



# FIGHTING FOR FOOD JUSTICE IN THE BLACK CREEK COMMUNITY:

Report, Analyses and Steps Forward

Published by the Black Creek Food Justice Network

WE ARE THE  
HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS  
STRIKING WORKERS IN  
SOLIDARITY WITH  
JFAAP JFAAP

Coming  
TOGETHER  
FOR THE  
BETTER

ON STRIKE  
FOR JUSTICE  
NITE HERE!

ON STRIKE  
FOR JUSTICE  
UNITE

BUILD  
MORE  
AFFORDABLE

MAKE  
food  
NOT





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
So what is Food Justice?	7
Food Justice: As Defined by Jane-Finch	8
<b>Project Description</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Project Results and Impact</b>	<b>11</b>
Food and the City	16
Food, Labour and Migration	18
Food, Policing and Race and Culture	20
Food, Mental Health, Gender, and Body Image	22
Food, Capitalism, Power and Money	26
September Day of Action - Food as a Human Right	29
Needs, Strength, and Continued Injustice	32
<b>The Food Justice Project: Looking to the Future</b>	<b>33</b>
Demands and Recommendations	34
<b>Community Resources and Tool-kit</b>	<b>36</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report, and the broader Food Justice Project, has come together as a result of the efforts of many people. First and foremost, we would like to extend our deepest thanks to the Black Creek Community: thank you for the privilege of working alongside you in the ongoing battle for food justice.

Additionally, we would not have been able to engage the community in vital community conversations, to manage the success of our September Day of Action, to create our multiple food equity and access projects, and express community demands and recommendations, had it not been for the generous efforts of our various collaborators. For this, we would like to express our sincere gratitude, on behalf of the Black Creek Food Justice Network, to the following:

Black Creek Community Farm Resident Council  
Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP)  
Black Creek Community Farm  
Black Farmers and Urban Growers Collective  
Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre  
Food Forward  
African Food Basket  
Everdale  
Food Share  
Toronto Food Policy Council  
Community & Legal Aid Services Programme (CLASP)  
Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University

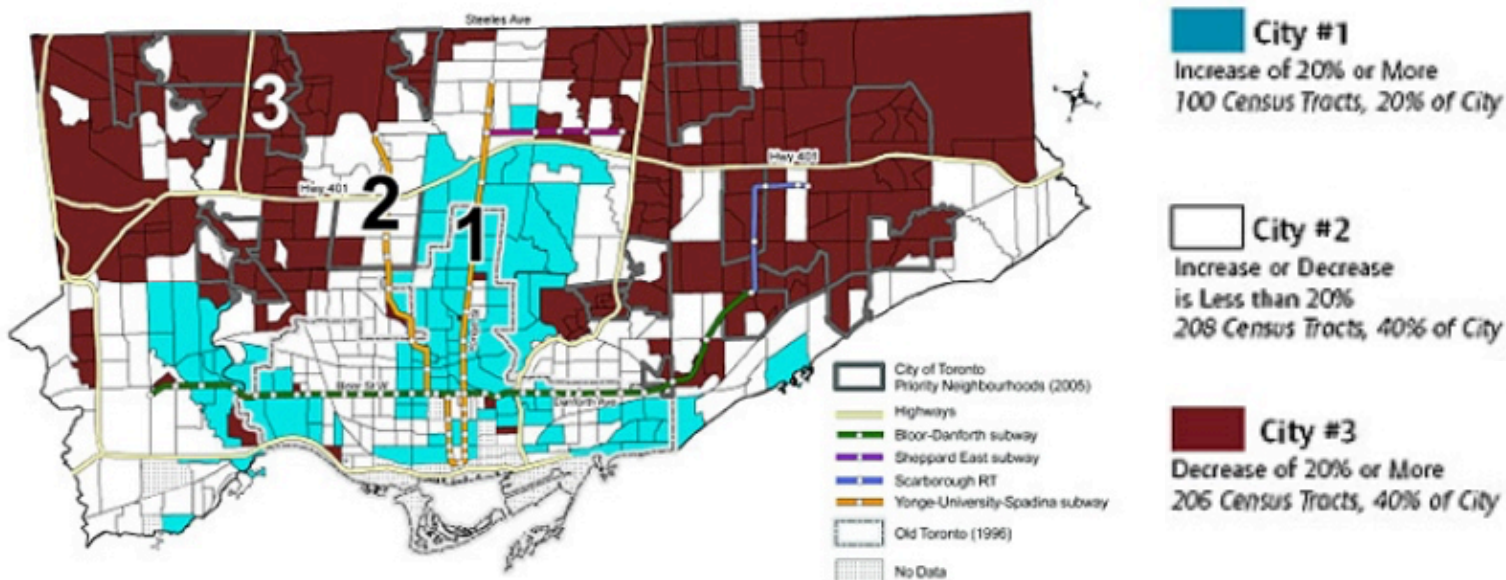
We are also grateful for the new connections and opportunities for solidarity that arose from the groups involved in our September Day of Action panel discussion: Jane and Finch Action Against Poverty, Justice 4 Migrant Workers, the National Farmers Union, the Network for the Elimination of Police Violence, the Toronto Food Policy Council, and the Workers' Action Centre. We look forward to fruitful future collaboration.

