



## **FoodShare's Work in Schools and Childhood Nutrition**

FoodShare Toronto created the model for student nutrition programs in the city of Toronto, which works hand-in-hand with our Field to Table Schools program, the educational complement that returns food education to our schools through curriculum connections from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 12 to cultivate Food Literacy. Our Fresh Produce Program for Schools provides direct access to healthy produce. We have also had great success with a healthy cafeteria model, which we call "The Good Food Café", and which Jennifer Bain in the Toronto Star has called "the future of school lunches." And in 2010 we brought together our expertise in urban agriculture and our work in schools to help facilitate Canada's first school market garden at Bendale Business and Technical Institute in Scarborough. FoodShare is the only organization taking this multifaceted approach to returning healthy food and Food Literacy to schools, leading the charge with its Recipe for Change initiative. See a video on this work here: <http://www.foodshare.net/work-in-schools-video>.

### **Student Nutrition**

As a key partner in the Toronto Partners for Student Nutrition FoodShare does on-the-ground work to support almost 800 student nutrition programs across the city of Toronto in 550 sites serving schools in all school boards. We are currently feeding 139,000 students in what are mostly universal morning-meal programs, meaning that all students in a class will gather and share a meal together, to reduce the stigma and ensure that all are well-fed and alert and ready to participate in class. These programs are run by parent volunteers, many of whom are newcomers to Canada and are engaging with their child's school and public society for the first time in a way that is meaningful for them and helps build their own capacity and social connections, often also creating new employment skills and opportunities.

### **Fresh Produce Program for Schools**

FoodShare's Fresh Produce Program provides affordable and healthy fresh produce to 250 Student Nutrition, School and community programs every week. This program is an extension of our *Good Food Programs* (which also include the Good Food Box and Good Food Markets) and works based on the same infrastructure and values to connect individuals and communities with healthy, fresh, affordable and culturally diverse fresh vegetables and fruit, increasing the consumption of healthy produce, improving the income of small family farms, and creating vital community-building opportunities.

### **The Field to Table Schools Program**

The Field to Table Schools program models and re-introduces food education in schools, bringing the food system to life with hands-on activities and workshops. Students from JK to Grade 12 learn about composting, food gardens, nutrition, cooking, local and global food systems and more. We are reminding children what food is and where it comes from, teaching that healthy food also tastes good, and helping them to choose it for themselves.

Our staff has deeply analyzed the Ontario educational curriculum from JK to Grade 12 to identify points where the food system can be brought to life, and has designed an entire library of creative workshops and teaching tools to support this important work, which are delivered through an extensive network of connections to teachers and schools throughout all of our school boards.

Last year FoodShare's Field to Table Schools Educators led over 31,000 students and 150 teachers through hundreds of workshops and hands-on activities. Topics range from Grains on the Brain (an introduction to a variety of grains, how they are harvested, process and prepared) to Animals in the Food System to Growing Food Roots (how culture has an influence on our diet) to our Soil Power! composting initiatives and the Great Big Crunch, which teaches about healthy eating and local and global food systems while following the journey of an apple from seed to harvest to market and back again. They also created 13 Footprint Gardens (school food gardens shaped like feet, with the toes representing organic gardening, trees, local food, water conservation and composting) in elementary and secondary schools, creatively growing environmental awareness and re-establishing connections with our food cycles. Schools such as George Harvey Collegiate Institute, located at Keele and Eglinton Avenue, use the produce from the garden in their breakfast program. And FoodShare is working with a business and technical high school in Scarborough to develop Toronto's first market garden on school property in keeping with the school's strong focus on hands-on learning, personal management skills and teamwork.

### **The Good Food Café**

FoodShare's Good Food Café models a universal and healthy school cafeteria, serving attractive and delicious nutritious food that students choose to eat and that is simple to prepare, proving that "good for you" can be easy for schools to prepare, and tasty too. Jennifer Bain called the Good Food Café the "future of school lunches" in the Toronto Star: <http://www.thestar.com/living/food/article/712627--cafeteria-serves-cuisine#article> We prioritize fresh vegetables and fruits, serving locally produced and organic food whenever possible, and sell full meals at the current high school price point of \$4.00. The success of the Good Food Café is clear every single school day, when all at once a great rush of excitement signals the arrival of our happy customers - grade 7 and 8 students from College Français - who eagerly gobble up everything we serve. It is our hope that The Good Food Café will become the model for schools across Ontario and Canada.

### **The Bendale Market Garden: Canada's First School-based Market Garden**

In 2010 FoodShare combined our expertise in urban agriculture with our connections and our work in schools to help facilitate the Bendale Market Garden, Canada's first school-based market garden at Bendale Business and Technical Institute in Scarborough. At Bendale, students are involved in every step of the process of bringing food from field to table: they plant, grow, and harvest the food on what was once the front and back lawns of the school, they cook the fruits and vegetables in culinary arts classes, they serve this food to their peers in the cafeteria, and they sell any remaining produce at a Market for the local community. Bendale inspired Sarah Elton to say "I have seen the future of food" after her recent visit, which she profiled on CBC radio's Here and Now: <http://www.foodshare.net/news/?ps=15>. The Toronto Star has also profiled the project in a series of articles you can access here: <http://www.foodshare.net/news/2010>. FoodShare believes strongly that what Bendale has done is a model that can and should be replicated across the city and across Canada: that schools and institutions can turn vast expanses of lawn into urban fields of food, at the same time educating new generations to make healthy choices.

