



the stop
community food centre

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locations
1884 Davenport Road
601 Christie Street, Barn 4

mailing address
P.O. Box 69, Station E
Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E1

t 416 652 7867
f 416 652 2294

e general@thestop.org
w www.thestop.org

Charitable # 1191-92763-RR0001

Sept. 22, 2015

Antoinette Crichlow
City Clerk's Office
tel: 416-397-4579
email: boh@toronto.ca
www.toronto.ca/council

Councillors and Board of Health members,

I am grateful for chance to speak on behalf of The Stop Community Food Centre and in my role as Chair of the Toronto Food Policy Council. It is clearly a critical time for Toronto to be supporting the development of a strong and bold Poverty Reduction Strategy, and essential that Council and Committees support the allocation of sufficient resources to ensure the TO Prosperity's success.

The Stop and TFPC have both been involved in the Commitment to Community process working with hundreds of other organization and individuals across the city to provide input to the poverty reduction framework development. We are pleased to see food as one of the critical pillar within that work and would encourage the Board of Health to support the Strategy. In particular, I would like to speak to a few of the key elements within the framework:

Urban Agriculture:

We are encouraged by the formation of the City's Urban Agriculture steering committee and by the Board of Health's own work on green spaces. We believe the UA Steering Committee should be moving more quickly in its efforts to remove the zoning, licensing and planning barriers which exist and which prevent the growing and selling of food in neighbourhoods across the city. We hope to see more of the type of innovative work currently happening in Hydro corridors, and strongly advocate the City lead the way for expanded growing spaces on TDSB, TCH and other public lands.

Student Nutrition:

The Board and City Council should continue to provide leadership in the area of student nutrition. We would urge continued expansion of this program, including the potential for secondary students in Neighbourhood Improvements Areas. The City of Toronto should be leading national, inter-provincial and regional efforts to secure universal student nutrition for all Canadian students.

Income:

Food security happens because of inadequate income and as such the City of Toronto needs to address income as a core element of their poverty reduction strategy. Changes which support low income people accessing transit will improve greatly people's access to healthy

food and their overall health. However, the City needs to indicate a clearer commitment to addressing inequality by becoming a living wage employer, and by driving change at Provincial and Federal tables regarding inadequate social assistance rates and minimum wage.

Toronto has tremendous food assets, and a history as a world leader in food. Investing in food is not only a significant tool in addressing poverty, it is also a means of stimulating local economies, of creating a more sustainable food system, and of addressing the social determinants of health for Torontonians today, and in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Gray', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rachel Gray
Executive Director