



Food First NL



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

A MESSAGE FROM OUR 2019

Board Chair



Eleanor Swanson

Sometimes, the best way to take a step forward is to take a step back, and to look at the big picture. Here at Food First NL, that often means reflecting on the definition of food security:

“When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious foods that meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

Let’s think about what a future Newfoundland and Labrador would look like where this is a reality, and what it would take to get there. We are talking about transformative change across all of the parts of our food system - production, distribution, access, consumption, and disposal. Working toward this change is what keeps our team of staff, board members, and community partners going, and over this last year - our 21st in operation - we made some big strides.

In 2019, Food First NL made major progress in our institutional food work, making connections among our schools, healthcare institutions, and our province’s food system. We supported an incredible amount of grassroots food action through the Our Food NL project and our Community Food Security Fund. We continued to strengthen the unique, province-wide collaboration at the heart of Everybody Eats, where working groups began their deep dives into our food system’s most pressing issues.

2019 was also a year of transition for Food First NL. In September, Kristie Jameson stepped down from the Executive Director role, having led Food First NL for ten transformative years. Kristie was an incredible force for food security and community-led solutions in this province, and

built Food First NL into the organization it is today - a critical voice backed up by an experienced and thoughtful team. Her legacy of strategic thinking and inter-sectoral bridge-building will live on in our work.

Food First NL also saw a transition at the Board level at the end of the year, and we welcome Tom Cooper to his new position as incoming Board Chair. With his background in business and strategic planning, and his experience as Vice-Chair, Tom is well-placed to help guide Food First NL through the new opportunities that we see emerging in the coming year and beyond.

Those opportunities are diverse, and exciting. We see incredible potential in the growing conversation around institutional food and procurement. Momentum continues to build around the Everybody Eats process. New opportunities to fill gaps in the food system are emerging through social finance and social innovation. More broadly, we see a growing understanding of how food security cuts across the biggest issues of our time, from climate change, to poverty, to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. As we move farther into our third decade, we know that Food First NL will serve as an even more vital catalyst for action.

FUNDERS & PARTNERS

This year's activities would not have been possible without generous support from the following sources:

The Government of Newfoundland & Labrador (Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development), which provides annualized and project funding to support Food First NL's activities.

The Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security which provides funding to support the Everybody Eats project.

The Government of Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada) whose Innovation Strategy on Achieving Healthier Weights in Canada provides funding to support the Our Food NL and Everybody Eats projects.

Farm to Cafeteria Canada and SPARC BC which provides funding to support Farm to School activities.

As well as: Adventure Canada, Chevron Canada, Eat Great and Participate, and the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board.

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“

There is no one person, policy, or program that can resolve our food security challenges. It is an issue that requires a collaborative and multi-faceted approach.

”

- Kristie Jameson, Former Food First NL Executive Director

Everybody Eats

Convening 20+ partners to build a vibrant food system in which people & place flourish.

Everybody Eats is an initiative that takes a “Collective Impact” approach to advancing food security provincially. Food First NL acts as the backbone organization supporting the collaborative work of over 20 organizations and agencies who are engaged in the Everybody Eats network. These partners bring their own strengths and knowledge to the shared vision of creating “a vibrant food system in which people and place flourish”.

In 2019, we convened three action groups taking on different pieces of the work of Everybody Eats.

The Cost of Food and Household Food Insecurity Action Group worked on developing a set of accessible fact sheets about food insecurity that will be used for outreach and education about why so many people in the province struggle to afford food.

The Community Food Self-Sufficiency Action Group worked on the development of a food programs survey to learn more about how to support important work at the grassroots level.

The Local Food Promotion Action Group took stock of what is happening in local food

promotion provincially and how to facilitate strategic alignment among community organizations, industry associations, and government agencies.



In early 2020, we'll be engaging the Everybody Eats Leadership Team to think strategically about where the food system is, where it needs to go, and where our efforts are best placed to make the most impact.



