



Community Spirit Alive

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TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO SUN

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As we all begin to get outside more often during these first pleasant weeks of spring, it's difficult not to notice one of the most important characteristics that makes our city great. Toronto is a city of neighbourhoods, each with its own unique attributes and culture.

While community spirit is alive and well in our great city, there is still much work to be done to provide for a bright future for Toronto. It is estimated for example, that 36,000 Toronto children arrive at school hungry each day.

The 28,000 Members of the Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB) are working though, to change this troubling statistic. In recent months, TREB made a \$50,000 contribution to the Toronto District School Board's breakfast program called Feeding our Future.

The funds were used to purchase new kitchen equipment for the program, which provides nutritious meals and snacks to 1,700 students in 10 Toronto area schools every day.

With a volunteerism rate at more than double the national average, REALTORS® are deeply committed to the neighbourhoods in which they live and work and in fact, the Feeding our Future program was established as a result of one REALTOR's® strong sense of community spirit.

Today, many others are lending a hand. Last month, the employees of the Toronto Real Estate Board adopted one as well. TREB staff not only support Woodbine Junior High School, they volunteer there as well. The program involves volunteers who serve and clean up after meals each school day.

Currently we're rallying REALTOR® volunteers to help out at Corvette Public School.

While this program has achieved great success in a relatively short period of time, further support is needed and the need extends well beyond the neighbourhoods currently being served. The Toronto District School Board has identified 80 additional schools in immediate need of a nutrition program.

It costs the program \$1 to feed a child each school day however; government funding provides just 30 cents per day. This imbalance places the breakfast programs in financial jeopardy by December of each year.

If you have the resources to make the future brighter for children in our city's less fortunate communities please visit www.studentsuccess.ca to find out how you can help. All money donated to the programs goes directly to the purchase of food.

For detailed overviews of each of Toronto's unique neighbourhoods visit www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com.

Maureen O'Neill is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 28,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.