

FoodShare needs cash to replant:

"People's Conservatory of Food" committed to cultivating new future

by Jennifer Bain, Food Editor Toronto Star - July 04, 2007

The Royal Conservatory of Music has a new neighbour that has playfully nicknamed itself the People's Conservatory of Food. Its real name is FoodShare Toronto and it has been tackling food and hunger issues for 22 years.

But unless you've signed up for delivery of low-cost, fresh-food boxes, created a community garden, started a school salad bar, or rented an industrial kitchen to launch a food business, FoodShare has probably flown under your radar.

FoodShare puzzles people. It isn't well-known like the Daily Bread Food Bank and Second Harvest. It doesn't have a sexy fundraising soiree involving top chefs. Other than a short-lived, public salad-bar event, it doesn't have a major fundraiser because it can't reconcile the need to charge high ticket prices with its "food for all" agenda. Its "Walk, Run & Roll for FoodShare" on June 16 raised barely \$2,500.

So, unless someone can think up an immediate fundraiser befitting a "People's Conservatory of Food," **here's the plea: FoodShare needs \$400,000 worth of good, old-fashioned cash donations.** The non-profit group needs the money to help pay for its forced relocation from an Eastern Ave. warehouse to a vacant high school on Croatia St. in the west end.

FoodShare got \$1.5 million from municipal, provincial and federal governments to relocate because of development plans. Based on a \$1.6 million construction quote, it planned to quietly raise \$100,000.

"The good news was we raised \$375,000 from our great individual donors," says executive director Debbie Field. "And the bad news is we have to raise another \$400,000."

Renovation costs, of course, have a way of skyrocketing. But things are coming along beautifully. Here are highlights.

In October, FoodShare joined the Royal Conservatory in the former Brockton High School at 90 Croatia St., near Dufferin Mall. To co-exist happily in the leased space without disturbing the musicians, renovations must be done at night.

Luckily, contractor Mirela Luca of Construction Studio has found creative solutions, including handy artists who want night work.

The school's auto body shop is being turned into a warehouse,

with truck access, to pack 3,500 Good Food Boxes full of fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables each month and to sort produce for 85 school nutrition programs. (More than half of the boxes are bought by people at or below the poverty line.) Until the reno's complete, however, the Daily Bread Food Bank in Etobicoke is hosting all this work. The Parkdale Neighbourhood Church, meanwhile, is hosting FoodShare's cooking programs until the new kitchen is ready.

At first, Field was thrilled to see the school's abandoned kitchen, but most of the equipment didn't meet current building and health codes and had to be thrown out. "Another reason we so desperately need more money," she admits, adding every room had asbestos. But soon there will be two separate kitchens to house the Toronto Kitchen Incubator (that fledgling businesses can rent), a food youth training program and more. Outside there are plans for a greenhouse to grow herbs, organic greens and seedlings that are planted around the city every spring.

FoodShare does all this work and much more with just 24 staff members (plus hundreds of volunteers).

"It has been stressful for us to be spread out over three locations, but soon we're all going to be reunited in our new home," says Field, who loves being part of a vibrant neighbourhood. "It feels like a real expansion and a growth in our ability to have an impact on the city."

It's an exciting transformation, but at the back of everyone's mind is the fact FoodShare only has a 10-year lease from the Toronto District School Board. (It pays utilities only, but they are hefty.)

"People are saying already that we'll have to rebuild 90 Croatia around FoodShare because we'll never be able to leave," Field says.

And maybe it won't have to, if Field is able to change the Grade 12 diploma so that students can't graduate without food literacy. "Our dream is that every kid in the city of Toronto will come by subway to this building in Grade 3, Grade 6 and some time in high school, and take age-appropriate cooking, greenhouse, gardening, composting, beekeeping and food policy workshops," she says.

FoodShare hopes the next generation will help change our food system. Until then, there is much work to be done.

Good Food NEWS

Help us Replant ourselves!