Additionally, this report would not have been possible without the dedication of the Black Creek Food Justice Network Coordinators: Sabrina Butterfly Gopaul, Rosalyn Endlich, and Rosie Mensah

We would also like to thank the City of Toronto for the funding granted to us under the Access Equity & Human Rights Project that helped to make our endeavours financially feasible.

Photography by Errol Young   Graphic Design by Alexandra Fox

**MAP 1: CHANGE IN AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL INCOME, CITY OF TORONTO, RELATIVE TO THE TORONTO CMA, 1970-2005**  
Average individual income from all sources, 15 years and over, census tracts



Change in the Census Tract Average Individual Income as a Percentage of the Toronto CMA Average, 1970-2005

Source: Hulchanski (2010)

# INTRODUCTION

As David Hulchanski (2010) revealed, income polarization observed from 1970-2005 has resulted in an increasing trend showing pockets of wealth and poverty in Toronto. This dissolution of middle-income areas has divided a former “city of neighbourhoods” into three “Cities” divided sharply by economic status.

In “City #1”, a predominantly high-income area, income rose by 20% or more since 1970. In contrast, “City #3”, a generally low-income area, has seen a decline by 20% or more in neighbourhood incomes during the same time period. “City #2” is largely a middle-income area and has experienced no notable changes to income averages since 1970<sup>1</sup>.

City #3 is made up of the northeastern and northwestern parts of Toronto<sup>2</sup> and includes many areas designated first as “Priority Neighbourhoods” and then as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs). A prominent feature of these “inner suburbs” is that they have been described as “food deserts.”<sup>3</sup> While that terminology has been critiqued, the point is that these are areas where incomes have fallen and access to high quality, fresh, and affordable food is a growing challenge. The lack of local shops, supermarkets, amenities and services are believed to be creating “liveability challenges,” including food insecurity.

The neighbourhood of Black Creek, particularly Jane-Finch, has one of the lowest income rates, yet has been found to have some of the most expensive produce.



In 2010, Jane and Finch Action Against Poverty (2010) brought together local residents to discuss this issue in a project called “The Food Right: Right Food Campaign”, within the broader scope of systemic and spatialized inequality. They began with a simple survey, and found that 90.2% of respondents shop at supermarkets for food. When asked what food they would need access to in order to increase their food security, 74.2% of respondents said they needed more vegetables in their diet.

When asked why they could not get the food that they needed or wanted, 90% of residents surveyed attributed this issue to lack of money.

Respondents called for:

- sustainable community programs (such as community kitchens, school lunch, gardens, catering, landscaping) that would promote the availability and affordability of fresh and locally grown foods (48.6%);
- the coordination of government policies to ensure affordable pricing of nutritious foods for all, regardless of where people live (67.6%); and
- an increase in provincial income assistance by at least 40% as well as an increase to minimum wage rates to enable households to afford the basic costs of living including the ability to eat healthy and maintain a balanced diet (70.3%)

The demands of “The Food Right: Right Food Campaign” indicate that true food security is impossible without social justice. This must be understood as a necessary starting point for analyses of, and solutions to, food insecurity<sup>5</sup>. This includes not only addressing the immediate concerns of community members, but channelling our energy towards broad and effective systemic changes.

The concept of “Food Justice” demands that the power imbalances that maintain social inequality must be dismantled in order to even begin to address food security<sup>6</sup>. As such, “Food Justice” has become an important vision for community organizing around food issues.





## SO WHAT IS FOOD JUSTICE?

The meaning of food Justice can be a local decision that is defined by the community. The experiences and situated knowledge of community members characterizes what justice means and looks like to them<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, Slocum and Cadieux (2015) have identified four possible areas around which organizing toward food justice could occur:

1. Acknowledging and confronting historical, collective social trauma and persistent race, gender, and class inequalities;
2. Designing exchange mechanisms that build communal reliance and control;
3. Creating innovative ways to control, use, share, own, manage and conceive of land, ecologies in general, that place them outside the speculative market and the rationale of extraction;
4. Pursuing labour relations that guarantee a minimum income and are neither alienating nor dependent on (unpaid) social reproduction by women.



# FOOD JUSTICE: AS DEFINED BY JANE-FINCH

The Jane-Finch community is beautiful in its diversity. Many communities exist within the broader Jane-Finch community and as such, through our many conversations and various food equity and access projects, it has become clear that there is no one specific definition of what “Food Justice” means to Jane-Finch residents.

Food Justice means many things at once to the community. It means being able to access affordable, culturally relevant and healthy food. It means being able to easily get to and from grocery stores. It means not having food locked away from your access and not being policed by virtue of your race and socio-economic status.

It means having access to enough healthy food for your family at all times, not just at certain times. It means having access to secure and stable work so that you can achieve this. It means having access to lands to grow your own food. It means that food justice work needs to recognize that for some, it cannot be achieved without also working towards justice for migrant labourers.

