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Folks with yolks take their hunt to Market

Hiding 5,000 eggs in Kensington

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TABASSUM SIDDIQUI

STAFF REPORTER

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They came, they saw, they hunted.

While Easter egg hunts usually conjure up images of children in a grassy field, hundreds of Torontonians of all ages ducked and crouched along the concrete expanse of Yonge St. from Queen to Bloor last Easter, seeking a glimpse of a colourful egg.

The massive egg hunt, which featured over 2,000 toy eggs hidden in doorways, alleys, and even strewn about Dundas Square, was the brainchild of local urban interactive art collective Newmindspace, founded by University of Toronto students Kevin Bracken and Lori Kufner.

People heard about the hunt via the Internet and word-of-mouth, and hundreds turned out to take part.

They're hoping this year's Easter egg hunt, to be held all day next Sunday in Kensington Market, will be their best event to date — and the biggest. They're planning to hide up to 5,000 eggs throughout the Market's nooks and crannies.

"This year, we've already collected 2,500 ourselves, and people have told us they're bringing hundreds," says Bracken.

But where on Earth does one get that many toy eggs?

"Loblaws, party stores ... we just kept calling places and saying, 'How many eggs can you give us?'" Bracken laughs.

Bracken and Kufner are asking folks with yolks to show up to an "egg-stuffing party" Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at the Sanderson Library at Bathurst St. and Dundas Ave.

"We're going to write messages and place them in the eggs and then put all the eggs into tremendous bins," Bracken explains. "They're supposed to be messages of inspiration and joy — and hopefully family-appropriate," he quips.

Bracken says the little missives add to the interactive experience shared between the hunters. His favourite note from last year?

"The one that I always remember is: 'There's life outside,'" says Bracken, who moved from New York two years ago to study political science. "And the reason we were inspired to write that was that there's something about U of T students — they're supposed to be the brightest and best, but they never leave their rooms!"

The event's success spurred Bracken and Kufner to organize more interactive urban events, such as a 2.1 km mural of pink hearts painted along Queen St. W. on Valentine's Day, and public transit parties on the TTC.

Last Easter, Bracken, Kufner and their friends were up until 6 a.m. hiding eggs along Yonge St. This year they will have some help.

After the enthusiastic response to the last hunt, the collective expects a small army of volunteers to converge on Kensington Market in the wee hours to help this time around.

"These people — I thought we were crazy, but People are very dedicated. Easter is becoming a Hallmark holiday, but we use holidays as an excuse to hopefully cause people to look at their city in a new way."

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