



# GREENING our communities

through Live Green Toronto Grants



## PROJECTS:

- **Greenhouse at the Green Barn**
- **Yes in My Backyard**

Community gardens bring together people of diverse backgrounds to address urban challenges such as climate change, poverty, language barriers, social isolation and access to healthy food.

The greenhouse at the Green Barn and the YIMBY project were designed to increase Toronto's community gardening space.

## The Stop Community Food Centre

The Stop Community Food Centre works to improve access to healthy foods in a manner that maintains dignity, builds community and challenges inequality. The goal of their two projects was to transform the area into a model neighbourhood for community-based urban organic food production. The projects allowed community members to grow fresh, local produce and engage in hands-on learning about sustainably produced food.

**Greenhouse at the Green Barn:** A greenhouse was constructed at the Green Barn, the Stop's community food hub located on the site of the historic Wychwood TTC streetcar barns at St. Clair Avenue and Christie Street. The greenhouse is a 3,000 square foot structure built to LEED Gold standards that demonstrates energy- and water-saving technologies including geothermal heating, passive solar energy and greywater recycling.

**Yes in My Backyard (YIMBY):** YIMBY expanded the Stop's urban agricultural activities beyond the borders of the Green Barn into the backyards of community members. The goal of YIMBY was to bring various groups of people together: people with yards that could be cultivated, people with time to spare, people with knowledge about how to garden, and people with the desire to do it.



“Life is too short to work on one problem at a time.”  
Rhonda Teitel-Payne, Urban Agriculture Manager

For more information about the Greenhouse at the Green Barn and YIMBY, visit [thestop.org](http://thestop.org) or email [general@thestop.org](mailto:general@thestop.org).



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Greenhouse:** The greenhouse produces fresh and nutritious food year-round. Community members learn about organic food production and green technologies through open houses, tours, public events and workshops. Visitors gain an understanding of the benefits of local, organically produced food and learn why it's important to support local farmers and grow their own food.

By growing season-appropriate food and using geothermal heating, 128,000 kg of greenhouse gas emissions were saved in the first year. Participants from diverse backgrounds learned organic growing techniques, how growing and consuming local food promotes personal health, and how to reduce their carbon footprints.

**YIMBY:** Yes in My Backyard (YIMBY) created 40 new food gardens (about 14,000 sq ft.) in the neighbourhood. A Global Roots demonstration garden was built with a unique multicultural and intergenerational focus that brought seniors and youth together.

The Stop made concerted efforts to involve marginalized people in YIMBY activities, as they are often left out of environmental initiatives. To reduce financial barriers, a tool-lending library was set up, free TTC tokens and seedlings were given out and products were purchased in bulk.

YIMBY celebrates the end of each year with a practical and symbolic community seed exchange event.

The Greenhouse at Green Barn (2008 Capital Grant \$100,000)

Yes in My Backyard (2010 Capital Grant \$25,000)



The Stop established partnerships with the Vineland Centre for Research and Innovation and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers. Participants in the Global Roots portion of the YIMBY project shared their knowledge about growing new crops in Ontario. Vineland is working to develop and adapt culturally specific varieties of vegetables that are commonly eaten around the world but not yet grown commercially in Ontario.

### Challenges

Food production at the greenhouse was lower than initially projected. Experiments with temperature, humidity, lighting and plant varieties were successful in increasing the harvest.

### What's next

The Stop receives requests from around the world about their operations including fundraising, service approach, community engagement, logistics and goals. To share what they've learned, The Stop wrote a paper about their model which includes information on how to apply it in other communities. The Stop continues to empower the local community, providing participants with skills and knowledge to create a sustainable future.