Community members of Jane-Finch may relate to all of these meanings, only some, or it may shift over time. The point is that all of these meanings of “Food Justice” have been identified as general concerns of the community, and members have a lot to say on how food injustice has affected their lives and what needs to be done to transform injustice to justice.



# PROJECT DESCRIPTION



So how did we learn that this is what “Food Justice” means to Jane-Finch community members? We undertook an expansive project of consultation and community engagement, and hope to use this Report as a way to provide both the community and the City of Toronto with our findings and resources that have come directly out of the community’s recommendations and demands.

Jane-Finch is made up of vibrant communities that encounter numerous systemic barriers and challenges surrounding access to healthy, affordable and culturally relevant food.

These barriers have had a direct impact on residents and have contributed to food insecurity throughout the communities located in the broader Jane-Finch community.

In response, Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF) and partners applied for and received a grant from the City of Toronto's Access, Equity and Human Rights program to coordinate a Food Justice Project within the broader Jane-Finch community. This is made evident by the realities of our experiences that have, over the years, been analyzed and turned into statistics by various groups and organizations. Such statistics show that Jane-Finch communities have the highest rates of chronic diabetes in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)<sup>8</sup>. At the same time, residents are paying 7% more than all other regions in the GTA for healthy produce<sup>9</sup>. It is clear that the food security of Jane-Finch is more than just a challenge, it is becoming virtually non-existent.

"Food security" is present when all people at all times have access to sufficient food to lead active and healthy lifestyles. It is currently not present in the Jane-Finch community.

In response, Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF) and partners applied for and received a grant from the City of Toronto's Access, Equity and Human Rights program to coordinate a Food Justice Project within the broader Jane-Finch community.

Led by the BCCF Food Justice Committee, the Food Justice Project began by engaging the farm and local community in strategy meetings. Eight of such meetings were held from October 21, 2014 to March 23, 2015 to develop the Food Justice Project, and its many sub-projects. As the process unfolded, it quickly became apparent that the community needed to be placed in the driver's seat of the project.

The goal of the project was set as not just opening up another forum for discussion, but to empower community members to create solutions that can be tailored to their specific needs.

In taking on this project, the Food Justice Committee had to address a number of challenges to achieve its goals. Some of these included (but are not limited to):

- Engaging community members in all aspects of the project's design and delivery;
- Ensuring the diverse Jane-Finch communities were fully represented;
- Meeting project deliverables within the project's budgetary restrictions; and
- Working towards a collective understanding of what food justice means to Jane-Finch communities

# PROJECT RESULTS AND IMPACTS

The first year of the project was successful in mobilizing a diverse range of community perspectives through multiple food equity and access projects. More specifically, these projects were designed to engage the community in discussions about food justice/injustice through a variety of methods that made up the broader forum for discussion. Below are three projects that did just this. While they are separate projects from one another, they are very much interconnected by virtue of their focus on Food Justice and the Jane-Finch community.

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS



As outlined above, there were a total of eight meetings held throughout the community as a way of reaching out on the topic of Food Justice to Jane-Finch residents. The same five theme groups listed above were used as topic guides for the discussions.

It was largely through these meetings that we learned of the communities concerns, demands and recommendations circulating around Food Justice. We have included these at the end of this report.