Everybody Eats is tracking **10** common indicators for shared measurement of changes in the food system over time.

St. John's Food Policy Council

As co-chair of the St. John's Food Policy Council (SJFPC), Food First NL convenes a diverse group of food system players in St. John's. This year SJFPC met in-person five times, developed a communication program, and co-hosted two events. A Nutrition Month “Lunch & Learn” explored the new food guide and policies with over 20 city employees.



At “Eat Think Vote at the Market”, SJFPC hosted a public dialogue between farmers’ market vendors, consumers, and eight federal candidates, as part of a national campaign organized by Food Secure Canada.

Our Food NL: Coast of Bays

Three dynamic communities advancing their own solutions to local food security challenges.



Rencontre East

The Rencontre East gardening program bloomed this year, with towers for strawberry plantings, two new greenhouses, and a town supported composting program. These were stewarded by Coordinator Peggy Caines and have become real gathering places in the community.

The gardening program at St. Stephen's All Grade School also thrived. Students grew hydroponic greens, raised vermicompost worms, and shared a meal from their school garden.

This year Food First NL also applied for a non-profit moose license, and the meat was shared between Rencontre East and Pool's Cove in support of their food programs.



Pool's Cove

Pool's Cove is home to a unique collection of programs - a vibrant community garden, our first livestock program, and a community freezer. This year, a new pop-up market sold extra garden produce and value-added items made by committee members!

In 2019, the community freezer program continued to be in demand. As a welcoming service available to all, it provides meat, fish, berries, bottled items, and eggs from the livestock program. Seniors programming continued to be a special focus for the committee and Coordinator Josephine Marshall, with wellness and social events offered throughout the year.



Miawpukek First Nation

This was a great year to break ground at Samiaji Miawpukek Community Garden. Coordinator Tim Drew used his design and cartography skills to base a garden plan around the four directions of the medicine wheel teaching. Four corners of the garden are for community members in different stages of life. These will be connected with plantings and signage for each direction.

In Miawpukek, partnership-building continued to be an important part of sustaining programs. From connecting with the local 50+ Club, Women's Group, and Daycare, to building university research partnerships and attending the national Assembly of First Nations Food Security Forum in Ottawa.



We asked people: "What difference have the Our Food NL programs made in your life?"

Seeing children pick and eat and enjoy the foods they planted.

“

Being a senior it is so good to know that I can get meat or fish to cook.

”

I feel proud of what I grow.



The communities have taken ownership of various strategies to support food security in creative ways. These projects and successes spearheaded by Food First NL could, and should, be replicated throughout rural NL. Future projects will be successful with the targeted support this leadership group has provided to unleash the existing talents and skills in our people.

- Sandra Carpenter, Manager - Public Health, Central Health

Fill Your Plate Food Summit

A full day of inspiration and skill building to support community food projects.

The Fill Your Plate Community Food Summit in Harbour Breton brought together community leaders from the Coast of Bays region and beyond for a full day of inspiration and hands-on skill building to support community food projects. Co-hosted with Central Health and the Central Regional Wellness Coalition, the Summit created space for reflection and brainstorming about what is working well and what is possible for local communities to advance food security.

Attendees learned about inspiring programs in their area that grew out of locally-conducted Community-Led Food Assessments, and shared their own project ideas and challenges. We ate delicious local food, tried our hands at sprouting and hydroponics, learned about wild medicinal plants, the new Food Guide, and much more.



One lucky participant won a SucSeed kit, and a large collection of gardening and cookbooks was donated to the Harbour Breton Public Library.



100% of attendees rated the Summit as 'excellent' or 'very good' & most said the interactive hands-on learning was their favourite part.

Food First NL has been supporting projects in this region for the past three years as part of the Our Food NL project. The Fill Your Plate Summit was a capstone to that work, to share our stories and resources more broadly and to thank the region for welcoming us so wholeheartedly.

