

NOT FAR FROM THE TREE



2021 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

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MISSION

Our mission is to harness the power of fruit trees to create healthy, resilient, sustainable and connected communities across Toronto. We empower Torontonians to pick and share fruit that would otherwise fall to waste, while providing opportunities to connect more intimately with their neighbours, environment, and food system. We act as, and empower people to be stewards of the urban orchard to ensure its benefits can be realized for many generations to come.

VISION

We envision a future Toronto where everyone has access to the urban harvest as part of a resilient, local food system that builds community, and is based on the value of shared abundance. To achieve this vision, we work to:

- Bring people together around the harvest
- Strengthen community ties
- Increase access to healthy and local fruit
- Raise public awareness of Toronto's urban orchard as a food source
- Promote the health and sustainability of the urban orchard
- Amplify the work of our social service partner agencies

2021 SEASON: ABUNDANCE

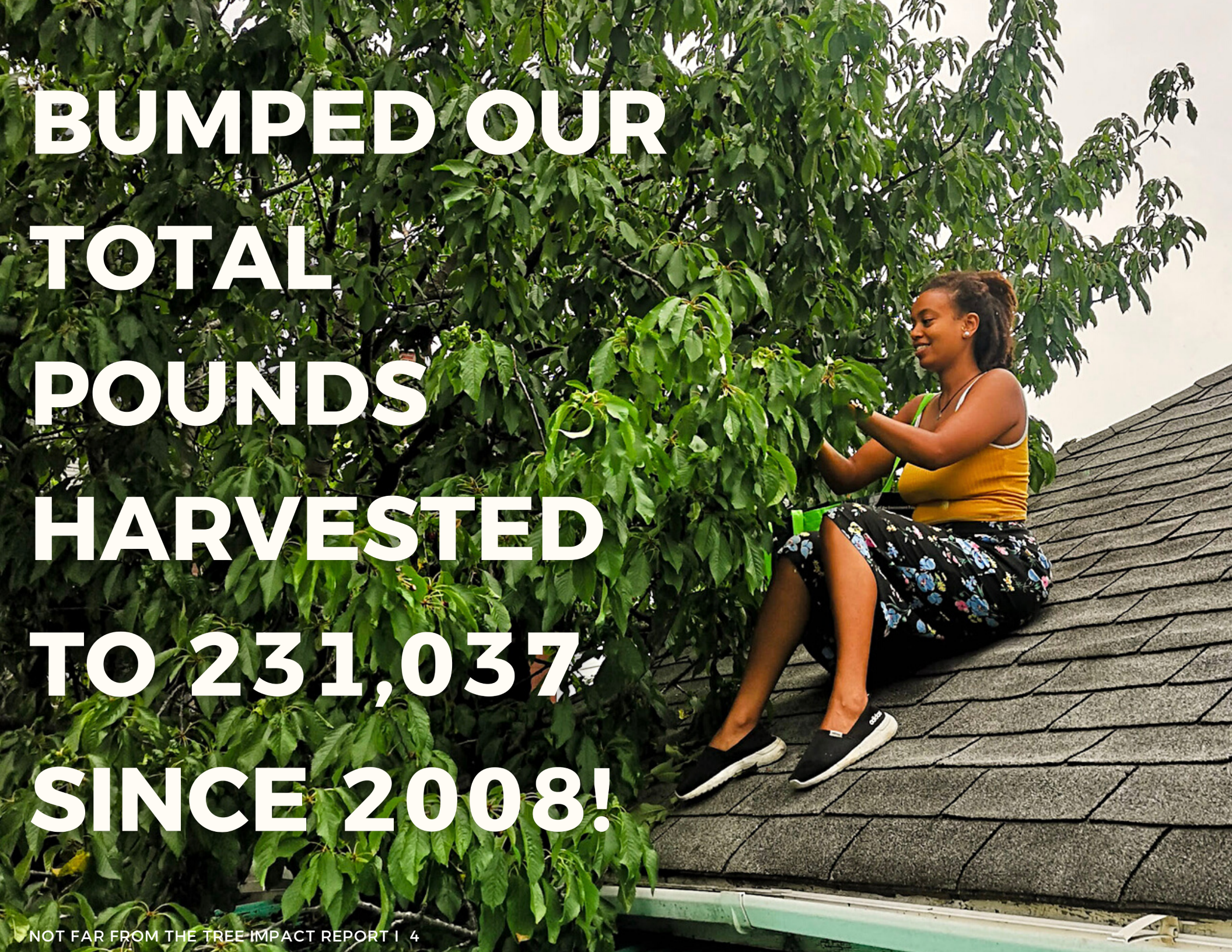
This year's bumper crop yields took us all by surprise, motivating the team to pick and share as much fruit as possible. As Covid-19 continued to impact the City of Toronto and beyond, we saw food banks reaching record breaking numbers, shelters in crisis mode and food insecurity in our city on the rise. Despite this, Not Far From The Tree (NFFTT) was able to safely bring people together from across the city to pick and share as much fruit as we possibly could. With an increase in demand from social service agencies and Tree Registrants inside and outside our catchment area, the entire NFFTT team embraced every opportunity to pick and share fruit within and outside our existing borders.

