



**PILOT PROJECT
RAISES FUNDING FOR 6,000 MEALS
served to ONTARIANS through the
ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF FOOD BANKS**

JCO Communications Inc., producers of the *Toronto Chocolate Festival* in partnership with *Chocolish Events + Entertainment* and *Dine.TO* are pleased to announce the success of its **HOT CHOCOLICIOUS: ONTARIO'S HOT CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL** held in February 2014 by raising enough funding for **6,000 meals for Ontarians** distributed through the *Ontario Association of Food Banks*

CHOCOLICIOUS kicked off as a pilot project from February 1 - 28, 2014 with the generous support and combined efforts of **Balzac's Coffee Roasters** and **Crepes A Go Go** in Toronto and the GTA.

The premise of the fundraising effort created and initiated by *JCO Communications* was to raise funds "one cup of Hot Chocolate at a time". **Balzac's Coffee Roasters**, with seven locations, and **Crepes A Go Go** with two locations, pledged a portion of each hot chocolate sold during the month of February to be donated to the **Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB)**. With cash, the OAFB is able to acquire and distribute fresh, healthy food for the 375,000 adults and children being served by food banks in Ontario every single month.

"Thank you to everyone who worked on Hot Cholicious this year!" says Bill Laidaw, Executive Director of the OAFB. "The funding raised through this important campaign will provide the equivalent of 6,000 meals to those living with chronic hunger across the province. We so appreciate this support and your incredible commitment to addressing hunger today and investing in long-term solutions that will reduce the issue of hunger in the future."

Joey Cee, the creator of the project (and producer of the *Toronto Chocolate Festival*), wanted to use the comforting winter drink of choice in Canada, “hot chocolate”, as the “liquid gold” as it was cherished by the early Mayans who used it in its drinking form. Each cup of hot chocolate sold could turn into money for the food banks and a great positive experience for those participating.

*“It’s a very ambitious project” says Joey, “but we all should do something, anything to help out our hungry brothers and sisters in this part of the world. I’m hoping that in the near future we can see **HOT CHOCOLICIOSUS** raising millions of dollars annually for the food banks through the sale of Hot Chocolate. I’m confident that chocolate lovers will want to chip-in deep in the heart of winter to help those who can’t afford the luxury of enjoying some of the small things we take for granted and readily enjoy.*

Although the project was late in launching due to the extremely cold and snowy winter storm weather we all shared last December and January, we are extremely pleased with the results as a pilot project.”

HOT CHOCOLICIOSUS is now ready to go nationwide with ten provincial “Hot Chocolate Festivals” under the **HOT CHOCOLICIOSUS: CANADA’S NATIONAL HOT CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL** banner. Participating vendors in each province will be raising money for their respective provincial food bank.

In addition, **CHOCOLICIOSUS USA** is launching simultaneously and will include all fifty states raising money for food banks in their respective states.

This year, a campaign will be launched to encourage corporations, associations and organizations to host their very own office **HOT CHOCOLATE PARTY** or **HOT CHOCOLATE DAY** at their place of business. By inviting their staff, customers, suppliers and friends, they could also help raise funds just by simply brewing and offering a cup of hot chocolate – with a cookie or two. All they have to do is set aside a day and make it happen. *It’s as simple as that!*

To participate as a vendor, company, association or organization, please visit www.HotChocolateFestival.org to download the official application.

Together we can all make a difference in the fight against hunger – one cup of hot chocolate at a time.

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For further information:

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