

Now More Than Ever



Annual Report 2014 | [www.thestop.org](http://www.thestop.org)



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## A Year of Milestones

The past year has been one of celebration and reflection for everyone at The Stop.

It was a year of important anniversaries: our Healthy Beginnings program marked 25 years of providing nutrition and support to pregnant women and new mothers in our Davenport West community. Healthy Beginnings not only changed the lives of women and children in our own neighbourhood, but became the model for the Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program that supports local prenatal programs for vulnerable pregnant women across the country.

Fifteen years ago, The Stop transformed an unused bocce ball court down the street at Earls court Park into a 10,000 square-foot community garden, one of the first in the city. Earls court Community Garden continues to grow 2,000 lbs of healthy, organic produce for our programs every year, tended by volunteers from all walks of life who learn skills, build friendships, and discover the incredible possibilities of growing food in an urban setting while digging in the dirt.



We marked the 10th anniversary of What's on the Table, The Stop's preeminent fundraising gala. In a city now brimming with food-themed fundraisers, What's on the Table continues to stand out as one of the fall's must-have tickets and has raised an impressive \$2.5-million to support our work.

Some of our milestones were marked with sadness. Last year, we bid a tearful farewell to Gillian Smith, who resigned after 17 years of dedicated service on our Board of Directors. Gillian's extraordinary leadership guided The Stop through periods of remarkable growth and change, and we owe her an enormous debt of gratitude for helping to shape The Stop into the dynamic organization it is today.

We also lost a beloved staff member. Laura Garrido died in October, having battled cancer for several years. Laura first came to The Stop as a participant in our Healthy Beginnings program with her daughter, Paola. She participated in

our Community Action Training and ended up working in the Food Bank, where she embodied the dignity and respect fundamental to all our work. She is deeply missed by colleagues, volunteers, and community members.

The theme of this year's Annual Report, Now More Than Ever, is a tip of the hat to The Stop's remarkable past, and a rallying cry: our programs and innovative approach have never been more urgently needed. It's evident in the unabating

demand for our emergency food programs, but a wide angle view reveals an even more troubling picture: recent reports peg the city's child poverty rate at 30%, the highest in the country. Skyrocketing housing costs, precarious employment, unliveable social assistance rates, and lack of affordable daycare are among the policy shortcomings that continue to hobble our fellow citizens and their families in their aspirations for healthy, dignified lives.



Now more than ever, we need to relentlessly connect the dots between poverty and health. We need to have difficult but important conversations about what we owe each other as fellow citizens. The Stop is poised to bring renewed energy and leadership to these conversations as a key plank of our strategic plan over the next three years.

The following pages offer you a glimpse into our world last year. We hope you enjoy reading about some of the people and stories that exemplify The Stop's brand of noisy, respectful, challenging, city-building work.

Thank you for being a part of the passionate community of believers who makes our work possible year after year. Now more than ever, we need you to stand with us in the fight for a healthier, more equitable city where no one gets left behind.

**Rachel Gray**, *Executive Director*

**John Montesano**, *President*



# Now More Than Ever: IMPROVING HEALTH



## Taking Nothing for Granted

Like many people who come to The Stop, Tina had a successful career with a good salary until a debilitating illness turned her life upside down. During her long recovery, she lost her job, her savings, her home, and her pride.

Unable to afford to buy food, she had no other choice but to go to her local food bank in another neighbourhood, and was disheartened to find mostly canned, processed, and junk foods loaded with salt and sugar. After already losing so much, Tina feared that even healthy, fresh food would no longer be part of her life. But when she moved into the Davenport community, she learned about The Stop and found delicious meals in the Drop-in and a food bank brimming with healthy foods.

“The Stop is a godsend,” said Tina. “It is a sign pointing me in a new direction where I don’t take anything for granted.”

