

THE STOP'S  
2018/19  
ANNUAL REPORT

# 2019

**the stop**

**The Stop Community Food Centre**

P.O. Box 69, Stn. E., Toronto, ON, M6H 4E1

**Locations:**

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& 601 Christie St., Barn 4  
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**Charitable registration number:**

119-192-763-RR0001



# Roots of Food Justice

## THE STOP ACKNOWLEDGES

The Stop Community Food Centre is located on the territory of the Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Haudenosaunee, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River.

Given the historic context of the land on which The Stop resides, it's imperative that we draw attention to the devastating impacts that decades of colonization have imposed upon Indigenous peoples. In the coming years, we will grow our Indigenous-focused programming and land work, while standing in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and other racialized communities that are seeking to reclaim their identities, health, land, and community resources.



We see that good works have the important function of rescue, intervention, and aid, but of themselves they are not enough and cannot be substitute on either the personal or societal level for economic, social, and political justice.



THE STOP'S FOUNDERS, 1982

# the stop

- 1 1884 DAVENPORT RD
- 2 EARLSCOURT PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN  
1369 ST. CLAIR AVE W
- 3 WYCHWOOD OPEN DOOR  
729 ST. CLAIR AVE W
- 4 MASHKIKI'AKI'ING GARDEN  
950 DAVENPORT RD
- 5 GREEN BARN  
601 CHRISTIE ST., BARN 4





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“We believe that when we connect this work to an understanding of how racism and oppression impacts our ability to eat, grow, live, and thrive, we can reimagine a society that’s truly grounded in food justice.”

**A WORD FROM  
RACHEL & SARAH**



Throughout our 38-year history, The Stop Community Food Centre has shown how the simple act of bringing people together around food can be a catalyst for change.

We’ve seen how growing, cooking, and sharing good food can transform a person’s health, bolster a community’s sense of identity, and even deepen the connections we feel to each other on a global scale.

We believe that when we connect this work to an understanding of how racism and oppression impacts our ability to eat, grow, live, and thrive, **we can reimagine a society that’s truly grounded in food justice.**

In 2018-2019, The Stop brought this good food philosophy into new communities, while we deepened our roots in the places we’ve been for decades. Here’s just a taste:

We welcomed thousands more guests to the table with the addition of *The Stop’s Wychwood Open Door*, a daytime drop-in centre on St. Clair West. We’re serving up hearty meals alongside life skills resources and new community connections, and we will soon be dramatically expanding and enhancing our range of services.

Working in this community requires us to acknowledge those who have been forcibly disconnected from their land within it. In 2019, we grew our Indigenous-led programming at the *Mashkiki;aki’ing Medicine Wheel Garden* — Toronto’s oldest Indigenous community garden. Guided by our Indigenous Advisory Circle, we

supported participants with opportunities to share teachings and learn more about plant medicine, gardening, and healthy living.

To truly create a just, equitable, and well-fed community, we must work together to shift the structures that keep people in poverty. With our neighbours at Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre, The Stop launched *My Davenport, My Voice*, a voter education pop-up project, and the *Davenport Community Coalition* which mobilizes to protect affordability in our community. These groups provided opportunities to amplify community power and support our neighbours in advocating for good food for all.

We’re excited to share these stories, and many others, within this annual report.

This letter is a bittersweet one, for it’s our last together. In March 2020, I resigned as Executive Director after more than seven years at The Stop. It’s been an honour to have been part of such a strong and vibrant community, and I’ll be watching in admiration as The Stop continues to develop innovative, responses to poverty, social isolation, and food insecurity.

There is so much on the horizon, and this work takes a community. To our staff, volunteers, donors, supporters, and to everyone reading this report, **thank you for planting the roots of food justice with us.**

*Rachel Gray, Executive Director  
& Sarah Powell, Board President*



## The Power of Food

What we eat, and how we eat it, has a powerful impact on our sense of self.

Our ability to access the foods we love, to express ourselves through cooking, and to share our traditions with others can build pride in our identities. It also deepens the connections we have with our families, cultures, and neighbours.

Food is at the heart of all of our work at The Stop. In 2018/2019, we provided more opportunities for people of all walks of life to share a meal, enjoy a taste of home, and feed their sense of community.

