

For immediate release

As Winter is Upon us, St. James Town Forced to Halt Healthy Food Supply to Community Members in Need

OASIS Food Hub in Desperate Plea with City for Permission for Space for a Shared Shipping Container During Winter Months Ahead

(Toronto, ON) – Despite their best efforts, blood, sweat and tears, the St. James Town Co-op had to end their emergency food distribution program this summer after losing access to a working temporary location. This community run organization had been distributing emergency food and hot meals to an average 550 households per month while in operation. Since then, too many lack access to the nutritious food they desperately need to stay healthy. Food costs are rising fast and supply lines are at risk: we are facing a food emergency.

The Co-op currently runs a weekly Farm to Table Market and bulk food buying club with local farm partners, but many families can't afford enough healthy food even at reduced prices. As the weather gets colder, and local produce runs out, this vital work, too, will have to end because there is no safe, warm, accessible operating space for food provision available within walking distance.

OASIS Food Hub is one of several food support projects in St. James Town without space to function in the winter. Safe space with other community food partners is needed to sustain supply in response to this ongoing emergency. They have been advocating for a permit to use a customized shipping container to function as a centralized food depot that will provide running water, warmth and will allow the group to operate their large freezer. Despite having access to this infrastructure, permission has still not been given to place the Food Depot container anywhere in the community.

Other vulnerable neighbourhoods in Toronto are using shipping containers to provide food to their communities. Moss Park, Flemingdon Park, McCormick Park's Shipping Care Project, and Scadding Court Community Centre's 707 Market are all examples of where this has been allowed in other parts of the city.

On Wednesday, October 27, the St. James Town Community Co-op will host their weekly Farm to Table Market – an initiative that provides St. James Town residents an opportunity to buy subsidised fresh produce grown/harvested by local farm partners and co-op members. At this week's Market, residents of St. James Town are inviting the media to help get the word out and secure a temporary space to distribute food throughout the winter – **permission from the city is absolutely critical in order for this to happen.**

What: Farm-to-Table Food Market: Wednesday, October 27

When: 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Where: By the parking lot between 200 Wellesley and 275 Bleecker St

To sign the petition demanding permission for space for food, click here –
<https://www.change.org/p/st-james-town-urgently-needs-space-for-food-security>

To sign a petition letter to the City of Toronto, click here -
<https://act.newmode.net/action/foodshare/st-james-town-co-op>

Local partners working closely with St. James Town Co-op and OASIS. Food Hub includes Aunty Amal's Community Centre. St. James Town Community Co-op allies also include FoodShare, and African Food Basket, who collaborate and provide support with healthy food supply, and Green Thumbs Growing Kids and Toronto Neighbourhood Group, providing education and development support.

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To volunteer, donate or learn more information, please visit the following links:

St. James Community Co-op

<http://stjamestowncoop.org/>

OASIS Food Hub

<http://www.oasisfoodhub.ca/>

To sign Change.org petition for space please visit:

<https://www.change.org/p/st-james-town-urgently-needs-space-for-food-security>

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