

Creating Change in the Food Service Industry

This article is about a two minute read.

Chartwells Canada, the nation's leader in educational food and support services, has been providing Humber College with delicious meals and customized dining programs for more than 15 years.

Katie Evans and Harsimranjeet “Simran” Sandhu are Chartwells food services managers for Humber’s North and Lakeshore campuses. They are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the residence dining hall and Chartwells-run retail spaces. “Our main goal is to make sure that Humber students, staff, and faculty are nourished and have access to safe, nutritious, delicious, and affordable meals and feel welcome in our spaces,” said Katie.

Sustainability is at the forefront of Katie and Simran’s daily business operations. An example is the O2GO Reusable Container program. Developed by OZZI, O2GO Reusable Food Containers are a sustainable alternative to single-use disposable containers. To date, approximately five million disposable containers have been averted from landfills and oceans by O2GO Reusable Food Containers. The program began in the fall of 2021 and has been praised by the community for its effort to reduce waste on campus.

Katie’s and Simran’s teams lead the majority of O2GO operations on campus by helping students, staff and faculty buy into the program, serve meals, exchange O2GO cards, and clean containers.



Above: Harsimranjeet “Simran” Sandhu, (she/her).
Photo credit Katie Evans



Above: Photo of Katie Evans, (she/her).
Photo credit Katie Evans.

This article continues on the next page.

“It has been a great experience to be part of this program,” said Katie. “I am proud to know that through OZZI, we are able to minimize waste while providing students with a safe and functional take-out container system.”

Due to food service staff's great work and the effectiveness of the program, there has been a 91 per cent approval rate among students using the program in residence.



Above: O2GO containers during service hours at Humber's North residence. Photo Credit: Office of Sustainability

Beyond O2GO, Katie and Simran manage other sustainability initiatives including waste management and recycling. All oils used in the kitchen are recycled, organic bins are readily available to compost food waste, and paper straws have replaced plastic straws for several years now. “Simran and I are glad to be part of an organization that recognizes the importance of sustainability and empowers us to take action,” said Katie.

Katie and Simran have adopted sustainability into their personal lives as well. “We want a safe planet; we want our children to grow up and not have to worry about global warming and climate change; we want a safe place to breath and live,” said Katie and Simran.

Food security is personally important to Simran, who provides free food to her temple. Volunteering and taking care of people in need is an important aspect of her religion. Simran has also worked with friends from Starbucks to serve coffee and donate merchandise to frontline health care workers.

“Let the people around you and the communities you are a part of know you are interested in getting involved and making a difference,” said Katie, when asked about providing advice to others interested in sustainability. “You don't have to create a movement yourself, and you certainly don't have to do it alone! There are many great projects out there already if you take the time to research a cause that is important to you.”

Next time you're on campus, be sure to greet Katie or Simran and feel free to ask them any questions about the operations of the residence dining hall and Chartwells-run retail spaces.

To find out more about Chartwells and Compass Group Canada's sustainability strategy, visit their website. To learn more about the O2GO Reusable Container program, visit humber.ca/sustainability.