



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toronto Garlic Festival Seeks Host/Partner to Avoid Cancellation

Ontario farmers and food producers count on culturally inclusive festival for sales and year-round customers.

Toronto, ON – June 2, 2023 - The highly anticipated 2023 Toronto Garlic Festival, originally scheduled to take place on September 24, 2023, at Artscape Wychwood Barns, is at risk of cancellation. The primary obstacle forcing potential cancellation of the event are escalating costs. The venue rental fee alone surpasses \$13,000.00, placing a considerable financial burden on the not-for-profit festival. To ensure a sustainable future, festival organizers are seeking a partner that will benefit from hosting the festival and provide support.

For over a decade Ontario garlic farmer and festival vendor JP Gural has counted on Toronto Garlic Festival as an important source of his farm income. Gural says, *"Rain or shine, as a garlic farmer, every year Toronto Garlic Festival is my Christmas." I am very disappointed to hear that this great event may have to be cancelled.*" Festival founder Peter McClusky says, *"Many places around the world and across Canada have a garlic festival, including Montreal. It's a shame that Toronto is becoming so expensive that we might lose our garlic festival."*

The Toronto Garlic Festival is also a celebration of the vibrant diversity that defines our great city. Attracting tourists, and visitors from virtually every culture and ethnic group in Toronto, the festival showcases how garlic is an integral part of many cuisines and medicinal practices. It is a bridge between cultures and an opportunity to show off Toronto's diversity to the world.

To ensure the continuity of the Toronto Garlic Festival and its valuable contribution to the community, festival organizers are seeking a property developer, Business Improvement Area (BIA), community group, or other interested party to host and support the festival, and in turn, to benefit from the opportunity. Says McClusky, *"The festival is*

ready-made, offering unique programming and site animation that will attract new visitors to a host site.” If a solution is not found the festival is at risk of cancellation in 2023.

Toronto Garlic Festival celebrates Ontario's annual garlic harvest with Ontario farmers selling heirloom garlic and local chefs cooking with garlic. Festival visitors stock up on their winter supply of fresh garlic and taste delicious garlic-themed food and black garlic beer. And every year they await new black garlic dessert creations by Toronto chocolatiers. They buy garlic-themed products while listening to live music, participate in educational talks, get a free garlic shot from a garlic barista, enjoy grilled garlic scapes, have their breath measured in the parts-per-billion in the garlic breath contest, attend art workshops and cooking demos, and have a personalized poem written by the Festival Garlic Poet Laureate. And donning VR goggles, visitors participate in a Virtual Reality Ontario Farm Tour. Fresh Ontario garlic and food, and beverages and crafts are for sale. All programming and activities are free.

The festival is committed to education and environmental sustainability. Last year a free garlic growing curriculum was developed for Ontario teachers by the festival, incorporating lessons in mathematics, cooking, and the sharing of recipes between students, and has been used by over 10,000 Ontario students. The festival's re-usable dishware program significantly reduces waste and is a model for other festivals to copy. To avoid downtown gridlock the festival encourages its thousands of visitors to, "Don't Stink & Drive" – walk, bike or take public transit to the festival.

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For hi res photos: <https://tinyurl.com/4buhk5ba>

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