With the support from our donors and community, we were able to facilitate the growth of the Picking and Planting Program, assist social service agencies, support food skill building workshops, continue to build community and social connection through the fruit tree. Thank you to our Pick Leaders, Volunteer Pickers, Tree Registrants, Storage Partners, Service Agency Partners, Community and Business Partners, the NFFTT team, our Steering Committee, and our donors for your generosity in a year that has been so very abundant to the community!



2021 BY THE NUMBERS

- 1 **32,048 lbs of fruit** picked from 373 fruit trees, vines and bushes!
- 2 **15,198 lbs of fruit** were donated to 41 partner agencies supporting over 4,500 clients and 5 new social service agencies were on-boarded to receive fruit.
- 3 **65 Pick Leaders** were trained, including **15 new team members** who collectively led **337 picks** from 254 trees.
- 4 **1550 registered fruit pickers** harvested and shared the bumper crop!
- 5 We hosted **7 partner group picks** with seniors and youth, supported 2 preserving workshops with **5 different partner agencies** and engaged 47 of their clients.
- 6 Hosted **2 Corporate Team Building picks** engaging **145 participants** at the Spadina House Orchard and the Winfield Orchard at the Canadian Film Centre.
- 7 In partnership with Ecosource, **44 volunteers** harvested **2,190 lbs of apples** from a private heritage orchard in Brampton! **1,957 lbs** were donated to Regeneration Brampton!
- 8 In partnership with The Laneway Project, we planted **395 trees and shrubs** with the support of **14 volunteers**.
- 9 **2,098 lbs of fruit** were donated to 3 unregistered agencies outside our catchment area.



**BUMPED OUR
TOTAL
POUNDS
HARVESTED
TO 231,037
SINCE 2008!**

“ A merry band of volunteers will arrive at your door, and when they are done their pick, everyone will have a huge smile on their face. NFFTT makes everything incredibly easy for anyone with a fruit tree to donate. ”

Peter Obradovich NFFTT Tree Registrant



PICK LEADERS THE APPLES OF OUR EYES!

Volunteer Pick Leaders are integral to harvesting the thousands of pounds picked this year and seasons' past! Accessing equipment sets, leading picks, harvesting and sharing fruit through rain and extreme heat, trekking from east to west, sorting out unexpected kinks throughout the process, and ensuring fruit is shared and put to good use! We are deeply appreciative of our Pick Leaders!

After a single virtual training session at the beginning of the season, we welcomed 15 new Pick Leaders to our team, totaling to 65 Pick Leaders who contributed over 1,180 hours to ensuring fresh fruit was picked and shared with their communities. Daria, one of our newest Pick Leaders, led 12 picks, resulting in 1,190 lbs of fruit! We were able to maintain all 11 operational cargo bikes and keep the equipment sets stocked for the team to lead, pick and share!