Cold Plate Challenge

Making cold plates healthy and delicious was a challenge we put to communities in 2019. It sounds easy, but asked a lot of this favourite traditional meal: alignment with Canada's new Food Guide, local ingredients, food safety, zero waste, and of course, bringing people together!

Communities stepped up and 33 Cold Plate Challenge events were registered province-wide. CBC featured the Challenge on all three morning shows across the province, and Mary Walsh and her co-panelists even poked fun at cold plates on Because News.

Through the Challenge, 1,500 healthy cold plates were served at events ranging from kitchen parties to community-wide meals.



Photo Credit: Conservation Corps of NL



We asked people: "What difference has the Hopedale Freezer & Pantry Program made in your life?"

The community freezer helps when I am out of things - it provides soul food.

“

I crave wild food all the time. It is a good change in my diet, because I mainly eat store bought food.

”

It gives me energy just to wake up to whatever the day has to offer.

Our Food NL: Rigolet & Hopedale

Deeply committed communities working to improve access to healthy and cultural foods.

Food First NL continues to partner with the Hopedale and Rigolet Inuit Community Governments on the Our Food NL project, supporting programs to address food security challenges in Nunatsiavut.

In Hopedale, a town of just under 600 residents, the Nikigijavut Hopedalimi Freezer and Pantry Program has between 60 to 187 visits each month, depending on food availability and need. This year, the new hunter support program subsidized the cost for local hunters to get out on the land. In return, a portion of wild food is donated back to the Hopedale Community Freezer. In 2019, the Hopedale Gardening Program continued to provide supplies to residents growing food at their homes, and a prize was given for the biggest potato!



In Rigolet, the Backyard Gardening and Good Food Box Programs continued to be successful. In the spring, two workshops united gardening participants with guest speakers to learn about seed starting and then season extension and greenhouses. As well as leading those programs, Coordinator Angela Blake also helps with other community food initiatives at the school, food bank, and Rigolet community freezer.



106 orders were placed in Rigolet's Good Food Box program in 2019, meaning **\$14,655** went towards healthy food.

Baker Lake

Baker Lake, Nunavut, became engaged in Our Food NL when they adapted our Community-Led Food Assessment process in 2015, and from that they developed the Niqitsiavut Community Kitchen.



Photo Credit: Niqitsiavut Baker Lake

Niqitsiavut is unique among community kitchens; its activities happen indoors and outdoors, using both country food and store-bought food. Workshops have been held on hunting, butchering and preparing wild game and fish, harvesting local berries, and creating healthy, budget-friendly meals.

Niqitsiavut supports sharing food and knowledge among participants and the wider community, which is why the program's name means "our good food" in Inuktitut. Food First NL continued to provide resources to Niqitsiavut in 2019 and to learn from their work.

THE FACTS ON FOOD WASTE



Roughly **one third** of food produced globally is lost or wasted.ⁱ



In Canada alone, **\$31 billion** dollars worth of food is wasted every year.ⁱⁱ



The average person in NL produces **4.5 lbs** of waste per day.ⁱⁱⁱ



As much as **30%** of waste produced in NL is organic waste.^{iv}



North America's food waste generates **193 million** tonnes of greenhouse gas per year.^v



North America's food waste is equivalent to **41 million** cars driving continuously for a year.^{vi}

REFERENCES

- i. FAO (2011). Global food losses and food waste – extent, causes and prevention. Rome
- ii. Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (2019). Retrieved from: <http://rethinkwastennl.ca/food-waste/>
- iii. *ibid*
- iv. *ibid*
- v. CEC Report: Characterization and Management of Food Loss and Waste in North America
- vi. *ibid*

FOOD WASTE RESOURCES

With funding support from MMSB, Food First NL developed a 2-hour workshop, and several print and online resources, to inform individuals of the issues surrounding household food waste, and to share strategies for positive action. You can download these resources by visiting:

www.foodfirstnl.ca/wasteless



**Buy Local
Seasonality Guide**



**Freezer
Inventory Tracker**



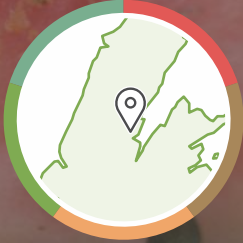
**Weekly
Meal Planner**



**Grocery
Shopping List**

Our grocery list and meal planner help you to buy only what you need, saving on food waste and grocery bills. Our seasonality chart helps you choose fresh food with a longer shelf life. Our freezer inventory assists you in storing food long after you would've had to throw it out.

