

Dear Toronto,

On November 27 the Occupy Toronto Food Team seized the basement of the historic St. Patrick Market (“the Market”) located at 238 Queen Street West. This one storey heritage site is owned by the City of Toronto and leased through 2039 to George Friedman and Queen-St. Patrick Market Inc (“Market Inc.”). This agreement has been in place since June 15, 1989.

The City of Toronto’s terms include that the ground floor be leased to raw food providers such as butchers, bakers, cheese mongers, and green grocers. The City specifically sought to prevent the establishment of fast-food or other restaurants within the Market’s walls. These conditions have consistently been violated.

Further and more importantly: the basement of the Market is designated for use by non-profit groups such as Occupy Toronto or the previous occupants Food Share. Unfortunately, years of neglect by Market Inc. have left the basement in such an abysmal condition that safe food storage, preparation, or even habitation is no longer possible.

Regardless, the Market basement has about 4500 sq. feet of activity space which is wheelchair accessible. The basement also houses a walk-in food freezer and other cooking infrastructure points. It is the perfect place for the Occupy Toronto Food Team to continue its nascent tradition of serving 1000 free meals a day, as we did in St. James Park.

Our demand is simple: we want a 36 month lease, at 99 cents a year. In exchange for a right of tenancy to this abandoned and dilapidated space the Occupy Toronto Food Team will:

- Repair and restore the basement to safe and hygienic conditions
- Feed the hungry of Toronto, twice-a-day, every day
- Work in tandem with Grange community groups on collective action

This space is being reclaimed from Rob Ford and his “business interest” acolytes in the name of Torontonians everywhere. We will not leave until our demand is met.

Sincerely,

The Occupy Toronto Food Team  
occupyTOfood@gmail.com  
@OccTorFoodies on Twitter

#### Background Links

Queen Street West Food Desert Needs a Change of Pace  
<http://spacingtoronto.ca/2008/07/15/this-ain%E2%80%99t-the-st-lawrence-market/>

St. Patrick’s market faux makeover  
<http://www.nowtoronto.com/daily/news/story.cfm?content=175013>

St. Patrick Market Through the Ages (Photos)  
<http://lost-toronto.blogspot.com/2010/02/stork-and-sons.html>

Occupy Toronto Seizes St. Patrick Market  
<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1093400--occupy-toronto-goes-underground-on-queen-west>