At the end of the season, NFFTT hosted a Pick Leader Appreciation party at The Stop where we celebrated the season's success. A big thank you to Avling and Lush for supporting the Appreciation party. We gifted our top 3 Pick Leaders, with an opportunity to learn about the different variations of apples, to say THANK YOU! We are so appreciative of our Pick Leaders ensuring the picking program's success year after year.



I think a lot about food security and the community access points to fresh foods, so I'm constantly looking for ways to assist that feel really tangible for me.

Kat Sylvester
NFFTT Pick Leader



“

“It's so important that people have access to quality food, to eat things that are actually good for them and that are culturally relevant. To know that there are untapped food sources in the city just makes me crazy. It's so wonderful that folks want to participate in this program and offer up their trees/vines for harvest, they take what they need and share the rest. Volunteering with NFFTT is a really concrete way to make a difference. It's measurable. It's amazing that a few hours out of my day can actually get great fruit to those who need it! Harvesting [fruit] is always super calming for me. I have a pretty intense schedule, so when I'm picking it's my meditation time. I can turn my brain off and kind of recenter myself.”

Alysha Aresenau NFFTT Fruit Picker

”

PICK TEAM THROUGH THICK & THICKER

Well adjusted to the Covid-19 Guidelines, our pick team shined this season! With a total of 567 registered members coming from all across the GTA to harvest and share the bounty this season! With the average yields during pome fruit season surpassing 150 lbs per tree, pickers stepped up and out to support pick leaders in dispersing the high yield harvests. This was beneficial in ensuring the harvest was shared and utilized by receiving partners, as to not overwhelm them with large donations. With so much to give, four or more donations were made after one pick, with the support of our pick team who were able to drop fruit off at community fridges, meal programs or agencies alike, on route back home! Our volunteers also supported the program by scouting trees before scheduled picks to ensure the fruit was ripe for picking, helped with planting initiatives, and 25 volunteers tabled at 8 Farmers Markets and completed 2 canvass walks to outreach to new homeowners with fruit trees.





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After reading that a share of the fruit goes to charitable partners and that the initiative helps divert food waste, I was sold on becoming a fruit picking volunteer. Learning how much fruit there is in the city has been eye-opening. Being able to pick and distribute the fruit, while being outside, away from the screen and meeting other people has felt incredibly fulfilling.

Allison Chan
NFFTT Fruit Picker

”



TREE REGISTRANTS MAKING IT POSSIBLE

To the stewards of the urban orchard who understand the importance of putting the bounty of their trees, bushes and vines to incredible use, thank you! Without the kind hospitality of Tree Registrants, eager to have our pick teams harvest and share their fruit, our work wouldn't be possible. Thank you for your support in ensuring that we could share the bounty of your fruit tree with people living all over the Greater Toronto Area and allowing NFFTT to bring people together in Urban green spaces- your backyard!

“

This is a win both for the home owner (less fruit mess in the yard) and for the community. Fruit should be accessible to everyone.

Catherine Lang
NFFTT Tree Registrant

”



“With NFFTT everyone wins! The tree gets harvested, the fruit is donated, the community is fed, there is little waste in a simple process that makes everyone feel good and get fed!

NFFTT Tree Registrant”

URBAN ORCHARDS HISTORY, HERITAGE, & HARVESTING

Pome and Vine fruit season brought in 24,797lbs of grapes, apples, crabapples, and pears! Our friends at the Canadian Film Center (CFC) and Spadina House Museum welcomed NFFTT back to their urban orchards this season after closing the grounds to the public due to Covid-19 in 2020. With the reopening this year, NFFTT was able to connect 112 registered volunteers and members of the public to these grounds by organizing 13 picks which yielded 3,408 lbs of fruit. The harvest was shared with all pickers and donated to service agencies including: Community Fridges Toronto (Dupont & Dundas West), Fort York Food Bank, St. John Compassionate Mission, Harmony Hall, Mustard Seed, Eastview Neighborhood Community Centre, Toronto Community Hostel, Na-Me-Res, and Aangen.

