



South Riverdale
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE

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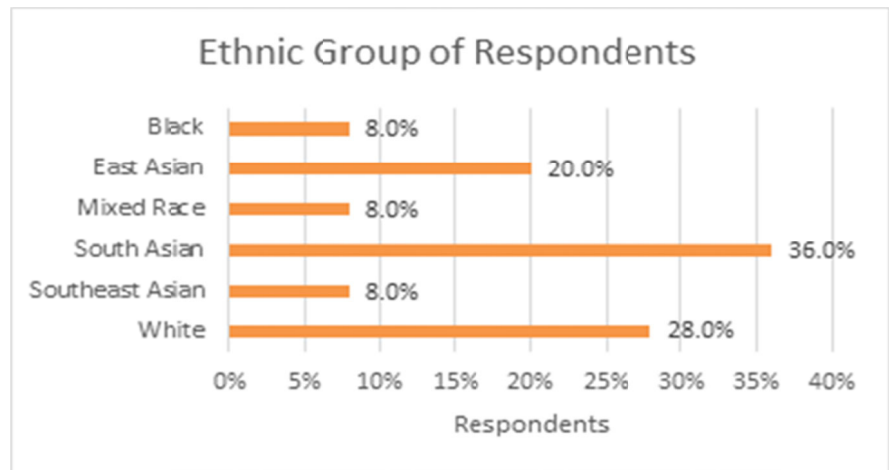
September 22, 2021

Re: Written Deputation In Support of the Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan

Dear Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

South Riverdale Community Health Centre strongly endorses and supports the establishment of a community-led and City-supported approach to address Black food insecurity in Toronto, and asks that Committee Member support the unanimous adoption of the Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan.

South Riverdale Community Health Centre's Harmony Community Food Centre is one of 12 Community Food Centres across Canada. While we do not specifically work with the Black community, we do work to address the determinants of health for ethno-linguistic and



ethno-cultural and racialized communities as well as peoples living on low income and as such understand some of the factors behind the need for the City of Toronto to have a Black Food Sovereignty Plan. The recent CFC Annual Program Report which pulls data from 12 CFC across Canada, of which we are one member, notes that “Racialized communities experience ongoing, and disproportionate levels of poverty across Canada ⁽¹⁾. The prevalence of household food insecurity in Canada differs markedly by racial/ cultural group; in particular, **with the highest rates of food insecurity among households that identify as Indigenous (28.2%) and Black (28.9%)**⁽²⁾.

There is increasing evidence that racialized communities are also disproportionately affected by COVID-19 due to various factors including the increased risks of discrimination, less access to healthcare, disproportionately high representation in essential work, and income and unemployment inequalities ⁽³⁾.

In order to better understand the experiences and meet the needs of community members, participants were asked to describe their racial or ethnic group. **80% identified as a person of colour (0% identified as Indigenous, 8% as Black)**. Some reported more than one ethnic group.” As food insecurity is one of the priority challenges facing Black communities in Toronto, we encourage the City to take this important step to respond to the need for better access to safe and healthy foods, more green spaces, and better local food infrastructure, particularly in communities with a higher percentage of Black Residents.

Establishing and supporting a culturally specific Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan is essential. This Plan is comprehensive and community-informed and based in an anti-racist approach to meeting short and long terms food security needs for black communities. It will go a long way to making meaningful change and supporting ongoing efforts to address food insecurity among Black communities in Toronto.

As an organization that is dedicated to health equity and to addressing the social determinants of health, we are completely in support of a Black Food Sovereignty Plan and anticipate that it will allow community health centres and other organizations that serve racialized communities and specifically Black Communities, as well as Black -led and Black serving organizations to better support those communities to meet their food needs. We anticipate that the results will be very positive for black communities and for the City of Toronto. Thank you to the members of the Economic and Community Development Committee for considering our submission today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Altenberg', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jason Altenberg,
Chief Executive Officer
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