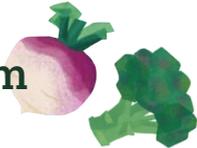
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*The Drop-in at 1884 Davenport*



## Feature Program



### DROP-IN MEALS

The Drop-in at 1884 Davenport is where most people's Stop story begins. When they walk through our doors for the first time, they're welcomed with a warm meal, a shared table, and a room full of new friends. It isn't long before they're cooking in our kitchen or visiting our garden spaces.

Last year, our Community Chefs Monica, Yvonne, and Bronwyn created strategies to source more local food, cut down on food waste, and incorporated more recipes from our Drop-in diners and volunteers. We served dishes from Korea, Uganda, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Cuba, Appalachia, Turkey, Russia, Syria, Vietnam, Israeli, Morocco, Italy, Portugal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Mexico, and El Salvador—to name just a few!

“They provide us with very nutritious meals, and they treat you like a human being. They make you feel confident in your life.”

### IN 2018/19

- 51,707 healthy meals served
- 20,000 lbs of produce used from 35 small farms around Ontario
- 5,000 pounds of onions chopped by crying volunteers
- 75% of diners said the Drop-in meals give them opportunities to connect with others

### FOOD BANK

The Stop's Food Bank provides a three-day supply of food to people living in our community. Through creative partnerships and the support of our donors, our Food Bank hampers always feature fresh produce, milk, eggs, and whole grains. Last year, we saw an increase in the number of members who don't have access to a kitchen. In response, we worked to provide a greater range of healthy items that don't need to be cooked.

### IN 2018/19

- 16,963 members of our Food Bank, 4,188 of whom were children
- 15 different types of fresh produce on offer during any given month
- 84% of Food Bank members said they made healthy changes to their diets

“At other places, sometimes by the time you get home you realize the food isn't good. The Stop is different. People know they can get something good and healthy for their families.”



“No matter what problems we have out there, in here, the cooking group, we all focus together and do one thing. And look what we just did!”

**COMMUNITY KITCHENS**

Our Community Kitchens bring people together to prepare nutritious, culturally-diverse, and inexpensive meals—while building their food prep prowess and supporting life skills development. In response to common questions from our participants, we offered a series of 11 one-off kitchen workshops on everything from Canada's new food guide to cooking with mindfulness and sugarless baking.

**IN 2018/19**

- 1,380 tasty meals prepared at 73 kitchen sessions
- 95% of participants became more confident cooking healthy meals at home
- 88% developed a sense of belonging and 83% made friends in the program

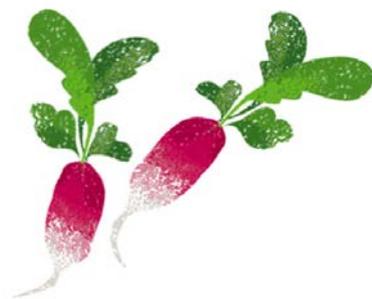
**YOUTH FOR FOOD JUSTICE**

The Stop's Youth Program provides opportunities for young people ages 14+ to grow, cook, and share healthy food and to understand sustainable food systems and the root causes of hunger from a social justice perspective. Our unique program includes a weekly drop-in, hands-on workshops with high school students and youth groups, and youth-led events like “Black is the New Black,” which brought together over 150 youth to explore Black Identity in Toronto in July 2019.

**IN 2018/19**

- 528 youth participated in food justice programs
- We collaborated with 15 partner agencies and organizations
- 100% of youth participants felt connected to people and a community within the program

“I feel less stressed when gardening. I didn't expect to like it but I did!”





## Growing Community Connections

We believe that when people are connected to good food, to the land, and to each other, they can create significant change within themselves, throughout their neighbourhoods, and across the city.

In 2018/2019, The Stop expanded our work into new communities, and we enhanced our existing programs to create more opportunities for transformative connections.



*Mashkikii;aki'ing  
Medicine Wheel Garden*



## Feature Program



### THE STOP'S WYCHWOOD OPEN DOOR

As Toronto's rates of poverty and homelessness grow, there's been an unprecedented demand for supportive drop-in spaces. In 2017, our longtime partners at Wychwood Open Door approached us with the offer to acquire the largely volunteer-run organization and more effectively meet the growing needs of its community. After a unanimous vote from their Board of Directors, we assumed operations as The Stop's Wychwood Open Door in October 2019.