Over the season, NFFTT spent a lot of time at the Spadina House Heritage Orchard, learning from seasoned gardeners about the 100 year old apple trees and animating the grounds with the Picking Program. Some participants had never visited this historical site and made a point to come back and tour the grounds. In September, NFFTT was invited to host apple picking and heritage lessons at the reopening grounds. A big thank you to our Pick Leader, Julian, who spent the day sharing his knowledge to eager members of the public.







FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIP REVEL CIDER

Where did the remainder of the harvest go, you ask? In such an abundant season, many of our partner agencies expressed that they simply cannot use the donated fruit fast enough. After all the work of harvesting and sharing fruit, it is important to us, to form partnerships with producers that further put good fruit to good use. Sharing imperfect wormy fruit that cannot go directly to clients at partner agencies such as Revel Cider, is an innovative solution to divert unwanted fruit. Our 1/3 model has not change - we are simply adapting to the fact that our agencies are overwhelmed by the sheer volume they receive throughout the season.

Meet Revel Cider!

Revel Cider is an independent cider maker based out of Guelph, Ontario. To help us divert fruit from some of our larger apple and grape picks, NFFTT partnered with Revel and even went down to their headquarters to help process the fruit. "We are so excited to partner with Not Far From The Tree to add to our foraged fruit projects!"

We look forward to the first sip of Bumper being released in the Spring of 2022!

CORPORATE PARTNERS RECONNECTING THROUGH TREES

This year NFFTT provided 2 corporate team building experiences for their employee engagement. We spent half the day educating the teams on the importance of picking and sharing fruit, the impact it has on building community, how rotting food impacts the climate crisis and the demand from our service agency partners. As the teams began picking fruit, we heard laughter and stories being exchanged, as they hadn't seen each other since the pandemic started in 2020. This is a great initiative that allows teams to reconnect outside while giving back to the community. All fruit picked was donated to agencies inside and outside of our catchment area.

Thank you to our corporate partners who choose to participate in this philanthropic event to engage their team in some friendly competition, to promote harvesting and sharing as much fruit as possible!



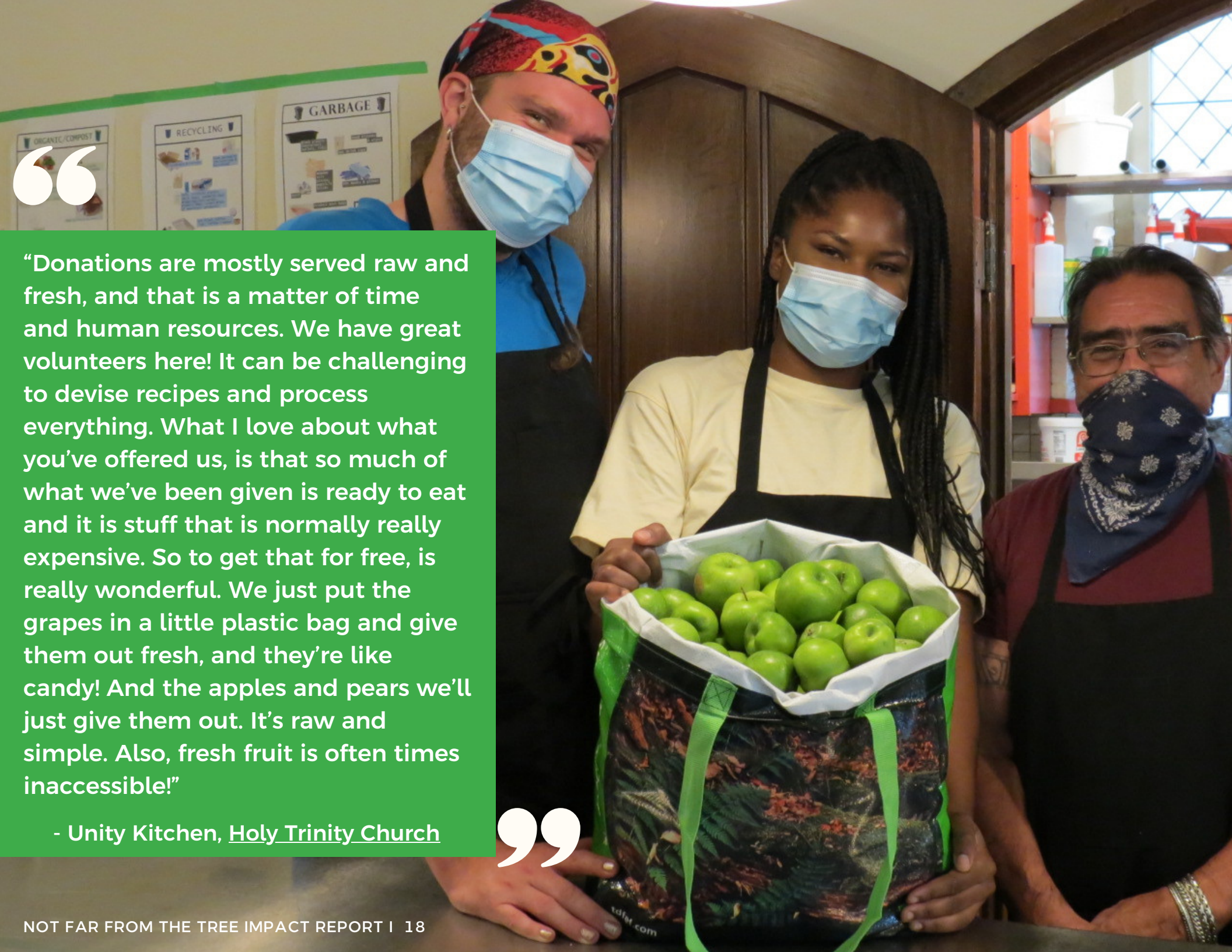
SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES

