bring forward this initiative,” said City of Vaughan Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio. “It costs \$572 a month for a family of four to eat well. Significant pressure is being placed on families and individuals as they struggle between paying the bills and buying food.”

Each month, more than 5,000 York Region residents use local food banks, and 40 per cent of these people are children.

In June 2009, York Regional Council endorsed a resolution put forward by Regional Councillor Frustaglio to actively support York Region’s nine local food banks in this year’s food drive campaign. This initiative supports the findings of United Way of York Region’s report “... *if addressed*”, which encourages communities, businesses and various level of governments get involved and work collectively on issues.

York Region has been working with local food banks to determine how the Region can support their local food drives. During this drive, specific campaign assistance includes York Region Emergency Medical Services paramedics helping with food collection and transportation. York Region will also provide temporary storage of food collected, if needed.

In the upcoming months, York Region will continue to work with each of the local food banks through the Region’s annual Community Enhancement process. This process provides funding for community agencies up to \$10,000 to help them meet their immediate needs.



*From left to right, Bill Fisch, York Region Chairman and CEO, Kim Harrison, Director, Richmond Hill Food Bank, Joyce Frustaglio, Regional Councillor, City of Vaughan, Susan LaRosa, York District Catholic School Board, Director of Education and Bill Hogarth, York Region District School Board, Director of Education.*

"As educators, we see the direct impact nutrition has on student learning," said Bill Hogarth, Director of Education for the York Region District School Board. "Proper and adequate nutrition enables students to increase and maintain their energy levels and their cognitive abilities; therefore maximizing their learning opportunities and educational experiences."

As active partners in this year's campaign, both school boards are encouraging school food drives, offering community hours to students who volunteer at local food banks and communicating with parents about the importance of food bank contributions.

"It is difficult for anyone to learn when hungry, particularly a child," said Susan LaRosa, Director of Education for the York Catholic District School Board. "As in the past, we are confident our school communities will rise to the occasion and support the Thanksgiving Food Drive in any way they can."

York Region employees are also encouraged to donate non-perishable food items. Bins will be provided in various Regional buildings.

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

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