



THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH.

But there should be.



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Canada is the only nation in the G7 and one of the only OECD nations without a nationally-funded or subsidized school food program. As the world faces alarming food shortages, growing inflation, and increasing income disparities even in wealthy nations, this must change. School food programs are essential for children's well-being and development, and food is a human right. This topic brief offers an overview of the scope and impact of the problem in Canada, how school food programs address these challenges, and the best practices in school food programs that can achieve significant and long-term impact on reducing child hunger and its effects.

In Canada, ensuring equitable availability of food, especially for children, is challenged by geography, an uneven social safety net, and a history of colonization that has created systemic barriers to access to resources, education, and employment especially for Indigenous, Black, and racialized people.

The pandemic stalled progress on a coherent, coordinated national school food policy – promised by Canada's federal government in late 2019 – that would broadly address child hunger and support local food systems development.

The need for school food programs stems directly from the level of food insecurity and poverty experienced across Canada.

Programs designed to eradicate child hunger, including school food programs, must operate

together with poverty reduction programs. Policies and programs intended to reduce economic disparities and provide income benefits that keep up with inflation are essential. New federal and provincial/territorial income supports introduced at the beginning of the pandemic, including the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, contributed to an overall reduction in poverty in Canada in 2020.¹

Many of these programs have now been phased out, yet the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, inflation, war, and climate change continue to take a heavy toll on the ability of parents and communities to feed their children. The cost of food continues to rise and the equitable distribution of food continues to be compromised.

School food programs are needed now more than ever.

¹ Employment and Social Development Canada. [Canada's poverty rate decreased significantly in 2020](#), March 23, 2022.

The scope of the problem

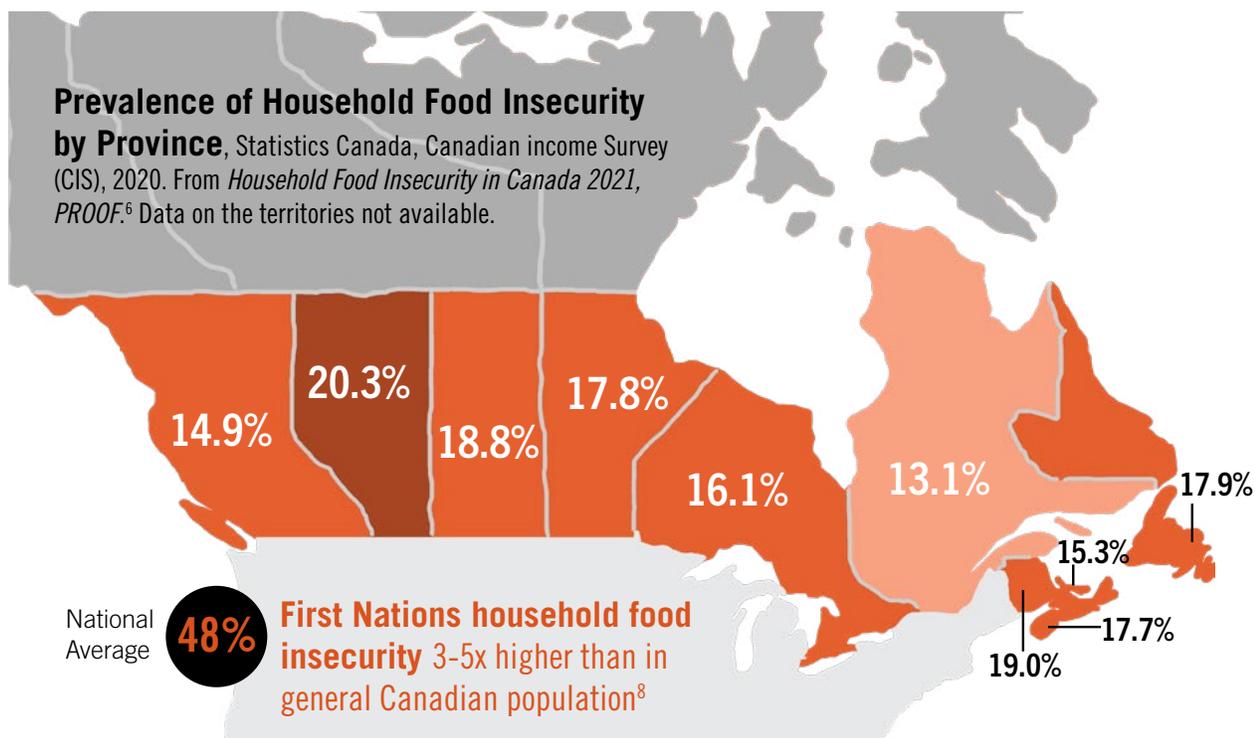
Food insecurity is lack of access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life, due either to the unavailability of food and/or lack of resources to obtain food.² Food insecurity is a powerful determinant of health in Canada as it is around the world.