Since the acquisition, we've embarked on a comprehensive review of our new facilities with the goal of expanding and enhancing our services—while preserving all its beloved activities like chess and ping pong tournaments, live music, and holiday celebrations.

“They provide us with very nutritious meals, and they treat you like a human being. They make you feel confident in your life.”

#### IN 2018/19

- 13,890 community members accessed programs
- 34,604 hearty meals served
- 424 referrals made to services like Legal Aid, harm reduction clinics, and housing support workers.

### COMMUNITY ADVOCACY OFFICE

At The Stop's Community Advocacy Office, people with lived experience of poverty and marginalization support their peers with information, referrals, and assistance in an empathetic environment. To mark the program's 10th anniversary, we hired four Advocates to chart its impact by organizing focus groups, surveys, and one-on-one interviews with past and present office staff and participants. We're excited to share the results with you in next year's annual report!

#### IN 2018/19

- 396 hours of training provided to peer advocates
- 2289 people accessed the office, where they received 1300 referrals
- 79% of clients say they feel less stressed because they know they can access the Advocacy office



“The Advocacy training was invaluable in helping me be more accepting of myself, redefine personal values, and to reframe my situation in a way that enabled me to move forward. I learned to advocate for myself.”



“When I came here [to Canada], I didn’t know anyone, and I was only six weeks away from giving birth. I was suffering from depression, but The Stop they engaged me into various opportunities for programs and it really ‘brought me up’ from that state. I am so grateful.”

**MASHKIKII;AKI’ING MEDICINE WHEEL GARDEN**

The Stop partners with the Sagatay program from Na-Me-Res Native Men’s Residence to animate the Mashkikii;aki’ing (Medicine Earth) Medicine Wheel Garden. This partnership provides a space for participants to share teachings and learn more about plant medicine, gardening, and healthy living. Last year, we grew more Indigenous plants to supplement program food, provided seeds and sacred medicines to other gardens, and raised awareness of the importance of such spaces for Indigenous people and the broader community.

**IN 2018/19**

- 544 visits to the Mashkikii;aki’ing garden
- 59 garden sessions held
- 15+ native plants cultivated in the garden



**HEALTHY BEGINNINGS**

Pregnancy can be an anxious time, especially if you’re new to Canada and separated from friends and family. Healthy Beginnings offers information, education, and support with a team of nurses, dietitians, settlement workers, and counsellor/therapists—plus a healthy lunch and fresh food hamper. Last year, we formed a new partnership with Birth Mark Doulas, a non-profit organization that assists vulnerable and marginalized individuals and their families in navigating the system of sexual, maternal, and infant care in Toronto.

**IN 2018/19**

- 225 women took part in Healthy Beginnings programming
- 188 babies born with healthy birth weights (95% of all birth)
- 91% of participants incorporated healthy food into their diets and 90% felt a sense of community with staff and other participants





## Challenging Systems

As Toronto's rates of poverty, food insecurity, and social isolation continue to rise, we must be tenacious in our advocacy and collaborative in our approach.

In 2018/2019, we brought more people to the table for vital conversations around poverty, food security, decolonization, and social justice.



*Caption here*

“EJP has had a tremendously positive impact on my personal development, my well-being and my life—It made me feel like I’m not alone. It’s provided a way for people in my situation to band together and work toward real change. We need more initiatives like EJP to help us amplify our voices.”

**FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

Hunger isn’t caused by a lack of food—it’s a lack of access, income, and democracy. In 2019, we were proud to launch The Stop’s Economic Justice Project (EJP) and work with people experiencing poverty to ease their personal financial stresses, identify systemic causes, and support them as they advocate for broader change.