“**The Stop is a godsend. It is a sign pointing me in a new direction where I don’t take anything for granted.**”  
— Tina, Food Bank Participant



**94%** of participants said The Stop is an important source for healthy food.



## Part of Something Meaningful

"If I had not moved away from the city, I would still be offering my time to The Stop," John said wistfully of the years he spent volunteering in The Stop's kitchen.

Ironically, it was John's volunteer experience at The Stop that helped him find full-time employment at a new restaurant in another city. For the past six years, John spent hours in the kitchen with our Community Chefs, Scott and Monica, where he developed his culinary skills and became familiar with the workings of a commercial kitchen.

"Volunteering at The Stop gave me the satisfaction of participating in a good cause that benefits the community. It feels nice to be part of something meaningful."

## Now More Than Ever: BUILDING SKILLS

**89%** of participants reported gaining new knowledge about nutrition & healthy eating in food skills programs.

**“There is a role that each person plays in the production and service of food... What The Stop offers is an alternative to a traditional food bank, something that is more inclusive, where the people involved in the food production are also the recipients of the food, in many cases.”**

— Chef Jamie Kennedy



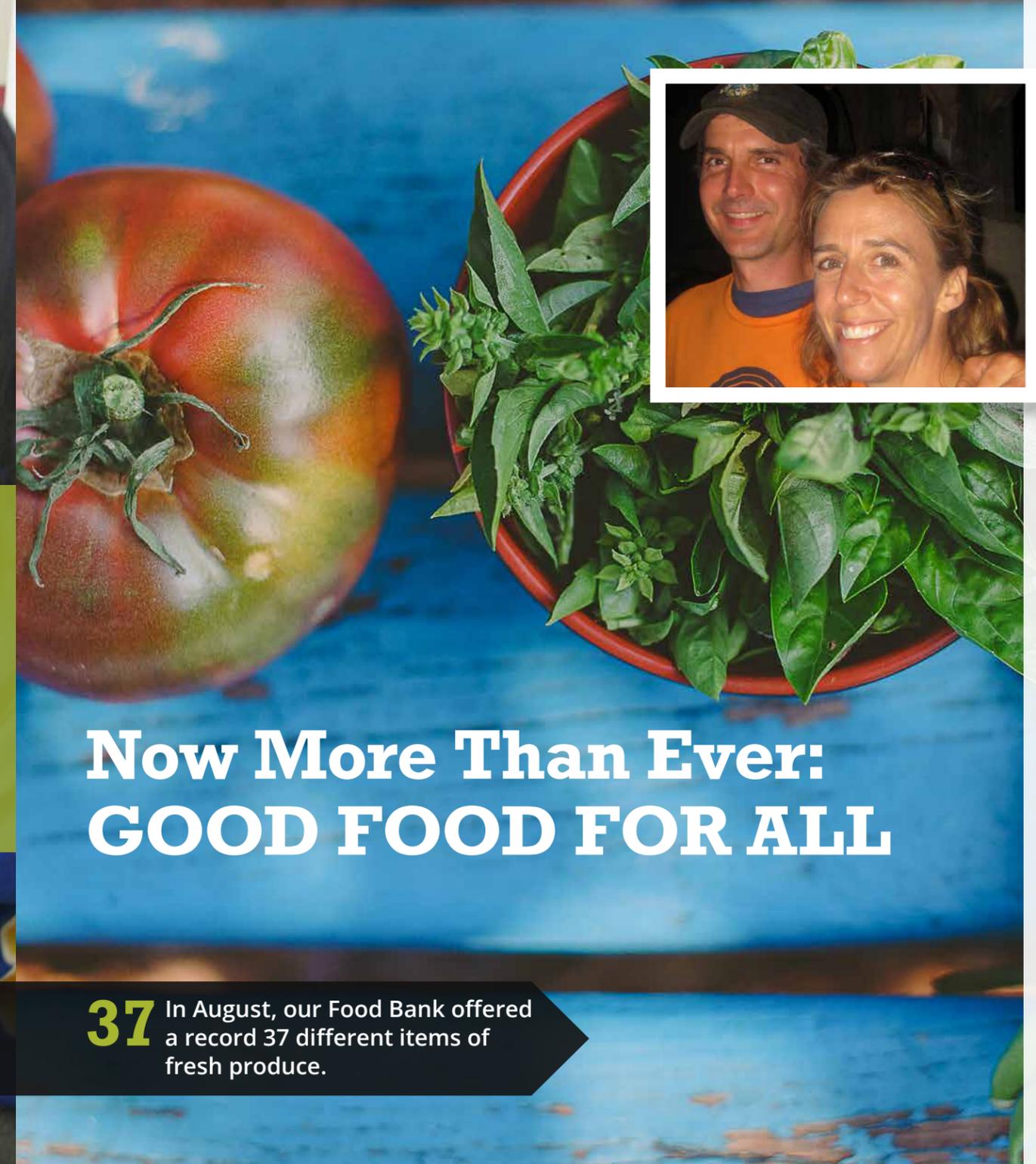


**“The staff and volunteers at The Stop are an incredible resource to our community and to my students. It’s a great launching point for them to seek answers, question the world around them, and become immersed learners.”**

— Teacher Kamla Rambaran



**757** children and youth participated in education programs last year.



**A Fresh Approach**

When Gillian Flies and Brent Preston took up careers as farmers, they knew they wanted to grow food they would feed their children. But they always had the bigger picture in mind. “Ultimately, we knew we wanted to make our healthy produce accessible to everyone,” said Gillian.

So they masterminded Grow For The Stop, an innovative program that supports sustainable local farming while providing fresh food to our community. Every summer, Brent and Gillian hold a concert at The New Farm featuring some of this country’s hottest acts (last year’s event featured Gord Downie and The Sadies) and raising more than \$30,000 for Grow For The Stop. The Stop purchases the equivalent in fresh produce from The New Farm, which is featured in our Drop-in meals and community kitchens and distributed in the Food Bank.