In 2021, 5.8 million Canadians were living in food-insecure households with 1 in 6 (1.4 million) age 18 or under.³

For children, household food insecurity has detrimental effects on health and development,

including increases in every form of malnutrition, developmental delays, increased hospitalizations, higher risk of chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease and diabetes, reduced cognitive ability, and psychosocial dysfunction.⁴ These concerns early in life increase children’s risk of poor school readiness, poor school performance, subsequent health disparities, and poverty.⁵

There are significant regional differences in food insecurity in Canada. Nunavut and the Northwest Territories have the highest prevalence of children living in food-insecure households, followed by Alberta, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.⁶



² Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Hunger and Food Insecurity*, retrieved September 2022.

³ Tarasuk V., Li T., Fafard St-Germain AA. *Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. PROOF (Food Insecurity Policy Research, University of Toronto)*, 2022.

⁴ Kansanga, M.M. *Hunger in early life: Exploring the prevalence and correlates of child food insecurity in Canada. Agriculture & Food Security*, 11(32), April 2022.

⁵ Black, M. *Household food insecurities: Threats to children’s well-being. The SES Indicator, American Psychological Association*, June 2012.

⁶ Tarasuk V., Li T., Fafard St-Germain AA. *Op. cit.*

Indigenous Peoples, especially those living on reserves, face the highest levels of food insecurity. Almost a third (30.7%) of Indigenous Peoples living off reserve in Canada's ten provinces are food insecure.⁷ The number of food-insecure people, including children, is even higher among on-reserve Indigenous populations, at an estimated average of 48%, with a wide range of regional variation.⁸

The picture is made more dire for Indigenous Peoples because of high food costs. Even prior to the pandemic, food costs were two to three times higher in First Nations communities, many of which are more than 50 km away from a major urban centre with poor access to transportation. In fly-in communities, costs can be even higher and, worse still, fresh fruits and vegetables may not be available at all.⁹ Other key contributors to high levels of food insecurity in Indigenous communities include high rates of un- or underemployment, low wages relative to the cost of food and other essentials, and insufficient access to traditional food systems.

With record inflation since 2021, the prevalence and severity of food insecurity has increased across Canada, hitting First Nations communities even harder given other socio-economic risk factors.

As just one demonstration of the pandemic's impact on hunger and food insecurity, the Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto says requests for aid have spiked as inflation reached a nearly four-decade high in mid-2022, with food banks across the country reporting similar spikes in demand of up to 30%.¹⁰ Second Harvest, a national food rescue organization, reported an increase in use of food bank and similar services of more than 124% in 2022, and forecasts a steady increase of 60% per month in 2023.¹¹ These impacts are felt most severely by children, who comprise about one-third of all food bank users.



⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Assembly of First Nations, University of Ottawa and Université de Montréal. *First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study: Summary of Findings and Recommendations for eight Assembly of First Nations regions 2008-2018*, October 2021.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Szklarski, C. *Child hunger a major concern in Canada amid skyrocketing food prices*, The Canadian Press, June 23, 2022.

¹¹ Pasieka, C. *60% more Canadians per month expected to use food banks, other programs in 2023*, survey finds, CBC News, January 11, 2023.

Food security for all: Feeding and nourishing children equitably in Canada

Within this context of poverty and food insecurity, Canada does not fare well at meeting the urgent need to feed and nourish its children.

Canada ranks 37th out of 41 countries when it comes to providing healthy food for children.

Canada has no government-funded programs dedicated to supporting children's nutrition. It is the only nation in the G7, and one of the only OECD nations, without a national school meal program.

Instead, Canada relies on a patchwork of charitable efforts such as school breakfast programs, food banks, and local or regional organizations that operate in the poverty/food security spaces – many of which are under-funded and under-staffed.

These stop-gap measures address the consequences of food insecurity and child hunger but are largely insufficient to uncover and act on their root causes

or implement the broad, systemic changes that can lead to sustainable improvements in food security and local food systems development.

In 2019, Canada's federal Liberal government announced its long-awaited National Food Policy which included a commitment to work with the provinces and territories to develop a national school food program. Federal Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau and Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Karina Gould were tasked with developing the policy and program. However, COVID-19 stalled implementation and, while a public consultation period was completed in December 2022, so far no clear action plan has been established.

In the meantime, inflation and food costs continue to rise and children continue to go hungry.



Why school food programs matter

School food programs can be a useful strategy to improve children’s nutrition, reduce childhood hunger, and improve longer-term health and learning outcomes.