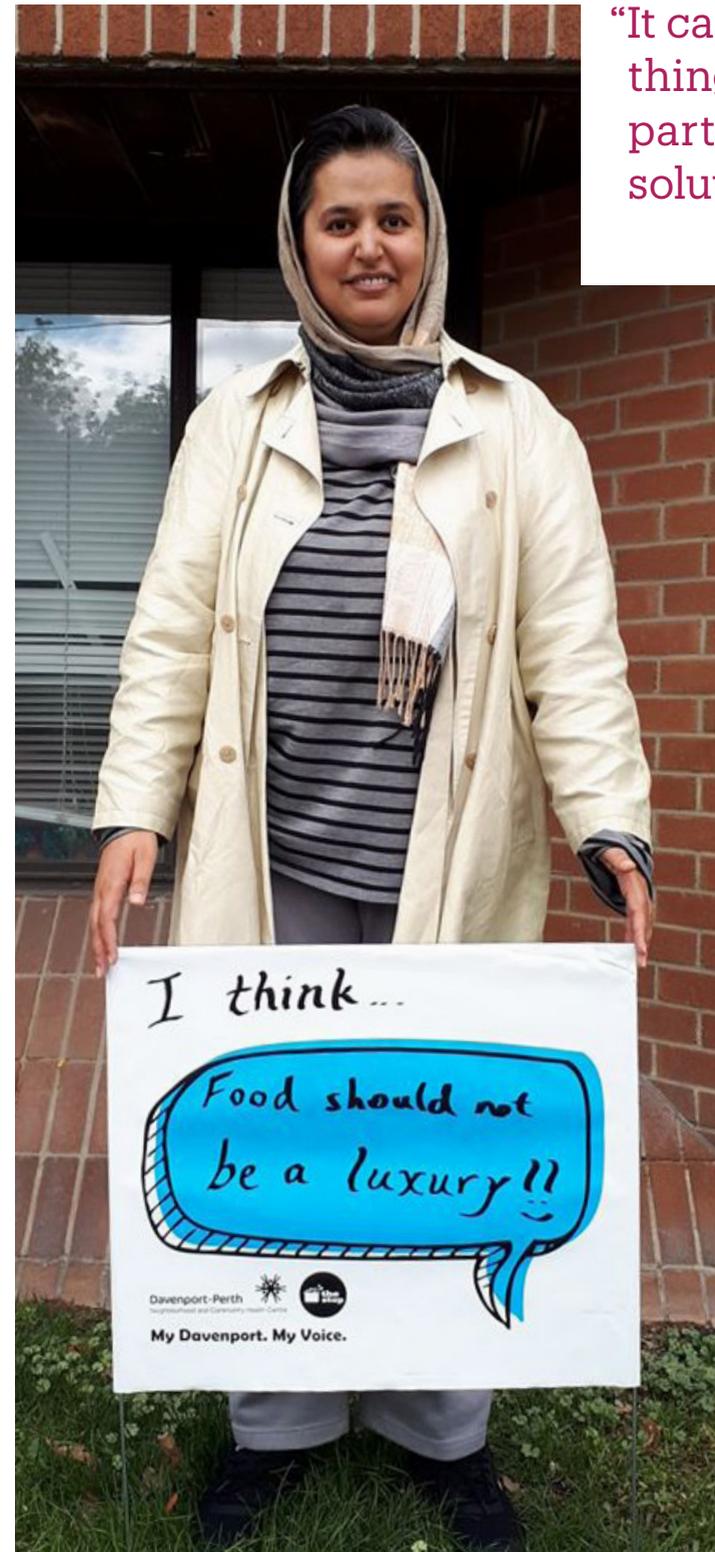
Following a comprehensive training program that featured workshops with Right2Housing, Parkdale People’s Economy, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, we hired four participants to contribute their skills and knowledge to like-minded advocacy campaigns across the city.

- 16 weeks of hands-on and theoretical training
- 4 economic justice advocates hired

**MY DAVENPORT, MY VOICE**

Elections are an incredible opportunity to talk about food. As voters, we have the power to choose a food system where no one goes hungry, where food is ethically sourced, and where our environment is protected. During the Federal election season, The Stop and Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre (DPNCHC) joined forces as “My Davenport, My Voice” to hold a series of civic engagement events and activities with our community.