Now more than ever, Gillian and Brent believe in The Stop’s approach, particularly in the context of the larger food movement. “The Stop brings together chefs and restaurants, retailers and local businesses, and supports local farmers,” Gillian said, “while effectively balancing emergency food access with work on broader political issues, which is critical.”

**Now More Than Ever:  
GOOD FOOD FOR ALL**

**37** In August, our Food Bank offered a record 37 different items of fresh produce.



## Advocating For Change

As a family physician at St. Michael's Hospital and Inner City Health Associates, Dr. Gary Bloch sees up close, every day, the devastating health impacts of poverty. "Poverty and hunger are a crisis, for our society and for our health system," he said. "We need to look deep into the structure of our society to figure out why this crisis exists, and what we must do to fix it."

Gary believes that poverty is the biggest health issue faced by people living on low incomes and focuses his efforts on what health providers can do to address the health impacts of poverty, and to decrease poverty itself. He chairs a Committee on Poverty and Health at the Ontario College of Family Physicians, and he is co-founder of Health Providers Against Poverty.

In October, Gary was one of three panelists at the launch of our new speaker series, Food For Thought. He joined Dr. Kwame McKenzie of The Wellesley Institute and Trish Hennessy of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives to tackle the topic of income inequality and health. In addition to raising public awareness about these issues, Gary also works with The Stop behind-the-scenes, helping to connect community members with medical professionals to complete Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) assessments to increase their income.

Gary believes that now, more than ever, approaching these issues from a holistic perspective is critical. "The Stop's approach is unique and in many ways brilliant, and speaks to the underlying reasons people are too poor to reliably feed themselves," he explained. "This approach is powerful."



## Now More Than Ever: TAKING ACTION

**100%** of participants have taken action on an issue that mattered to them since joining The Stop's Bread & Bricks Social Justice Group.

**“With the proper training, I might be able to make a little difference in the lives of others.”**  
— Wendy, Community Action Training Participant

**65%** of participants have met at least one person who they can turn to for advice or count on in a time of crisis.

## Making A Difference

After losing her home and her job, Wendy (left, with fellow participant Dave) learned about the various programs available through The Stop and began building a community of support.