Food Share

Field to Table Centre

90 Croatia St. Toronto, ON M6H 1K9 t: 416. 363. 6441 xt 221 f: 416. 363 0474 e: info@foodshare.net www.foodshare.net

As of July 31st the Good Food Box will be packed at 90 Croatia St!



recipes

Roasted Green Beans with Onions and Walnuts

- 1 lb green beans, stem ends snapped off
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tsp minced fresh thyme
- 2 medium thin-sliced garlic cloves
- 1/2 medium yellow or red onion, cut into 1/2 inch thick wedges
- 1/3 cup toasted chopped walnuts
- Salt and pepper to taste

Adjust oven rack to middle position, pre-heat oven to 450°F. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil; spread beans and onions on baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil; using hands, to coat evenly. Sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon of salt, toss to coat, and distribute in an even layer. Roast for 10 minutes. While roasting, combine balsamic vinegar, honey, thyme, and garlic slices in a small bowl. After beans and onions have roasted for 10 minutes, remove from oven. Drizzle vinegar honey mixture over the beans and onions; use tongs to coat evenly. Put back in the oven and continue to roast until onions and beans are dark golden brown in spots and beans have started to shrivel, about 12-15 minutes longer. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Transfer to serving dish, sprinkle with toasted chopped walnuts, and serve. *Serves 4.*

Quick Sesame Green Beans

- 8oz fresh green beans, trimmed
- 2 TBS low sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 TBS miso paste
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp grated fresh ginger root
- 1 TBS sesame seeds, toasted

Place the green beans into a steamer insert and set in a pot over one inch of water. Bring to a boil, cover and steam for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and transfer beans to a serving bowl. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, stir together the soy sauce, miso paste, red pepper flakes, garlic and ginger. Pour over the green beans and toss to coat. Sprinkle sesame seeds on top.

Toasting sesame seeds: Heat a dry skillet over medium heat. Add sesame seeds and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant and lightly toasted. *Serves 4.*

featured this week: GREEN BEANS

Green beans and other beans, all derived from a common bean ancestor that originated in Peru. From there, they were spread throughout South and Central America by migrating Indian tribes. They were introduced into Europe around the 16th century by Spanish explorers returning from their voyages to the New World, and subsequently were spread through many other parts of the world by Spanish and Portuguese traders. Today, the largest commercial producers of fresh green beans include the United States, China, Japan, Spain, Italy and France.



While green beans are typically referred to as string beans, though are also commonly known as snap beans. Haricots verts are French green beans that are very thin and very tender.

Green beans are in the same family as shell beans, such as pinto beans, black beans and kidney beans. Yet unlike their cousins, green beans' entire bean, pod and seed, can be eaten.

Green beans are picked while still immature and the inner bean is just beginning to form. They range in size, but they usually average four inches in length. They are usually deep emerald green in color and come to a slight point at either end. They contain tiny seeds within their thin pods.

Green beans, while quite low in calories (just 43.75 calories in a whole cup), are loaded with nutrients. Green beans are an excellent source of vitamin C, vitamin K and manganese. Plus green beans are very good source of vitamin A (notably through their concentration of carotenoids including beta-carotene), dietary fiber, potassium, folate, and iron. And, green beans are a good source of magnesium, thiamin, riboflavin, copper, calcium, phosphorous, protein, omega-3 fatty acids and niacin.

To freeze green beans: Snap ends off. Leave beans whole, cut into shorter lengths, or French-cut, which is similar to a julienne cut. Blanching Time: Boil for 3 minutes maximum (ideally they should just turn a brighter shade of green). Plunge into ice water to stop blanching process. Dry thoroughly and pack into freezer containers or bags, leaving 1/2-inch of headspace.

DELIVERIES

for the week of: **July 31**
orders are due 5 pm Tues. **July 24**

for the week of **August 7**
orders are due 5pm Tues. **July 31**



tel 416. 363. 6441 ext234 fax 416. 363 0474 e. gfb@foodshare.net
As of July 31 the GFB will be packed at 90 Croatia St!