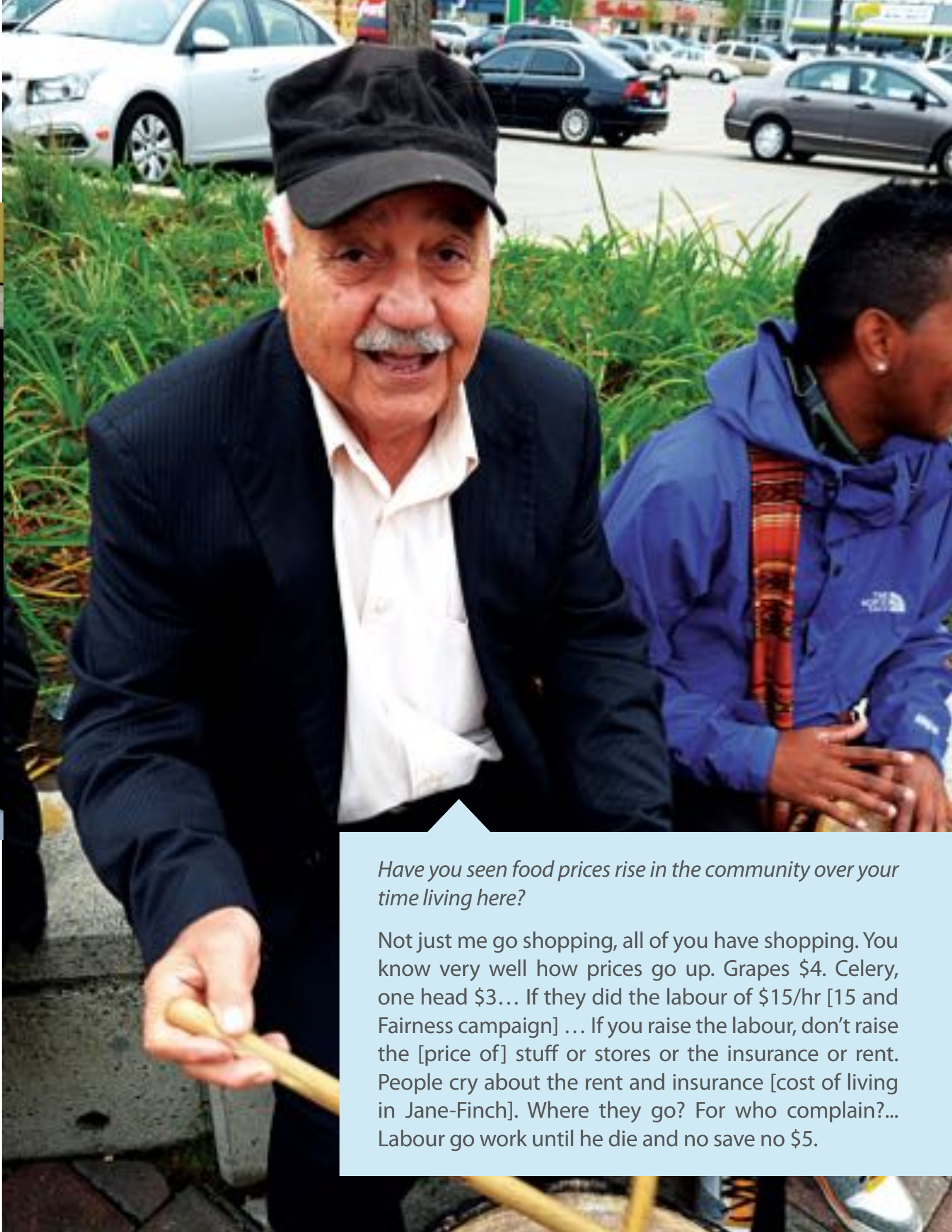
# HUMANS OF BLACK CREEK



The photo series was created as a way of engaging with the community on the topic of Food Justice in a way that went deeper than conversations.

By capturing images of residents and pairing the images with quotes from them, we are putting faces to the concerns identified by the Jane-Finch community.

Not only does this create a greater impact on those viewing the images, hopefully inspiring a desire to get involved in some way with the concerns of the community, but also allows community members to see themselves in the work that we have collectively accomplished together.



*Have you seen food prices rise in the community over your time living here?*

Not just me go shopping, all of you have shopping. You know very well how prices go up. Grapes \$4. Celery, one head \$3... If they did the labour of \$15/hr [15 and Fairness campaign] ... If you raise the labour, don't raise the [price of] stuff or stores or the insurance or rent. People cry about the rent and insurance [cost of living in Jane-Finch]. Where they go? For who complain?... Labour go work until he die and no save no \$5.





**CHR1Y 105.5FM**  
CITY COMMUNITY RADIO INC







## FOOD FREQUENCY RADIO SHOW

The radio show endeavored to create an experience or journey of collective learning and understanding of Food Justice and what that means to the Jane-Finch community. We planned a total of five radio shows that focused on the five theme groups outlined in this report and common to the two projects below (food and the environment; food, labour and migration; food, policing and race and culture; food, mental health, gender and body image; and food, capitalism, Power and money).

The radio show opened up space for community members, grassroots activists and experts to engage in conversation as well as debate.

In conjunction with Community Conversations, the idea of the radio show was to create an accessible space for those who could not attend community meetings by providing them with the ability to listen in on such discussions and debates from their homes, work, or anywhere that they had access to a radio.

These various food equity and access initiatives made up the driving force for the overall Food Justice Project. The project's initiatives created spaces for Jane-Finch members to share their lived experiences with food and how it intersects with policing, race, labour and migration, gender, capitalism and many other aspects of their daily lives. As a result, community members identified what they define as their needs and strengths as a community, as well as the continued injustices they experience.

**MAJOR ISSUE:  
FOOD AND THE CITY**



*How is it for you getting to and from the grocery store?*

I take the bus. My joints don't work because I have rheumatoid arthritis really badly so I can't do a lot of walking. Sometimes I walk to the Chinese store because you can get vegetables a little bit cheaper, but they are not that fresh. I end up going to FreshCo or No Frills and I have to take the bus because taking back the stuff and having to pull the cart... I've been hurting for years now. It's difficult because I don't drive and that's where the problem lies, the cost of transportation, then the cost of food; everything is going up. It is very difficult.

- Marcia

The built environment of Jane-Finch itself was named by community members as a challenge to food access. The neighbourhood was initially constructed in a typical suburban style that assumed that residents would primarily be traveling by car, and amenities services and housing are quite spread out. Many of the residents in Jane-Finch, especially in high-rise apartments and in community housing, do not have consistent access to a vehicle and this poses significant challenges to acquiring food.