SUPPORTING FOOD RESILIENCE

Although Covid-19 safety measures have become our new normal, the deeply chaotic impact specifically facing the clientele of our social service agency partners is still heightened. In addition, many partners are experiencing a steady increase in demands for food donations from first time users. With continued restrictions on in-person services and associated health risks to vulnerable populations, the demand for nutritious meals and food has become the predominant request. The 41 partners we supported with donations, including 8 unregistered agencies, have pivoted to providing bagged lunches, emergency food hampers, meal deliveries, and take away dinners to serve over 4,500 clients.

With such an abundance of fruit, it was imperative that we delivered as much of the harvest to our partners and answer donation requests. We welcomed 5 new partners, The Neighbourhood Organization, YWCA Women's Shelter, Sanctuary Toronto, St Stephen-in-the-Fields, and the Community Fridges Toronto, to our program. We were delighted to share the bounty with all receiving agencies, in support of their client meal programs. Thanks to the amazing work of our volunteer teams, 15,198 lbs of fruit has been donated to this season!





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“Donations are mostly served raw and fresh, and that is a matter of time and human resources. We have great volunteers here! It can be challenging to devise recipes and process everything. What I love about what you’ve offered us, is that so much of what we’ve been given is ready to eat and it is stuff that is normally really expensive. So to get that for free, is really wonderful. We just put the grapes in a little plastic bag and give them out fresh, and they’re like candy! And the apples and pears we’ll just give them out. It’s raw and simple. Also, fresh fruit is often times inaccessible!”

”

- Unity Kitchen, [Holy Trinity Church](#)

PARTNER PICKS DIGNITY & FOOD ACCESS



In 2021, NFFTT hosted 7 partner picks with 5 agencies that engaged 47 youth and seniors. Supporting our partners' food accessibility initiatives, these picks are an opportunity for agency clients to be empowered! We provide direct access to harvesting and sharing the abundance of fruit growing in Toronto's Urban Orchard! We hosted fun and engaging apple picks with Evangelical Hall Mission, Building Roots, and Harmony Hall Youth. Clients from Alexandra Park Neighbourhood Learning Centre enjoyed a pear pick and a grape pick. Seniors from the Riverdale Hub were delighted in harvesting a beautiful apricot tree and delicious concord grapes on two picks. Altogether, they harvested over 1,000 lbs of fruit that was distributed amongst participants, other clientele and incorporated into delicious service agency's meals.



