

# Hungry city

By Maia Filar

## NOT-FOR-PROFIT FOOD SHARE HELPS TORONTO GET FED

Paul DeCampo is excited about a bag of smaller than average red apples. "It's products like these that make Food Share work," he says, climbing over crates of fresh produce to grab the Norfolk Fruit Growers bag.

At six cents a serving, these fruits literally fall through the cracks at the production plant, but make an ideal snack for school kids. "These are perfectly good apples that are too small to be Grade A. Traditionally they would be used for juice, but we buy them and sell them to school snack programs, and they come in a 10-pound bag, which makes it easy for a student to carry."

Not-for-profit Food Share was founded in 1985. Known for its Good Food Boxes and Good Food Markets, it also plays a big role in helping the community. In 2008, it transported healthy food to more than 250 schools, parenting and childcare centres and community agencies. Food Share helped create 200 new morning meal programs for students in Toronto's low-income communities and supplied 8,320 cups of nutrient-dense Power Soups and more than 4,000 pounds of produce to agencies that support the homeless and under-housed in the GTA. "We are helping to build the capacity for certain communities to be more self-sufficient

and reliant," DeCampo says. "Our goal is to shorten the distribution chain, stitching the pieces together to bring us closer to the source."

DeCampo, a former wine merchant, heads the Good Food Box team. The Good Food Box offers a variety of fresh produce directly from the Ontario Food Terminal. Also on the agenda: addressing the reoccurring issue of "food deserts" in the city, which leave many without accessible good food.

"Many areas are very poorly served by grocery stores for fresh, affordable produce." One unlikely desert is the government-housing complex at Avenue Road and Davenport, where the only shopping options in the area are Whole Foods and Pusateri's. That's where the Good Food Markets come in, which may be just a single stand selling seasonal and affordable high-quality produce. "We want to help people understand where food comes from and how it's grown, but also go beyond that and understand the benefits of supporting local farmers from an environmental, economic and nutritional point of view."

Helping with this mission are local chefs like Donna Dooher from Mildred's Temple



Food Share's Paul DeCampo makes connections.

Kitchen and Mark Cutrara from Cowbell, who are involved in Recipe for Change, an annual charity event that celebrates food with a purpose. "Out of Recipe for Change we want to expand on opportunities for chefs to engage with students in the classroom," DeCampo says. This evening of food and drink supports the Field to Table Schools program, which brings food literacy back to students from JK through Grade 12. "It can be as simple as bringing in three different varieties of apples and doing taste comparisons on how to use them differently," DeCampo says. But in the simplest terms, the main goal is straightforward. "We need to re-instill the basic skill of cooking, because that's something that's been lost along the way."

For more info, visit [foodshare.net](http://foodshare.net) **CB**

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