### **FoodShare's Recipe for Change Initiative**

At FoodShare, we're cooking up a Recipe for Change: reminding children what food is and where it comes from, teaching that healthy food also tastes good, and helping them to choose it for themselves. After many years of mapping curriculum connections to food and creating innovative workshops, tools and resources for teachers and students in our Field to Table Schools program, FoodShare Toronto is taking this work to a new level, leading the charge to embed food education in the Ontario curriculum and make Food

Literacy a requirement of graduation for our students. Recipe for Change will take our vision for students to new heights: a Good Food Cafe in every school, and all students being taught to cook, garden and compost throughout all the subject areas.

### **Supporters of Recipe for Change**

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario  
Sustain Ontario  
Ontario Public Health Association  
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation  
Sudbury Food Connections Network  
Ontario Agri-Food Education, Inc.  
Food Security Research Network  
The Stop Community Food Centre  
Just Food Ottawa  
Caledon Countryside Alliance  
Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee

### **Quotes from Supporters of Recipe for Change**

"We all have a role to play to make it easier for our kids to grow up healthy. We are so pleased to work in partnership with FoodShare's Recipe for Change campaign. It is a tremendous step in the right direction to ensure that all kids have knowledge of healthy food – how to choose healthy food and how to cook healthy food and most importantly how to eat and enjoy it." – *Sharon Brodovsky, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario*

"Sustain Ontario is a provincial alliance for healthy food and farming. We work together with diverse groups across Ontario to create a food system that is healthy, equitable, ecological, and financially viable. We believe that FoodShare's Recipe for Change has the potential to transform the future of food by changing the way that children and youth eat and how they understand food. We are excited to be a part of Eat-In Ontario, helping to promote Recipe for Change and a better future for Ontario." – *Ravenna Nuaimy-Barker, Director, Sustain Ontario*

"Recipe for Change is a timely and important initiative, which our organization wholeheartedly supports. Last year we were fortunate enough to be able to launch our newest curriculum resource – *Hungry For Change, Cultivating an Understanding of Food Security* – at FoodShare's conference in Toronto. We believe that FoodShare's Recipe for Change initiative, their Eat-In Ontario event, and all the work that they do in partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Sustain Ontario and others builds foundations for Ontario students to acquire food literacy skills." – *Domenic Bellissio, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation*

"Our organization shares FoodShare's vision that all children and youth should have the opportunity to grow, cook and have access to good healthy food. We believe that Ontario should have a single, integrated school food policy, above and beyond policies that set nutritional guidelines. This would ensure that all children have access to healthy, nutritious, and local foods where possible, as well as clear curriculum guidelines that support healthy food choices and food literacy through agri-food education. Support for healthy local food at schools will lead to economic benefits for Ontario farmers and therefore strengthen Ontario's agricultural landscape." – *Alice Haasduk, Sudbury Food Connections Network*

"Our organization share's FoodShare's vision where all children have access to healthy food and without exception can begin their school day with a good meal. We have been working for over 20 years to ensure that agri-food messages and facts about agriculture reach teachers across the province. Through this filter, we have been delivering "healthy eating" messages as supported by commodity groups and members throughout Ontario to create a classroom environment friendly to farming. We believe in a food policy that

would provide for clear curriculum guidelines that support healthy food choices and food literacy through agri-food education. Support for healthy local food at schools will lead to economic benefits for Ontario farmers and therefore strengthen Ontario's agricultural landscape." – *Colleen Smith, Ontario Agri-Food Education, Inc.*

"The GTAAAC believes that FoodShare's Recipe for Change initiative, their Eat-In Ontario event, and all the work that they do in partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Sustain Ontario and others, builds foundations for Ontario students to acquire food literacy skills exemplifying the important values and policies that the GTAAAC supports." – *Nick Ferri, Chair, Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee*

### **About FoodShare Toronto**

FoodShare ([www.foodshare.net](http://www.foodshare.net)) is a Toronto non-profit community organization whose vision is Good Healthy Food for All.

Founded in 1985 to address hunger in our communities, FoodShare takes a unique multi-faceted and long-term approach to hunger and food issues. We work to empower individuals, families and communities through food-based initiatives, while at the same time advocating for the broader public policies needed to ensure that everyone has adequate access to sustainably produced, good healthy food. Working "from field to table," we focus on the entire system that puts food on our tables: from the growing, processing and distribution of food to its purchasing, cooking and consumption. FoodShare Toronto is Canada's largest community food security organization, recognized as an important innovator of effective programs that have been reproduced all across Canada. We facilitate empowerment and community development from the ground up, cultivating awareness, building citizenship and enhancing individual and community participation, all the while striving to improve access to good healthy food. Since its earliest years, FoodShare has recognized that partnerships and advocacy make us stronger and amplify the effects of our work. We pioneer by illustrating what is possible, creating empowering tools and replicable, scalable solution models (our programs) to combat universal food problems, then we mentor communities in adapting and growing these solutions. We apply our program models to the direct needs of low-income communities in Toronto, implementing these solutions universally to remove stigma. FoodShare's community development partnership model means that our work is leveraged exponentially, garnering impacts that reach far beyond Toronto and even Canada.

Our programs, which reach over 155,000 children and adults per month in Toronto, include Student Nutrition, Field to Table Schools, The Good Food Café, Focus on Food youth internships, the Good Food Box, Good Food Markets, Fresh Produce for Schools and Community Groups, Baby and Toddler Nutrition, Community Kitchens, Field to Table Catering, the Food Link Hotline, Power Soups, Community Gardening, Composting, Beekeeping and Urban Agriculture.

**For more information, photos and additional support:**

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