Walking distances to grocery stores was also named as a primary concern of the community. This was paired with concerns regarding the high cost of taxis and transit as major barriers to food access, especially carrying heavy groceries in winter.

A 'need' expressed by residents was to improve the physical process of getting to and from food centers.

Additionally, York students that reside in the neighbourhood are bussed to a grocery store outside of the neighbourhood, illustrating both the challenges of food access within Jane-Finch and the divides between the neighbourhood and York University.

Another crucial and consistent thread of concern expressed by Jane-Finch residents revolves around the potential wave of gentrification pressures that may increasingly affect the neighbourhood, especially with the recent subway extension. Residents raised observations about the connections between food and gentrification, including the recently opened FreshCo at Jane-Finch, a more expensive grocery store that residents question may be an indicator of gentrification. There is significant fear of displacement that is amplified by uncertainty about development plans for the neighbourhood and whose interests those plans will serve.

Strengths in the community are the amount of potential food-growing space, including parks, the Hydro corridor, and the Black Creek Community Farm. However, the challenge remains in accessing that land for growing, especially for community groups and individuals.



# MAJOR ISSUE: FOOD, LABOUR, AND MIGRATION



*What is food like back home versus here in Toronto?*

"Here it's so different, you have to shop, buy everything. Back home it's organic, like if you want any fruits, we have the variety, anything you go to the yard and pick, pineapple, plantain, whatever provision. But here it's different. It's not like back home... So I lose out on that so much, I miss that every time I talk about it."

- Lovin

Community members connected food to labour and migration, both here in Canada, and around the world. Black Creek is an incredibly diverse community consisting of people that have come here from all around the world. A significant asset of our community is that we have residents who have significant farming knowledge and experience from their countries of origin. This knowledge could be a rich asset in community growing, especially in learning how to grow much needed culturally appropriate food locally.

However, there are many challenges as well.

Locally, residents expressed that the high rate of temporary/agency work in this community, and other precarious forms of labour, contribute to food insecurity by providing a low wage, not providing health benefits, and not offering consistent hours or income.

Youths face additional challenges to accessing employment, while trying to balance school and family responsibilities. Having precarious status, having a stigmatized address, not being able to find work close to home, and the obligation to report additional income to Toronto Community Housing pose additional challenges.

Thus, there is a strong need for better employment opportunities that are more secure and obtaining an increase in minimum wage to a living wage. Awareness around this need is currently being raised by the 15 and Fair campaign.

Additionally, through discussions with community members, we learned more about the situation of migrant workers working in Canada who grow, harvest, and pack a great deal of our 'local' food and how they are exploited. Connections were made between their plight and what people are experiencing here in Black Creek.

Temporary foreign workers spend the majority of the year in Canada, yet cannot access any of the basic benefits of Canadian citizens or residents (such as Employment Insurance or health coverage). They often work in fear, cannot reunite in Canada with their families, and many of them are here because their rural livelihoods have been destroyed in their home countries, largely due to the North American Free Trade Agreement and other trade policies and economic marginalization.

Connections were also made with people organizing locally in Ontario, as well as transnationally, on issue pertaining to migrant workers' justice and organizing for a higher minimum wage for food service workers across the United States and Canada.

**MAJOR ISSUE:  
FOOD, POLICING, AND RACE  
AND CULTURE**







The intersections between food, policing, and race was an area that community members had unique insights to offer by raising issues that are mostly absent in the larger food justice movement.

When discussing what food justice means to them, many community members made the connection to the criminalization of poverty and race and how that connects to accessing food.

Specifically, community members outlined the following issues: being followed in the grocery store; being searched and detained for suspicion of stealing food; the fact that our local grocery stores have security systems and undercover while grocery stores in wealthier more white areas do not; and finally, the locking up of baby food.

All of these issues in our local grocery stores represent additional challenges the community faces in accessing food.

The constant state of policing and surveillance in Jane-Finch, which residents also connected to the issue of police harassment and carding, is not usually considered a food access issue, but we believe this must be reconsidered. No one ever should have to face the decision to either steal baby food or to not feed their child; stealing because you cannot afford the necessities comes from desperation and injustice, and this represents a serious need in the community.

Furthermore, having a criminal record prevents people from accessing employment, which only further perpetuates food insecurity.

Programs to support breast-feeding could play a role specifically in the issue of the cost of baby formula; however, feeding children from formula should also be an accessible right to parents.

A potential way to help improve food access for racialized communities is having the opportunity and support to grow our own culturally appropriate food within the community, for the community. Access to land and resources to support growing for racialized communities needs to be addressed in Jane-Finch, as it is a huge challenge, and has deep roots of historical exclusion, that continues to manifest today.

**MAJOR ISSUE:  
FOOD, MENTAL HEALTH, GENDER,  
AND BODY IMAGE**



Organic food would be good if we can get some of those organic foods to buy. Other places if they can have a little market, once or twice a week...the organic food is good, right? It's better than those herbicides and pesticides on the fruits and vegetables. It's a little more expensive, but I'd prefer to have that...It's totally worth it.