She became an active member of The Stop's Earlscourt Community Garden team and volunteered in the greenhouse, where she was able to connect with others. Her involvement in the Bread & Bricks Social Justice Group also helped her to build mutually-supportive friendships, and to turn her lived experience into action.

Wendy was one of 16 participants selected for this year's Community Action Training, a multi-week course in which community members learn about the root causes of poverty and inequality, and how to become effective change-makers.

"The Advocates have done so much for me," Wendy explained. "With the proper training, I might be able to make a little difference in the lives of others."



## A Family Affair

When David talks about the Men's Cooking Group – a community kitchen that brings together men in the community to cook and share healthy food – his enthusiasm is palpable. "I look forward to seeing my friends in the group on Monday, and being a part of the extended family that we have formed."

David has also donned an apron to volunteer as a lunch cook, and his wife Sarah helped create baked goods for the Good Food Market on Tuesdays. "It was a joy to connect with the amazing, diverse Stop community, coming together in support of access to fresh, good, and healthy food," she said.

David and Sarah recently decided to take their support of The Stop one step further by joining our Good Food Friends Giving Circle. "We want to be a part of Good Food Friends because we are strong believers in The Stop's mission and its ability to make a real, direct, and positive difference in fighting poverty and hunger," explained Sarah. "We want to spread the word so more and more people find out about The Stop's unique approach that fosters growth, dignity, and self-sufficiency, empowering the community in which it operates. It's a dynamic and positive model for all communities."



**“It was a joy to connect with the amazing, diverse Stop community, coming together in support of access to fresh, good, and healthy food.”**  
— Sarah, Volunteer & Supporter



# Now More Than Ever: BUILDING COMMUNITY

**77%** of participants made new friends and 80% feel that they belong to a community at The Stop.

## By The Numbers

Healthy meals served: **59,401**

Food hampers distributed: **10,498**

Community kitchen sessions: **169**

Urban agriculture volunteers: **189**

Education program sessions: **177**

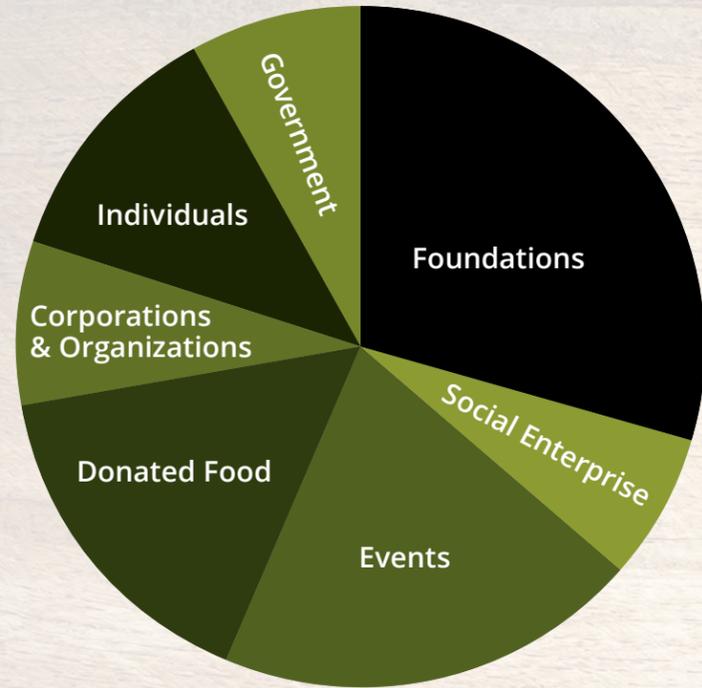
Hours worked by Peer Advocates: **2,214**

