



CIF FEATURE STORY:

Community Kitchen Partnership from Field to Plate

Sept 2019

FEATURE STORY: Community Kitchen Partnership from Field to Plate; Prince Albert Food Bank

This project originated from community meetings with stakeholders from community based organizations in and around Prince Albert. Many needs were identified from this series of meetings, one being an educational platform designed to reconnect people to the food they eat. This platform has evolved into what is now known as the Co-op Community Oasis Garden. While the initial focus of the project was to develop an urban supply of food and provide education to the public on localized food production, community engagement and social support were other targets for this project.

“Thanks to funding from the Community Initiatives Fund, we are able to have a coordinator who developed the children’s Field to Plate program,” shared Cathryn Abrametz, Public Health Nutritionist - Public Health Unit. **“The project is community inclusive with the goal of increasing food knowledge through land-based education. The garden is a safe and positive environment where children learn about food and engage in hands on experiential activities.”**

Daily activities are facilitated and are attended by children from the community. Daily activities are fun and educational, including activities such as *Let’s Plant a Garden Tower*, *Water is life*, *How do Plants Grow*, *the Squirm of Worms*, *Composting*, etc. 313 members of the community enjoyed programming between the months of May – August this year. Meals and snacks for the participants are made together using the fresh produce that is grown from the garden. A fall garden harvest and canning workshops will complete the program.

Addressing food security issues were the initial drivers of this project. **“The garden location is intentional to address local food security issues. This location also brings programming to where children live and play. It provides opportunities for children who may not access traditional programming available elsewhere in the city,”** said Cathryn.

Thanks to the efforts of the many strategic partners in undertaking this project, a viable and long-term source of produce is available in a reclaimed urban environment. Related community education workshops have been realized and the social aspect of this project achieved an important role in providing both land-based and cultural education. **“The garden provides a safe and secure environment for children in the community,”** Cathryn highlighted. **Participating at an early age in each stage of the growing, harvesting, and preparation of food also promotes lifelong positive attitudes towards vegetables and fruit.”**

“Gardening is awesome!”

“I just love coming here. I had lots of fun!”

“I saw a slug!”



Photo Credit: Prince Albert Food Bank