

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**Food Literacy Innovator FoodShare Toronto awarded Vital Ideas grant for work in Schools
Addressing Toronto's Vital Signs issues**

TORONTO, June 11, 2012 – FoodShare Toronto is pleased to announce that it has been awarded the prestigious Vital Ideas grant from the Toronto Community Foundation, in recognition of the organization's work to return Food Literacy to schools, building a healthy future for our children.

For the past 3 years FoodShare has been building a vibrant network of students, teachers, parents and community members committed to making a change to the way children eat in our communities, and demonstrating that simple initiatives to reconnect children to their food can pack a powerful punch. From growing sprouts, to making salads and digging in gardens – hands-on food education can transform the health and vitality of future generations.

"We are extremely proud to be recognized by the Toronto Community Foundation and awarded this prestigious grant," says Meredith Hayes, Schools and Student Nutrition Senior Manager. "With support from the Vital Ideas grant we'll be sharing our resources and expertise in Food Literacy programming with partners across Toronto and transforming the palates and plates in our communities."

FoodShare will use its \$30,000 Vital Ideas grant to enliven the organization's Recipe for Change initiative within Toronto and mobilize a network of community members to actively integrate cooking, gardening, composting, nutrition and Food Literacy in the lives of children and youth. Support from the Vital Ideas grant will provide communities with valuable training, teaching tools and resources to increase Food Literacy programming while providing tangible strategies to facilitate change.

"We know that how children eat when they're young lays the foundation for life-long patterns and we also know that healthy food is not the norm for children and youth in Toronto," says FoodShare Executive Director Debbie Field. "Children deserve to have the necessary skills and resources to make healthy decisions, know how to cook, garden, compost and understand where their food is coming from."

Vital Ideas grants are provided by the Community Foundation from its Vital Toronto Fund grant program which focuses on identifying and investing in Toronto's best high-impact organizations and initiatives. The grant program provides recipients with up to \$30,000 over one year to increase their capacity in order to expand their reach, share their experience, and better sustain their impact. Vital Ideas is one of three Community Foundation grant programs made possible through its Vital Toronto Fund, a strategic community endowment. The grant program identifies high-impact organizations that build on successful methods of service delivery and continually adapt and innovate. Beyond 'band-aid' solutions, the organizations work for social change by addressing the root causes of the trends identified in the Toronto's Vital Signs[®] Report.

"In order for our community organizations to thrive and build the social capital of our communities, these organizations must be supported to grow, collaborate and scale up to sustain their impact," said Toronto Community Foundation's President & CEO Rahul K. Bhardwaj. "Providing capacity building grants is the first step in a very important journey to wider community impact."

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FoodShare Toronto (www.foodshare.net) is Canada's largest community food security organization. Founded in 1985, FoodShare works with communities to improve access to healthy, affordable, sustainably produced food through community-based programs and policy recommendations, with a vision of Good Healthy Food for All. FoodShare Toronto created the model for student nutrition programs in the City of Toronto, which works hand-in-hand with its Field to Table Schools program, the educational complement that returns food education to schools through curriculum connections from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 12 to cultivate Food Literacy. The organization's Fresh Bulk Produce Program delivers healthy fresh produce directly to schools, and its Good Food Café[™] is a successful healthy cafeteria, which the Toronto Star has called "the future of school lunches." In 2010 FoodShare combined expertise in urban agriculture and its work in schools to facilitate Canada's first school market garden at Bendale Business and Technical Institute. FoodShare is the only organization taking this multifaceted approach to returning healthy food and Food Literacy to schools, leading the charge with its Recipe for Change initiative. See a video on this work here: <http://www.foodshare.net/school-recipeforchange.htm>.

Toronto Community Foundation

With more than 325 endowment funds and assets under administration of more than \$250 million, the Toronto Community Foundation is one of Canada's largest public charitable foundations. Our mission is to connect philanthropy to community needs and opportunities, all with a vision to make Toronto the best place to live, work, learn and grow, through the power of giving.

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