



## PROVINCE-WIDE FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAM RELAUNCHES WITH FREE WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTING WINDSOR-AREA PROJECTS

September 20, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attn: Local, Agricultural, Food, Education, Community News and Assignment Desks

### **Ontario Farm to School Challenge is back with a showcase of projects that get healthy and local food alternatives into schools**

The [Ontario Farm to School Challenge](#) returns for a third round from October 1-31<sup>st</sup> with new programming including educational webinars. The Challenge supports and inspires schools across province to connect students of all ages with fresh, locally grown foods by bringing the 'farm' to cafeterias, student nutrition programs, food skills programs, and special events. In advance of the third round of the Challenge, farm to school program leaders will come together virtually to share their own stories of viable projects that will encourage school staff and help them access the tools they need to set the table for local foods.

**The first educational webinar is on September 24 at 3:30p.m. EDT.** Registration is open to the public at [sustainontario.webex.com](http://sustainontario.webex.com). There is no cost to attend. The webinar will feature panelists Stephanie Segave and Jillian McCallum of VON Canada, along with chef Robert Catherine and Mike Turnbull from the Unemployed Help Centre of Windsor. They will present their collaborative farm-to-school pilot projects in Windsor and southwestern Ontario that include a team of secondary students preparing food for the Meals on Wheels and Student Nutrition Programs as part of a culinary, co-operative learning program that diverts potential food waste.

A virtual tutorial will also be hosted by Megan Hunter, Communications and Program Manager with the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and Greenbelt Fund. The tutorial will demonstrate how schools can use the [Ontariofresh.ca](http://Ontariofresh.ca) Marketplace, a unique business-to-business network that connects local farmers with institutions, to buy more local food from Ontario producers.

The Ontario Farm to School Challenge program, initiated by FoodShare Toronto and Sustain Ontario with support from the Greenbelt Fund, encourages Ontario schools to increase local food procurement in school food programs. To participate in the Challenge, teachers or project supervisor should highlight how they have incorporated Ontario foods into their school food program by tweeting the program @ONFarm2School, posting to the program's Facebook page, or sending an email to [kids@sustainontario.ca](mailto:kids@sustainontario.ca).

Participants are also encouraged to send along any photos, recipes or local food lesson plans along with their entry.

*Example Tweet: Students enjoyed 60 lbs. of carrots this week from ABC farm @ONfarm2school*  
*Example Facebook post: Grade 9 culinary students made crumble today with \$40 worth of local apples and strawberries. We bought the apples fresh from ABC farms and used frozen strawberries from last summer.*

Over the course of the Challenge, organizers FoodShare Toronto and Sustain Ontario will offer educational materials and profile Ontario Farm to School Champions to help participating schools source local food from existing suppliers, find new suppliers, and inspire fun ideas for menu planning and student involvement.

By participating in the Ontario Farm to School Challenge and choosing to buy Ontario products schools will:

- Help to support Ontario farmers and producers
- Educate students of all ages about the wonderful and good things that grow in Ontario
- Spread the word that Ontario produces heaps of good, healthy food that children and youth can enjoy all year long
- Benefit the environment
- And be entered for a chance to win exciting prizes for their school

To learn more about the Ontario Farm to School Challenge and how to get involved, visit [Ontariofresh.ca/farmtoschool](http://Ontariofresh.ca/farmtoschool).

More information about the pilot farm to school project discussed above can be found in the following Windsor Star article: <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2013/05/31/pilot-project-stretches-dollars-for-school-nutrition-programs/> as well as by watching the following YouTube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVppYtXUvZI>

### **FoodShare Toronto**

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FoodShare Toronto is a non-profit community organization whose vision is Good Healthy Food for All. Founded in 1985 to address hunger in Toronto communities, FoodShare takes a unique multifaceted and long-term approach to hunger and food issues. We work to empower individuals, families and communities through food-based initiatives, while advocating for the broader public policies needed to ensure that everyone has adequate access to sustainably produced, good healthy food.

### **Sustain Ontario**

Contact: Carolyn Young, Program Manager  
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Sustain Ontario is the provincial alliance for healthy food and farming. Sustain Ontario's more than 400 member organizations work collaboratively towards a food system that is healthy, ecological, equitable and financially viable. Sustain Ontario is a project of Tides Canada Initiatives Society.