SIX WORKSHOPS ON FOOD WASTE



Pasadena

Western
Environment Centre
April 2019



St. John's

AC Hunter
Public Library
April 2019



Burin Bay Arm

Burin Memorial
Public Library
April 2019



Portugal Cove - St. Phillips

Environment
Fair
May 2019



St. John's

Stella's
Circle
June 2019



St. John's

Multicultural Women's
Organization of NL
December 2019



"I learned so much, and so appreciated the respectful acknowledgment that we are all trying, that we don't need to be perfect, but here are ways to act and have an impact"



Photo Credit: Western Health

“ Getting more local food in health care facilities is about sustainability. In food service we spend a lot of money on produce. If we spend that money locally, farmers know they have a market for their crops, so they can plan to expand their production. This creates economic sustainability. It’s also about supporting wellness. Buying local allows us to provide quality healthy food to our patients, visitors, and staff. ”

- Laeora Ryba, Regional Director of Nutrition Services at Western Health

Farm to Health Care

Supporting a more vibrant and locally focused food system in our province.

Many of Food First NL's projects share a common goal: to make the healthy choice an easy choice for all people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Health care facilities feed huge numbers of people daily. By working with these facilities to find ways for them to offer healthy, local, and sustainable food, we can improve our province's food environment and our population's health.

This work is particularly important in Newfoundland and Labrador, where at least 15.9% of households experience food insecurity. Food insecurity is connected to many adverse physical and mental health outcomes.

In 2019, Food First NL supported a Farm to Health Care pilot project with Western Health, engaged in planning for potential projects in the

other three health authorities, contributed local food requirement language to Eastern Health's food services contract process, and attended Nourish's national Food For Health Symposium in Ontario.

The Symposium featured workshops, panels, and networking opportunities with roughly 50 food industry and healthcare workers, farmers, advocates, and activists. Attendees shared their perspectives on the importance of serving healthy, locally sourced, and sustainable food in our healthcare institutions for the benefit of patient health and the environment.

Food First NL plans to take that experience and the lessons of 2019 into exciting future plans for Farm to Health Care in our province.



Patients who ranked the food in care highly were **4x more likely** to rank their overall hospital experience as positive.*

*Source: Saskatchewan Health Quality Council (2012) Acute Care Patient Experience Survey: What influences patients' ratings of their hospital?

Western Health

Western Health launched their Farm to Health Care pilot project in summer 2019.

Throughout the summer and fall, they ran popular weekly local vegetable specials in the cafeteria at Western Memorial Regional Hospital. The cafeteria also featured a hydroponic growing station producing herbs for the kitchen and a farm stand where staff and visitors could buy local vegetables and value-added products.



Western Health will be producing a report on their local food procurement totals for the summer, and key lessons they've learned from their pilot project so far.

School Food

Putting affordable, healthy, local, sustainable food on students' plates.



Farm to School

Food First NL acts as the provincial lead for a nationwide Farm to School movement, led by Farm to Cafeteria Canada.

Through our Farm to School project, we assist schools in connecting with farmers to create self-serve salad bars that offer local produce to students. Studies have shown that farm to school programs increase students' food literacy and openness to trying new fruits and vegetables. In 2019, three new schools in NL got salad bars off the ground and did interesting things like baking bread, growing in greenhouses, and taco days. A new round of grants is now rolling out nationally, and Food First NL hopes to assist a new slate of NL schools to join next year.