We were delighted to provide 14 youth who are active in a social service agency community garden program, a complimentary membership. We believe everyone should have access to the Urban Orchard and want to ensure clients of the social service agencies we serve can equally participate in the program. Fruit picking continues to be a fun, active, and informative way for everyone to get outdoors, access fresh fruit, share and learn new recipes, and connect with their neighbours!



“

We do a couple of different things with the fruit. If it can be given out fresh, we give it out as part of our community meal in our bags. Every week, our clients get a fresh piece of fruit with their meals. We've also used the fruit for our outreach programs at the SRCHC 955 Queen Street East location. We have harm reduction teams that go out into the community with sandwiches and drinks, and we include fruit in those packages. With tart apples, we've made some really lovely apple sauce that we've been able to freeze and use later for the breakfast programs at the 955 site. We've given away baskets of apples at our community meal table - if people want to take some for themselves or for cooking. The only thing going to waste here are peels and cores!

-SRCHC

”

HARVESTING IN BRAMPTON

This year we partnered with Ecosource, an environmental education organization that promotes waste reduction, urban agriculture, sustainability, nature connection, and youth leadership through different educational programs in Peel Region, to host 2 apple picks at a private heritage Orchard in Brampton! With the help of 44 volunteers spanning multiple generations we harvested 2,190 lbs of apples! 1,957 lbs were donated to Regeneration Brampton to support their meal program, one of their resources to support people experiencing homelessness!





“

It's good for the kids! I see moms pointing out the flowers to their children, explaining that this will become fruit. There's that disconnect - we're not farmers anymore. Children in the city especially grow up thinking that food comes from the store. We need to teach them that there's a lifecycle behind it, and we have to protect our environment.

-Maya Douglas NFFTT Tree Registrant

”



THE LANE-WAY PROJECT LEAVING A MARK

In early 2021, NFFTT partnered with The LaneWay Project - Laneway Park-ing to plant 393 plants, shrubs and medicinal plant species in two Toronto laneways. NFFTT engaged 14 volunteers to spend their weekend planting in an unnamed lane running south of Queen St E, from Logan Ave to Morse St, in Leslieville and the Central Hospital Lane in the Garden District (Gerrard & Sherbourne). With the support of NFFTT, these laneways have been transformed into a welcoming public space with colourful murals and green life.

STEWARDSHIP SUSTAINING THE URBAN ORCHARD

We harvested fruit from 254 new trees thanks to you! This brings our total registered trees count to 876 for 2021. As we continue to sign up new Tree Registrants, who are open to sharing the bounty of their fruit trees, it is imperative that we become wholesome stewards of the orchard. By sharing Tree care knowledge and educating our Pick Team and Tree Registrants we can ensure Toronto's Urban Orchard is sustainable for generations to come. Healthy trees, young and old, that are properly cared for will guarantee bountiful harvests in the future.

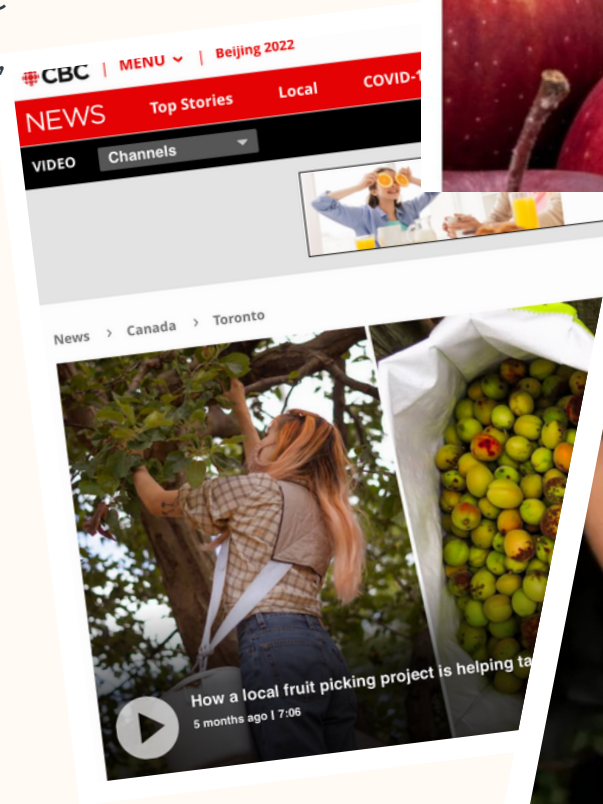
This fall, we successfully piloted Winter Moth Banding, servicing 19 pome trees! It was a success that Tree Registrants are intrigued on ways to prevent the imperfections and damage of canker worms and other caterpillars to their pome fruit come next harvest season. We look forward to the growth of this initiative by educating and supporting tree registrants in pest management throughout the year.