Average visitors to our Farmers' Market: **1,500**

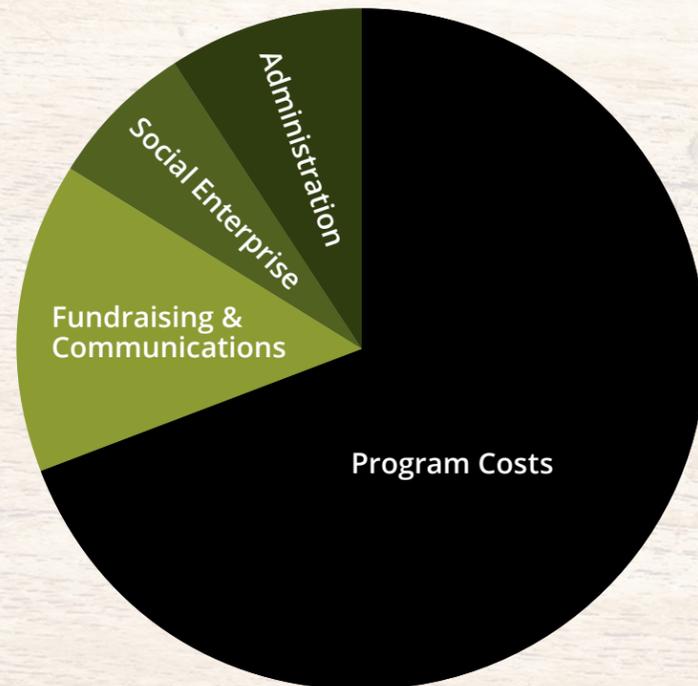
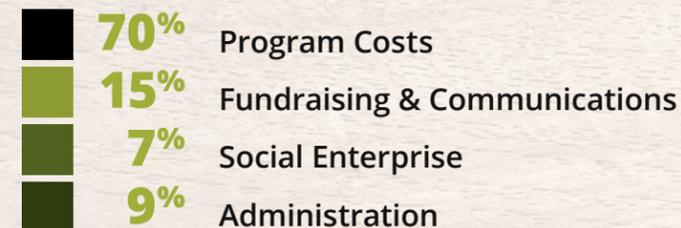
Hours worked by volunteers: **39,081**

# Financials 2013-14

## Income 2013-14



## Expenditures 2013-14



# Our Supporters

The Stop thanks the following partners for the generous support over the past year. Due to limited space, this list recognizes organizational supporters who have contributed more than \$1,000. We would also like to acknowledge, with gratitude, the significant contributions made by all of our other donors, including individuals, those who gave in-kind support, and the many restaurants, wineries, breweries, chefs, and auction donors who contribute to our annual events. This list was generated in October 2014 and includes those who have contributed since September 2013.

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- The W. Garfield Weston Foundation

- Tides Canada Initiatives Society
- Tippet Foundation
- Wilkinson Family Fund at The TCF
- Young Fund c/o Hamilton Community Foundation

### ORGANIZATIONS

- Charities Aid Foundation America
- Community Food Centres Canada
- CUPE Local 3902
- Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre
- Junction Farmers Market
- Railpath Community Run
- Seeds Of Diversity
- Steelworkers Humanity Fund
- United Way Of Greater Toronto

### FAITH GROUPS

- Fairlawn Avenue United Church
- Runnymede United Church
- St. Andrew's Group, Church of St. Timothy
- St. James Cathedral York Group
- Timothy Eaton Memorial Church

### GOVERNMENT

- CITY OF TORONTO**
- Community Service Partnerships Program
- Homelessness Partnering Strategy
- Investing in Neighbourhoods

### GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

- Human Resources Development Canada
- Public Health Agency of Canada



# Inspire Change.

## Our Mission

The Stop Community Food Centre strives to increase access to healthy food in a manner that maintains dignity, builds health & community, & challenges inequality.

[www.thestop.org](http://www.thestop.org)



## The Stop Community Food Centre

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The Stop Community Food Centre is a registered charity.  
Charitable #: 1191-92763-RR001



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