- 72 people created signs with their election goals
- 120 people came to a “Coffee with the Candidates” meet and greet with Andrew Cash, Hannah Conover-Arthurs, and Julie Dzerowicz
- 83% of participants said the project helped them better understand election issues



“It can get easy to feel hopeless, like things are out of our control. Being part of this group, and working on solutions, gives me hope.”



**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY COALITION**

Our Davenport West community is changing at a rapid pace. Thousands of new housing units are being built, while existing rents skyrocket and long-time businesses close. In 2019, The Stop and DPNCHC launched the Davenport Community Coalition to mobilize our neighbours for affordability and positive change. We established a steering committee, conducted research with University of Toronto Masters of Planning students, and brought together dozens of local residents to collectively plan our next steps.

- 20,000 new residents will move to the community over the next five years
- The average price of a one-bedroom rental is now \$2,315. A single person on ODSP receives just \$1,128.
- 38 active members of our DCC planning committee



## Donor Profile

Toronto may be booming, but its women are being left behind. 16.7% of women live below the poverty line, while women of colour are earning \$12,000 less than white women for equal work.

We believe that systemic issues require collaborative solutions. In 2019, The Stop embarked on an exciting new journey with the Toronto Foundation to pool our resources and share our knowledge. As a member of their Trust Collective, we joined 17 local women-led organizations and 100 women philanthropists with a goal of serving, supporting, and connecting with women, for women, in this city and beyond.



**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT WOMEN-LED PHILANTHROPY?  
CONTACT ROZ AT [ROZ@THESTOP.ORG](mailto:ROZ@THESTOP.ORG)**

# The Stop. Annual Report Financials 2018-2019



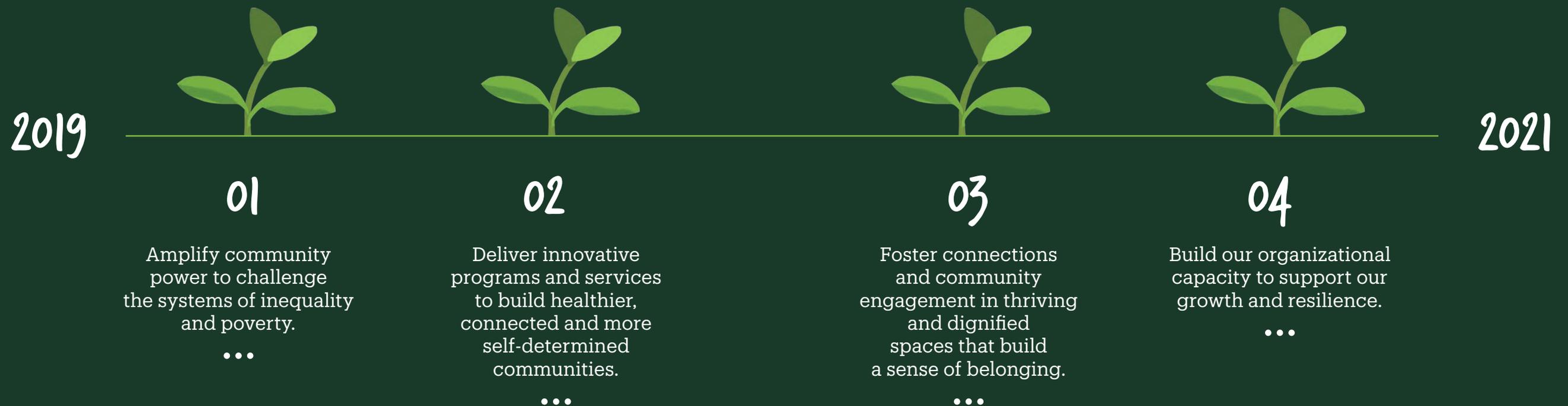
—  
Expense



+  
Revenue

**Looking forward.** In 2018, we started sowing the seeds of an ambitious three-year Strategic Plan. You've already read about its early results within this Annual Report.

Visit [thestop.org](https://thestop.org) or follow us on social media at [@thestopcfc](https://twitter.com/thestopcfc) to keep following our growth.





The Stop has given me the opportunity to reinvent myself. I feel confident and motivated to share my new skills and thrilled to keep learning. The Stop has supported, changed and uplifted my life.



COMMUNITY KITCHEN PARTICIPANT, 2019