School Food Guidelines

Schools are an important place for children and youth to have access to healthy food and beverage choices, and offering them helps build a foundation for life-long healthy eating habits.

In 2019, Food First NL participated in the development of new School Food Guidelines (SFG) for Newfoundland and Labrador. The SFG are based on Canada's new Food Guide and represent a commitment to improving the food environment in all schools across the province. The updated SFG are currently being piloted in 11 schools and the lessons learned in those schools will inform the final guidelines that will be fully implemented hopefully during the 2020-2021 school year.



Coalition for Healthy School Food

Food First NL recently became a member of the Coalition for Healthy School Food, a group of 100+ Canadian organizations advocating for a national school food program.

Food insecurity is an urgent public health issue in Canada, affecting one in six children under age 18. School food programs improve students' mental, physical, social, and academic wellbeing, but they require dedicated collaborative effort and long-term investments in order to thrive.

We look forward to working with the Coalition to develop a federal cost-shared universal healthy school food program that will enable all Canadian students to access healthy meals at school.



Photo Credit: Clarendville Middle School

“

There is a food revolution afoot in Canadian schools. Parents, teachers, students, and food service workers are clamouring for a fresh crunch in school lunch, and local farmers and fishers are eager to deliver.”

”

- Joanne Bays, National Director Farm to Cafeteria Canada

Community Food Security Fund

Planting the seeds of food security.

In 2019, we launched a Community Food Security Fund to support local food programs with “seed” funding. The fund had over \$20,000 available for groups looking to address food security locally in three regions.

Nine groups received funding in the inaugural year, including new community gardens for youth and seniors in St. Alban’s and Forteau, food preservation sessions and a lending library in Harbour Breton, and a new school greenhouse in English Harbour West.

Prior to launching this fund, Food First spent several years testing the concept with mini grants through our popular seniors’ program. In 2020, we’ll focus on evaluation and building the fund for future years.



Photo Credit: Harbour Breton Community Youth Network



Close to **800** people participated in the projects funded this year, mostly children and seniors in rural communities.

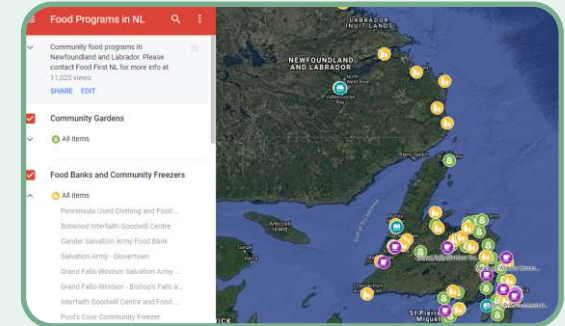


Photo Credit: Bay d’Espoir Community Youth Network



Photo Credit: Labrador Straits Seniors Complex

Healthy Eating in NL Resource Centre



This year Food First NL launched an interactive map to search for food programs in the province. It includes 90 community gardens, 56 food banks and community freezers, eight farmers’ markets, and 17 free and low cost meals. This map helps individuals and organizations find and connect with local food programs to participate and give support.

As the Resource Centre continues to grow, new programs and resources will be added to the site, with a focus on equipping community organizations to run successful food security initiatives.



Photo Credit: Bayd'Espoir Community Youth Network

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We purchased canning and bottling equipment, as well as dehydrators, that will be used in workshops to educate interested community residents on how to preserve. With this funding we were able to initiate a brand new project that we will be able to sustain as a community service, as we excitedly continue with Food First NL staff as very supportive information resources.

”

- Marie Bungay, Executive Director Harbour Breton Community Youth Network



Healthy Food For All



foodfirstnl.ca



info@foodfirstnl.ca



(709) 237 4026



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44 Torbay Rd. Suite 302 St. John's, NL A1A 2G4

Photo Credit (Front): St. Teresa's School

Photo Credit (Back): Bay d'Espoir Community Youth Network