



Joyce Frustaglio
Regional Councillor,
Acting Mayor

TO: Members of York Regional Council

FROM: City of Vaughan Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio

DATE: November 19, 2009

RE: **2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive Campaign**

This memorandum provides background information on the *2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive Campaign* and a report of the Food Drive project activities and project outcomes.

In York Region food bank use has increased by a staggering 35% since last year (almost double the provincial average). Approximately 5000 residents in York Region turn to food banks and various food programs monthly and of those 40% are children. Like other parts of Ontario this increase is mainly driven by the economic down turn, job loss and the rising cost of food.

At the June 25, 2009 Regional Council meeting, Council passed a resolution to be actively involved in supporting the Region's nine local food banks in their annual Thanksgiving Food Drives. The result of this was the first Regionally co-ordinated and sponsored food drive.

The food drive initiative supports the findings of United Way of York Region's report "...if addressed", which encourages communities, businesses and various levels of government to collaborate and work collectively on complex social issues.

Following Council's resolution, I worked with Bill Hogarth, Director, York Region District School Board and Regional staff to initiate a meeting with the local food bank representatives and community stakeholders to develop a project work plan, identify resources and leverage partnership opportunities.

This year the recent economic downturn and increased job losses have had a significant impact on food banks in many of our communities and while the 2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive accomplished its goals, the increased demand continues to outpace the rate by which food banks can replenish their food supply. In order to ensure that food banks are well positioned to address their immediate food shortages, ongoing community food drive efforts will be critical throughout the year.

Project Activities and Outcomes

This outcome summary is based on data that has been provided by York Region staff, York Region EMS, the York Region Food Network (YRFN) and the local food banks.

Project activities and outcomes included:

- **2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive - Official Launch Event:** The 2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive Campaign Kick-off Event took place from September 24, 2009 to October 16, 2009. An official launch marking the kick-off took place on September 29th, 2009 at the York Region Administrative Centre. The official launch brought together partners, community stakeholders and residents to highlight the event. The official launch garnered positive support through various media channels and helped raise awareness on an important community issue.
- **Deputing at Local Councils:** I made presentations at various Council/Committee of the Whole meetings encouraging local municipal participation in local food drives as well as offering specific areas of involvement where the Region could assist with local food drives efforts.
- **Encouraging School Food Drives:** Strategic partnerships with both the York Region District School Board and York Catholic District School Board, the Regional Municipality of York and the local food banks were formed to promote and encourage school food drives, offering volunteer community hours to students to volunteer at local food banks and providing key messages to all parents regarding the importance of contributing to ongoing food drive efforts.
- **Supporting the Food Drive Initiative:** York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provided support to twelve schools and five York Region buildings by collecting and delivering donated food to the nine local food banks.
- **Volunteering in Local Grocery Store Food Drive Events:** York Region EMS paramedics through their volunteer efforts assisted with the collection of food and provided support to three local supermarkets during local grocery store food drive events. Food collected during the events was transported to local food banks. (Local Supermarkets assisted: Metro (Yonge/Sawmill), No Frills (Sutton), No Frills (Richmond Hill))
- **Promoting The Regional Municipality of York (Employee Food Drive):** As part of the food drive initiative, the Region encouraged all staff to contribute to the York Region Employee Food Drive. Key messages through *York Beat* and the *In Touch* newsletters were distributed to all York Region employees regarding drop-off locations and a list of food items most needed. Food bins for donations were placed in the Great Hall including five York Regional buildings located across the Region: 520 Cane Parkway, South Service Centre, The Tannery, 62 Bayview and Bales.

- ***Coordinating the Pick-up of Donated Food:*** Specific campaign assistance was provided by York Region EMS who assisted with coordinating the transportation of food collected at local schools and Regional buildings to the nine local food banks.
- ***Creating Awareness and Education:*** As part of the food drive initiative, promotional materials, flyers/posters, information/fact sheets and key messages were used to create awareness and education regarding food shortages in York Region. Flyers highlighting specific food items needed the most and food bank drop-off locations provided a targeted approach during the initiative. In addition, generic campaign posters were created so that they may be used in future events.

Results

Our efforts truly made a significant impact in helping our most vulnerable residents.

- ***Food Drive Results:*** The YRFN final results showed 151,920 pounds of non-perishable food were collected during the 2009 Annual Fall Food Drive in York Region.

I am proud to say that the 2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive Campaign contributed over 30% towards the overall total food collected through the annual Fall Food Drive in York Region this year.

- ***New Funding Opportunity:*** Given the truly difficult times many residents are facing the Region also extended broader support through a one-time invitation to address food bank needs through the Community Enhancement fund process. Food banks have the opportunity through this process to receive basic support to assist them with their immediate minor capital improvement, food shortage and program expense needs.

I would like to express my personal gratitude to Regional Chairman Bill Fisch for making this opportunity available to our food banks.

Conclusion

The 2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive Campaign has been successful in a number of areas. Most importantly, significant gains were made in raising awareness and education while promoting food security issues in York Region. The 2009 Campaign was one of many local food drive events that took place in York Region. I would like to acknowledge the great work and dedication of all our community partners across York Region.

I would like to personally thank Community and Health Services Commissioner Joann Simmons and her staff for their support and contributions during the 2009 Campaign. But most importantly I would like to thank York Region EMS paramedics for their commitment and involvement in assisting with the collection and delivery of donated food to our local food banks. Their involvement truly contributed to the success of the 2009 Campaign.

I would also like to especially thank all members of Regional Council for their support and generosity during the 2009 York Region Thanksgiving Food Drive Campaign.

Valuable partnerships with our school boards, local food banks and other community agencies were further enhanced and I hope that these partnerships will be the catalyst in creating ongoing collaborations across York Region to address the food needs in our communities all year round.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Frustaglio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joyce" and last name "Frustaglio" clearly visible.

Joyce Frustaglio
Regional Councillor
"People First"