Consider these facts from the Coalition for Healthy School Food, which a robust, well-planned and administered school food program can address:

- **Only about one-third of children between the age 4 and 13 eat five or more servings of vegetables and fruit daily**
- **About one-quarter of children’s calorie intake is from food products not recommended in Canada’s Food Guide (this number is even higher in Indigenous communities because of the lack of availability of affordable, nutritious food)**
- **One-third of students in elementary schools and two-thirds of students in secondary schools do not eat a nutritious breakfast before school¹²**

Canada’s current spotty approach to school food programming is reaching only a small percentage of our over five million students. Furthermore, when school’s out, children most in need of support often go hungry. This problem has been particularly acute during the pandemic when children reliant on school food programs were unable to access them for large portions of the school year.

What impact can school food programs have?

The international literature on school food programs indicates that they are one of the most successful drivers of improved health, education, and economic growth.

A 2021 meta-analysis of school food programs in OECD countries (which notably did not include Canada) found positive associations between student participation in school food programs and diet quality, food security, and academic performance.¹³ School food programs have been found to have a positive influence on social inclusion, gender equity, food literacy, environmental sustainability and stewardship, and economic development.¹⁴

School meal programs can also open up an important market for local farmers, fishers and food processors, contributing to community development and long-term food security.¹⁵

To reap these benefits, school food programs need to be effectively designed, administered, managed, and monitored.

¹² The Coalition for Healthy School Food, retrieved September 2022.

¹³ Cohen, J., Hecht, A.A., McLoughlin, G., Turner, L., and Schwartz, M. Universal School Meals and Associations with Student Participation, Attendance, Academic Performance, Diet Quality, Food Security, and Body Mass Index: A Systematic Review. *Nutrients*, 13(3), March 2021.

¹⁴ Ruetz, A. and McKenna, M. Characteristics of Canadian school food programs funded by provinces and territories. *Canadian Food Studies*, October 2021.

¹⁵ Haines, J. and Ruetz, A. Comprehensive, Integrated Food and Nutrition Programs in Canadian Schools: A Healthy and Sustainable Approach, University of Guelph, March 2020.

Best practices in school food programs

The principles of high-quality, effective school food programs are well documented throughout the literature. But while the principles are recognized, our capacity in Canada to implement them remains largely unrealized. School food programs should be:^{16,17}

- **Universal:** Available to all students in a school at no cost or subsidized cost to families, and administered in a confidential, non-stigmatizing manner.
- **Health-Promoting:** Programs should focus on whole foods, vegetables and fruit, and integrate traditional foods, including methods of growing and gathering it, consistent with Indigenous Peoples' unique cultures and knowledge.
- **Connected:** Programs should be connected to local communities and draw upon local food resources where possible, supporting local producers and creating economic multipliers. Programs should engage the broader community including parents, caregivers, Elders, local businesses, and community leaders.

- **Sustainable:** Programs must be funded and resourced sustainably; school food program staff and volunteers should receive adequate training to teach and role model healthy food behaviours for students.
- **Respectful:** Programs must respect local conditions and needs, be culturally appropriate and locally adapted. Programs in diverse inner cities will look different from those in remote Northern communities, for example, and involvement by stakeholders with local experience is critical to success.
- **Comprehensive:** Programs should be integrated with curricula to incorporate food literacy, nutrition education, and food skills. Students should be involved through hands-on food growing, preparation, harvesting and other experiential learning opportunities.

At minimum, school food programs must meet nutrition standards for healthy child development. Ideally, however, they become part of an inclusive vision of community and planetary health.



¹⁶ Excerpted from *The Coalition for Healthy School Food*, based on Hernandez, K., Engler-Stringer, R., Kirk, S., Wittman, H. and McNicholl, S., *The case for a Canadian national school food program*, *Journal of the Canadian Association of Food Studies*, 5(3), September 2018.

¹⁷ Haines, J. and Ruetz, A. Op. cit.

Links between school food programs and learning

School gardens, composting, planting, and harvesting activities – beyond their immediate benefits of involving students in hands-on learning and providing fruits and vegetables to supplement school food supplies – can also be a hub for community cultural celebrations and food sharing programs. When integrated with community development, this extends their year-round value and reach to the whole community and helps overcome one of the main challenges in school feeding programs: their limitation to the days and months that school is in session.

Ensuring that children are fed and nourished consistently, sustainably, and year-round can best be achieved by tackling food insecurity at its root: linking school food programs to community economic development.

Similarly, curriculum links from school food programs to land-based and environmental education connect to important environmental, cultural, social, and traditional aspects of food. Going one step further, school food programs that are part of a community's broader economic development plans and its local agricultural and food-related businesses can advance social justice goals.

Broader community-building benefits

Connecting schools to local food through Farm to School or Farm to Cafeteria initiatives has led to increased knowledge about food and agriculture, promoted community-building, and mobilized communities to pursue innovations in food systems. Creating new, local markets for farmers can also have tangential environmental benefits

by reducing the carbon footprint of food production and transport.¹⁸ There are indications that communities with strong local food systems in place have been better able to withstand the challenges of pandemic-related food shortages.¹⁹

In short, school food programs and their offshoots can help stimulate the local economy, which is a crucial step on the road to food security.