*So having more frequent small markets, in walking distance, that would help?*

That would be great.

- Savita

On the topic of food, mental health, gender and body image, the community made it clear that it is important to broaden and deepen understandings of the connections between food and health. For example, diabetes is an urgent concern in this community, and represents an underlying problem of people not being able to access healthy and affordable food, but often the conversation about food and health stops here.

Through community discussions, residents mentioned that racism, as well as not being able to afford healthy food, can contribute to mental health problems, as both contribute to major sources of stress and hardship.

Focusing in on gender, residents (especially the youth), emphasized the amount of pressure on young women to attain certain racialized beauty standards. Young racialized women are bombarded with advertising and diets that can foster very low self-esteem, especially when paired with being teased by others and society's policing of women's bodies.

Residents also expressed concerns that artificial chemical products in foods, especially processed foods that kids and youth primarily eat, made people less healthy mentally and physically. For example, the community identified that hormones in meats are contributing to changing body types, which also affects self-esteem, body image, and health.



Significant anxiety was expressed by the community around not trusting the foods they are eating to be healthy and safe, raising issues of genetic modification of food, chemical and preservative additives, and pesticides.

Additionally, an issue facing a lot of our seniors is the cost of prescription drugs and the cost of food. More often than we would like to think, our seniors are in the position of choosing between food and their medication, which poses a significant challenge in and of itself, however, many community members are also taking medications that must be taken with food, posing an impossible dilemma.

You have to choose...I used to work with the elderly people. And a lot of elderly people, a lot of us, have to choose between the food and our medication, and a lot of the time you don't eat much because you have to buy medication, you have to buy medication because you will die without the medication.

- Maize Blanchard

What if a healthier diet to treat illnesses was covered by our healthcare system and doctors were able to write a prescription for healthy organic foods instead of, or in addition to, drugs and medications? This was suggested as a possible way to start to address the role of healthy eating in dealing with illness by broadening food policy actions to include a role to be played by medical professionals.





# MAJOR ISSUE: FOOD, CAPITALISM AND MONEY



*Is it challenging for you to access the kind of food you would like to feed your family?*

Everything get a bit expensive, since the money is down, the price is up. So we find it very hard, to do groceries, and fruits and vegetables, kind of tough...I cut down on the items, instead of buying 5 or 6 oranges, I buy 4. Apples, instead of buying 5 I buy 3, I cut down, because of the prices...I have to conserve. It is hard to stretch it...I have to pay all the bills, I pay rent, I pay hydro, I find it very hard, because I have to cut on the items, cut on cooking and eating to pay the rent...If the pay is higher, then you could afford, but the pay remains low and the items go up, so you kind of strain.

- Sandra



Economic issues were central to many of the discussions the community had about food. Healthy, organic, culturally appropriate food is significantly more expensive than processed foods, and opportunities to get it in Black Creek are very limited. The main grocery stores carry very limited selections of organic foods and cost is often prohibitive. When food prices rise, it hits Black Creek residents very hard. Even as food prices increase, peoples' wages have remained stagnant or are even decreasing, further squeezing low-income families. At the same time, farmer revenue is decreasing (for small and medium size farmers), while large corporations are profiting off this situation.

There is a tremendous amount of profit being made from the food system, but largely, it is not going to workers or farmers. Additionally, young, new and racialized farmers face severe challenges to become financially viable and to access land while corporations are buying up huge tracts of land.

Many community members face challenges in stretching their monthly income to cover all of the necessities and have to prioritize needs between food, rent and transportation.

Students are also struggling, especially as tuition prices and student debt increase, more and more students are becoming food insecure and relying upon food banks while in school. The socioeconomic realities of this neighbourhood must be addressed, and taken into account by organizations that come into the neighbourhood from outside to provide services and carry out their work.

Community members also expressed the desire to have better mechanisms to hold organizations who work in the community accountable, including organizations doing food growing and food access work. Community members furthered that they would like to have greater control over this process, including the decision making. This would make sure that the community truly benefits and that the resources are put to use in ways that maximizes opportunities for residents.



ON STR  
FOR JUSTICE  
UNITE

BEEET  
the  
SYSTEM

NOFRILLS





# SEPTEMBER DAY OF ACTION: *FOOD AS A HUMAN RIGHT*

On September 12, 2015, the Black Creek Food Justice Network took to the streets with over 100 protestors and supporters to assert the human right of access to healthy food.

“We say “food is a human right” because it’s essential for life. We are all human beings, so we all deserve to have access to sufficient food.”<sup>11</sup>

- Abena Offeh-Gyimah  
BCCF coordinator, community member and activist

The slogan “Food as a Human Right” broadly captured the demands and recommendations put forth by the Jane-Finch community to address Food Justice in low-income and racialized communities. These demands and recommendations are enumerated below.





