

The Kaslo Food Security Project: 2007

The Kaslo and Area Food Security project was an amazing success all around. Successfully meeting deliverables and beyond. Main accomplishments are a) Village of Kaslo now has an official Food Charter as well as guiding principles to food security in the OCP, b) a new community garden society is now managing the former community garden that had been experiencing neglect, c) cooking classes, canning workshops and educational speaker series demonstrated foodsafe in our newly certified kitchen at the Seniors Hall. Our most valuable lessons are that our small community is highly active and thirsty for many skills to build healthy lifestyles. The saying 'it takes a community to raise a child' could also be used to say 'it takes a community to build healthy and sustainable lifestyles'.

The community conversations about food security, who is growing what and how much fuel is used are the buzz topics. Our participant survey's comments indicated applause for workshops and information along with a call for more. We have also seen our success through the change in the market. Every local retailer is calling to find who is growing locally. As well many individuals are asking for information about how to grow more of their own diets. Success is also apparent through the increase of healthy families. Our food to families program has dropped bins of local, organic produce at our family programs at the family center for 2 months; each session parents are gleaming knowing they can feed a healthy meal. Most events were also at capacity, indicating success.

Events during 2007/2008

MayDays Pancake Breakfast- May 21st- Food Security Launch

Community Garden Planning - June 5th

Solstice dinner- June 21st

Relocalizing Event- July 11th

Farmers Market- every Saturday June 16th- September 12th

JazzFest Pancake Breakfast- Aug 5th

100 mile diet potluck - August 21st

Canning Workshops- Mondays in September

100 mile diet - Sept. 13th

Thanksgiving Dinner- October 11th

Local Flavors -Nov. 15th

Food to Families begins

Food Charter- public input- Dec. 6th

Delegation with Village Council re: Food Charter- Dec. 11th

Tableland Movie Premiere- December 13th

Festive Meal- December 20th

meeting regional advisory council to have food charter within land use planning-
January 24th

Food Security 101-Feb. 5th

Cooking Classes- Feb 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

Participants

There were over 150 participants throughout events including a large number of volunteers.

Our key partner was the Village of Kaslo.

Other partners throughout the year were: Barb Cyr with the Family Resource Centre; the Seniors Association and the use of their kitchen; the Anglican Church and their space; the Legion; Blue Belle Bistro for cooking; Sunnyside and Cornucopia for donations of food as well as the newly formed Community Garden Society of Kaslo; RDCK; CBT; and Boards by George.

The Kaslo Food Charter

Local government has officially endorsed the Food Charter, indicating support and concern for our food sources as well as the communities health.

Through the delegation process introducing the charter and background, Village council became engaged about food issues. Some councillors were already well informed, others were quite surprised by the information and wanted more.

Through the official community plan process, we have also worked with the Village to include guiding principles within the draft. The final OCP has yet to be finalized.

Continuing Success

Through the education and community awareness, many residents are serious about seeking alternatives to unhealthy processed foods, mostly through gardening and further information sharing. Our project has aided local entrepreneurs to start up a gardening consultation and edible landscaping business that will ensure continued education and actions.

The community garden society is well underway to their first year, with over 40 members to start.

We have several active farmers who are willing to continue the work of organizing themselves to compliment market needs together.

The food charter has spearheaded many conversations about how to implement guiding principles; an active residents group will explore such ways.

Food to Families is looking at becoming bulk food club.

Community Comments

"How can I get my kids to eat better? Do you have any recipes?" -many moms

"We are so lucky to have such a program, especially in a community so far from the city where all the food comes in"

"Will you be holding more cooking classes?"

"Can you source more local food for our store?"

"Are there any more farmers out there?"

"What's high in calcium that we can grow here?"

"Why is bread becoming so expensive?"

"Do you know if there are genetically engineered foods on our shelves?"

"How did your community become the second in BC to have a food charter? That is amazing! Can you meet with us to help our community do the same?"

Conclusion

Well another year of food security and still the need for program increases. I would like to say that the need for food security programs would diminish over time. I would like to see our community well fed without worries of the cost, availability and access concerns. However, we still are virtually a food insecure community. The awareness and questions of our town are amazing. The thirst for knowledge really is abundant. If we can work on trading that thirst for knowledge for the thirst to dig up our lawns and grow as much food as possible, we will be heading in the right direction.

My second year as food security coordinator has been amazing and challenging. The most challenging is the information disseminated on a daily basis regarding where a basic need for survival is being continually held hostage for profit at the cost of millions of lives in malnutrition and starvation. The reality of what our food system does, creates and impacts is one of the worst tragedies in our

human existence. However, the amazing part is how in one moment it can be devastating and in another, it can bring people together with a commonality that no other topic can. At our events this year, I witnessed folks sharing meals, talking about how important good food from good ground was so important to them. Many of these people came from what some may say as opposite sides of the tracks, and here they were, joined by bread.

There were many fantastic moments, moments of feeling victory for changing a system that has for too long been a sleeping monster. It really is a beautiful act to see a sleeping monster wake up to be a beautifully abundant garden of hope.

Our next steps take us right into that garden of hope with our third year of Lawns to Gardens programs. I look forward to getting out of the office, stepping away from the hoards of information about what is wrong and jumping into where positive change literally grows.