IN THE PRESS

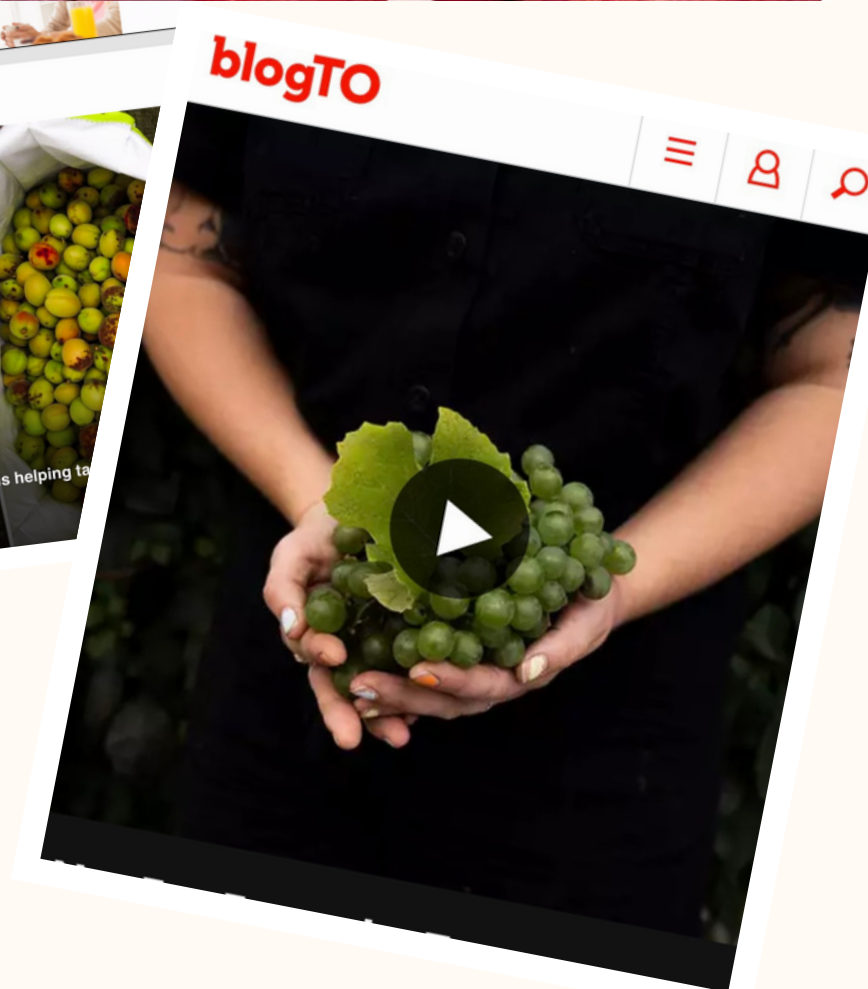
You talked about us and they heard! Thanks to you spreading the word about our work, we were featured on two major broadcasts, Blog TO, and tabled at 8 markets around the city this season. These opportunities were essential in supporting our outreach efforts to bring awareness to the Urban Orchard, the possibilities of harvesting and sharing fruit and growing our community!

We are so thankful to have been featured on [CBC Our Toronto](#), [ThingstoKnowTO](#) on CTV, [BlogTO](#), and [Project Spotlight](#).