## PANEL DISCUSSION

The Day of Action began at noon with a rally at the corner of Jane and Finch where enthusiastic drummers and speakers charged-up the crowd before marching up Jane Street towards the Driftwood Community Centre for a panel discussion and a community meal. The panel focused on food justice and featured members of the Toronto Food Policy Council, Justice 4 Migrant Workers, Network for the Elimination of Police Violence, Jane Finch Action Against Poverty, Workers' Action Centre, National Farmers Union, and Justice 4 Migrant Workers.



## REVOLUTIONARY GARDENING

The rally successfully shut down traffic along Jane Street as participants marched with signs baring slogans demanding food justice, occasionally stopping to create “revolutionary gardens”. Revolutionary gardening is the innovative practice of taking back public green space to grow healthy food in the community, for the community. The plants selected for the plots were aimed to reflect the diverse cultural foods in the community, such as peas, beets, radishes, and calliloo.

“The Jane and Finch community is one of the most expensive to buy healthy food. We wanted to use the green space that we have available to make healthy alternatives open to our community.”

- Suzanne Narain  
Organizer

These revolutionary gardens are both pragmatic and symbolic to the food justice movement in the Jane-Finch area. The hope is for the community to take ownership of these plots, cultivate food in public spaces, and expand the revolutionary gardening initiative to include partnerships with schools. Based on the success of this initiative, there is potential for the Black Creek Food Justice Network to turn this into a bi-annual event (gardening and harvesting) to further promote food justice in the Jane-Finch area.



# CONCLUSION: NEEDS, STRENGTHS AND CONTINUED INJUSTICES



The strength of the community is demonstrated in its ability to mobilize around the injustices they face. There is an expansive network of grassroots organizations that are willing and eager to support the community in addressing the inequitable food systems that continue to persist.

Despite this support, and despite the many hours put into researching and report writing on the Jane-Finch community, there has not been enough done to address these concerns. Community members are still facing soaring food prices and struggling with a lack of access to healthy, affordable and culturally relevant food. They are policed in grocery stores and throughout the community and have very limited access to transportation to reach food sources. Community members have expressed that they have had enough conversation and are ready for direct and ongoing action that actually addresses and responds to their concerns.



# THE FOOD JUSTICE PROJECT: *LOOKING TO THE FUTURE*

The time to develop real solutions is now. The Food Justice Project plans to do just this. Working with the community, the future of our project plans to develop a direct action response that rolls out of our September Day of Action that occurred on September 12, 2015.

We aim to disseminate the findings of this report throughout the community and develop actions that directly respond to the demands and recommendations put forward by the community.

An example of such a pilot program is the creation of the Garden Resource Network which seeks to provide accessible information, tools, and other resources on gardening and guerilla gardening to residents. This program will partner with food justice organizations that endorse the community's demands (and meets other requirements).

The driving force of the future of our project (and pilot programs) comes directly from the demands and recommendations put forward by the community, listed below.

# DEMANDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through community meetings, the Food Frequency Radio show, the Humans of Black Creek Photo Series and general community engagement we heard the voices of the community. Their demands are as follows, and grouped loosely according to theme:

## **Improve Growing Spaces and Support for Urban Growing**

1. Make City Parks and Hydro Corridors accessible for community residents to garden and grow food
2. Create, fund and maintain a garden in every school
3. Assure core funding from all levels of government for organizations doing food justice and urban agriculture work so that they can be sustainable

## **Make Food More Affordable by Raising Wages and Social Safety Nets**

1. Increase and maintain the minimum wage at a liveable wage rate or a basic guaranteed income
2. Raise Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works rates

## **Fight for Justice for the People that Work to Feed Us**

1. Support migrant farm workers' political demands, which include a) access to landed status upon arrival; b) a permanent residency regularization program for those already in Canada, c) equal access to all social programs; d) a fair appeal process before any repatriation order; and e) full protections under the provincial Employment Standards Act and Regulations
2. Subsidize small farmers and promote ecologically informed farming policies that support young, new, and racialized farmers.

## **Stop Criminalizing Our Communities**

1. Remove security guards and undercover police from grocery stores in predominantly racialized and working-class communities (high-income and/or largely white neighbourhoods do not have visible security presence)

## **Connect Food and Health**

1. Make healthy food more accessible to people with mental and physical health challenges
2. Mandate published images be representative of a variety of bodies, body shapes, sizes and skin tones.



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND TOOL-KIT

As way of conclusion, we would like to leave our community with a tool-kit for action to assist in the ongoing fight for Food Justice. Please find below a list of contact information for grassroots and community organizations, and other informational resources organized by each major theme of this report:

## **Food and the Environment**

- 1) Stop Line 9  
Website: <http://www.stopline9-toronto.ca/>
- 2) The Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University  
Website: <http://fes.yorku.ca/>
- 3) Council for Canadians  
Website: <http://canadians.org/campaigns>
- 4) Local organizers can be contacted through JFAAP  
Website: <https://jfaap.wordpress.com/>

## **Food, Labour, and Migration**

- 1) No one is Illegal  
Website: <http://toronto.nooneisillegal.org/>
- 2) Justice 4 Migrant Workers  
Website: <http://www.justicia4migrantworkers.org/>
- 3) National Farmers Union  
Website: <http://www.nfu.ca/>
- 4) La Via Campesina  
Website: <http://viacampesina.org/en/>
- 5) Workers' Action Centre  
Website: <http://www.workersactioncentre.org/>
- 6) Fight for 15  
Website: <http://fightfor15.org>
- 7) Coalition for Migrant Worker Rights Canada  
Website: <http://migrantrights.ca/en/home/>

## **Food, Policing, and Race and Culture**

- 1) Network for the Elimination of Police Violence  
Website: <http://nepv.org/>
- 2) Growing Food and Justice for all Initiative  
Website: [growingfoodandjustice.org](http://growingfoodandjustice.org)
- 3) Community and Legal Aid Services Programme (CLASP) at Osgood Hall Law School  
Website: <https://www.osgoode.yorku.ca/community-clinics/welcome-community-legal-aid-services-programme-clasp/contact-us/>
- 4) Afri-Can Food Basket  
Website: <http://blog.africanfoodbasket.com>

## **Food, Mental Health, Gender, and Body Image**

- 1) Advocacy for Change  
Website: <http://www.bcchc.com/programs-services/community-capacity-building/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/advocacyforchange/>
- 2) Black Creek Community Health Centre (BCCHC)  
Website: <http://www.bcchc.com/>
- 3) It Gets Fatter!  
Website: <http://itgetsfatter.tumblr.com/>
- 4) The Raging Spoon  
Website: <http://ragingspoon.ca/working-for-change/>
- 5) NEDIC- National Eating Disorder Information Centre  
Website: <http://www.nedic.ca/give-get-help/prevention-health-promotion>

## **Food, Capitalism, Power and Money**

- 1) Jane and Finch Action Against Poverty  
Website: <https://jfaap.wordpress.com/>
- 2) Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP)  
Website: <http://www.ocap.ca/>

## **Support for Growing**

- 1) The Garden Resource Network (specifically serving the Black Creek community)  
Email: [blackcreekfoodjustice@gmail.com](mailto:blackcreekfoodjustice@gmail.com)
- 2) Toronto Urban Growers  
Website: <http://torontourbangrowers.org/>
- 3) FoodShare  
Website: <http://www.foodshare.net/>
- 4) Permaculture GTA  
Website: <http://www.permaculturegta.org/>
- 5) Black Farmers Collective  
Website: <https://blackfarmersto.wordpress.com/>
- 6) The Stop Community Food Centre  
Website: <http://thestop.org/programs/fight-hunger/urban-agriculture/>
- 7) Toronto Seed Library  
Website: <http://www.torontoseedlibrary.org/>

## **Work on Food Policy in Toronto**

- 1) Toronto Food Policy Council  
Website: <http://tfpc.to/>
- 2) Toronto Youth Food Policy Council  
Website: <http://tyfpc.ca/>
- b. Toronto food organizations editable database <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9sNd-w9ZjkHc2h1bUdFdVdiSGM/view>
- 3) Food Forward – Food Justice Committee and Building Roots  
Website: <http://pushfoodforward.com/foodjusticecommittee>
- 4) Meal Exchange  
Website: <http://mealexchange.com/>
- 5) Community Food Centers Canada  
Website: <http://cfccanada.ca/>
- 6) Malvern Family Resource Centre  
Website: <http://mfrc.org/>



## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> David Hulchanski, 2010, *The Three Cities Within Toronto: Income Polarization Amon Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970-2005*, The Centre for Urban and Community Studies. Research Bulletin 41 <http://www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/pdfs/curp/tnrn/Three-Cities-Within-Toronto-2010-Final.pdf> [Hulchanski].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Prosperity Institute <http://martinprosperity.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> Glazier RH, Booth GL et. Al. (Eds.), 2007, *Neighbourhood Environments and Resources for Healthy Living: A Focus on Diabetes in Toronto*, ICES Atlas <http://www.ices.on.ca/Publications/Atlases-and-Reports/2007/Neighbourhood-environments-and-resources.aspx> [ICES].

<sup>5</sup> Kirsten Valentine Cadieux and Rachel Slocum, 2015, *What does it mean to do food justice?*, *Journal of Political Ecology*, Vol. 22 [http://jpe.library.arizona.edu/volume\\_22/Cadieuxslocum.pdf](http://jpe.library.arizona.edu/volume_22/Cadieuxslocum.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Supra note 4 [ICES].

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ivy Knight, September 11, 2015, *Food is a Human Right*, *Fiesta Farms*, <http://fiestafarms.ca/13122/food/food-is-a-human-right>

<sup>11</sup> Dominik Kurek, September 16, 2015, *Jane and Finch street takeover was success, organizer says*, *Inside Toronto*, <http://www.insidetoronto.com/news-story/5914680-jane-and-finch-street-takeover-was-success-organizer-says/>







If you are interested in getting involved with the **Black Creek Food Justice Network** or simply want more information please email: [blackcreekfoodjustice@gmail.com](mailto:blackcreekfoodjustice@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook - **Black Creek Food Justice Network**