THINGS TO KNOW T.O. | SPONSORED

Joining the harvest and making an impact



WE ARE SO GRAPEFUL FOR THE AWARDS WE RECEIVED! THANK YOU

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
City of Toronto
The Chawkers Foundation
Employment and Social Development Canada
J.P. Bickell Foundation
The Peter Gilgan Foundation
The Rotary Club of Toronto Charitable Foundation
The Sprott Foundation
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



THANK YOU BERRY MUCH DONORS!

NFFTT SUPPORTERS \$ 249 & UNDER

Alan Meisner	Erin Pinksen	Madison Simpkins
Angela Miles	Heidi Tsao	Marc Francoeur
Anne LeMesurier	FLECK Productions	Marika Elek
Anne Rochon Ford	Nine designs !	Michael Olin
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NFFTT FRIENDS \$250-\$999

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Laura Bast
Lois Lindsay
Matt Broadbent
Michaela Hynie
Mona Garde
Nate Charach
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Sheila Block

NFFTT FAMILY \$1000-\$4,999

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NFFTT CULTIVATOR \$5,000-\$9,999

Pembridge Insurance Company
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The McDonald Family
Walter Sisti

NFFTT STEWARD \$10,000-\$ 19,999

The Buchman's

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

Artscape Wychwood Barns
Alfred Sung
BrokerTeam
Carolyn Scotchmer
Canadian Film Centre
Digital Natives
Kevin Barkhouse
LUSH
Mateo's Bike Repair
Orchard People
Patagonia
Sara Qureshi
Sharita Henry
Sharon Kimberkey
Spadina Museum
The Laneway Project
The Stop
Tim Fryatt
Tree Mobile

STORAGE PARTNERS

Danielle's Garage John's Garage
Greenest City Na Me Res
Grethe's Garage Peter's Garage
Jode Roberts Scott Dobson
Vivian's Garage

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Annette Village Farmers Market
Building Roots Moss Park Market
Evergreen Brickworks Farmers Market
The Bentway Market
Trinity Bellwoods Farmers Market
Withrow Park Farmers Market

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Building Roots (Spadina & College)
Building Roots & Moss Park Market
Community Fridges Toronto
Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre
Evangel Hall Mission
Fife House (Denison)
Fife House (Sherbourne)
Fife House (Sorauren)
Fort York Food Bank
Fred Victor (Lombard)
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Interval House
Margaret's House
Mustard Seed
Na-Ma-Res
Portland Place
Riverdale Hub
Sanctuary Toronto
South Riverdale CHC
St. Johns Compassionate Mission
St. Stephen-In-the-Field Church
The Church of the Holy Trinity Unity Kitchen
The Dale Ministries
The Stop (Davenport)
TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization
Toronto Community Hostel
West Neighbourhood House
WoodGreen Community Services (Queen East)
YMCA Sprott House
YWCA Toronto's Women's Shelter

MEMBERSHIP PARTNERS

Chocosol
Curbside Cycle
Karma Co-op
Revel Cider
Toronto Tool Library

NFFTT STEERING COMMITTEE

Anne Lemesurier, Member (New!)
Baljinder Uppal, Secretary, Member
Chris Rotolo, Member
Jordy Gold, Member
Lars Boggild, Chair, Member
Maddie Emberson, Member (New!)
Niya Bajaj, Member, Member (New!)
Rachel Lissner, Member (New!)
Walter Sisti, Member

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Julia Girmenia, Project Director
Jessica Akiwi, Program Manager
Areeg El - Sayed, Communications Assistant

INTERNS

Kobe Yao
Lucy Yazar

PAST STAFF & STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO HELPED MAKE 2021 A SUCCESS!

Dale Schattenkirk, Steering Committee
Member
Laura Hache, Steering Committee Member
Maddy Simpkins, Communications Assistant
Megan Anevich, Project Director
Molly Lalonde, Picking Program Assistant

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Not Far From The Tree is a project on MakeWay Charitable Society's shared platform.
For further inquiries connect with info@notfarfromthetree.org