For Indigenous communities, it is a step toward the decolonization of food systems and future food sovereignty, helps to rebuild traditional knowledge across generations, and connects people to each other and to the lands and waters that sustain us all.



¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹How the pandemic brought a N.B. First Nation together to tackle food insecurity. *The Current*, CBC Radio, February 2021.

CFTC's approach to school food programs

Canadian Feed The Children believes it is essential to strengthen and support school food programs so that children receive nutritious meals seven days a week, 365 days a year.

CFTC funds school meal programs in Indigenous communities across Canada that are designed as part of a bigger picture, which includes broad-based community support, capacity-building for local food systems transformation, nutrition and land-based education, and partnership to achieve the community's self-defined food security and food sovereignty goals.

Decolonization, anti-racism, reconciliation, and self-determination aims are all better achieved working in equitable, meaningful partnerships, such as those built via CFTC's participatory, community-led approach to school food programming.

A recent study investigating the characteristics of school food programs in Canada found that federal and provincial governments spent \$93 million in the 2018-19 school year to provide free meals to approximately 35% of JK-12 schools, representing just over one million students (21%) of students in Canada.²⁰

Clearly, program demand exceeds supply. The Ruetz and McKenna study also highlighted that the current system of government-NGO partnership to fund and deliver these programs is lacking in several key areas, specifically program mandates, student reach and universality, program sustainability, resources, and monitoring.



²⁰Ruetz, A. T., & McKenna, M. L. Op. cit., 8(3), October 2021. Ruetz and McKenna limited their analysis to provincial/territorial-funded programs and their NGO program delivery partners because they were focused on providing current data to inform the development of a harmonized, national school food program proposed in the 2019 federal budget. As a result, estimates of student reach are likely understated.

CFTC's school food programs – which are funded entirely by individual, corporate and foundation donors and do not receive federal or provincial/territorial funding – obviously function as part of the broader whole and are also limited in terms of student reach. However, CFTC's approach to school food programs offers many best practices in design, delivery and capacity-building that can serve as a model for other organizations operating in the school nutrition ecosystem.

Foundational to CFTC's approach – a principle that is embedded within all programming in Canada and internationally, for school food programs and across other areas of focus – is CFTC's community-led, participatory approach to development.

In Canada, CFTC partners directly with Indigenous communities to support their own identified food security and food sovereignty goals. Our approach is

flexible so that we can fund school staff, nutritionists/dieticians, agricultural activities such as school and community gardens and food forests, and various aspects of school food programs from the purchase of food and kitchen equipment to nutrition education and land-based educational initiatives.

The selection of these elements is based on engagement and dialogue with community members, Elders, school and health centre staff, and other stakeholders who are centred in the decision-making for their community, know the context and community best, have trusting community relationships, and have the influence and capacity to act on the development goals of their communities.

This is the path to achieving the scale and reach necessary to transform local food systems, improve food security and achieve long-term, sustainable impact.

CFTC's best practices in school food programming

CFTC's school food programs offer a model for the design, delivery and capacity-building essential to achieve sustainable, long-term impact. They are:

- **Participatory and community-led**, developed and implemented by centering Indigenous knowledge, practices, community, economic and environmental stewardship goals
- **Comprehensive**, combining curriculum, education, family and community involvement, and healthy food provision
- **Universal**, delivered through schools to all students in a non-stigmatizing way
- **Health-promoting**, built by and for Indigenous children's development and nutritional requirements by nutritionists and dieticians, informed by Elders and incorporating traditional foods and food practices
- **Connected** to local food systems through school gardens (which provide produce to supplement school food supplies), community gardens, food forests, local food centres, and other food distribution/sharing programs
- **Culturally relevant**, incorporating land-based education, traditional hunting, fishing, harvesting and food gathering practices, hands-on food skills experiences including processing, preserving and canning food, and nutrition education for students, families, Elders and community members
- **Monitored and evaluated** for effectiveness and impact in culturally-sensitive, respectful ways
- **Sustainably resourced and funded** to engage, train, and build the capacity of educators, community leaders and members, parents and caregivers, and students on healthy food behaviours, food and nutrition knowledge, traditional approaches to food and nutrition, and food security / food sovereignty activism

Join us

CFTC has supported community-led food security and food sovereignty initiatives for more than 35 years in Canada and internationally. We now work directly with partners in 29 Indigenous communities across Canada using a collaborative, respectful, community-led process to enable them to achieve self-determined, sustainable change.

CFTC is also part of a consortium of Indigenous-led or Indigenous-serving organizations that, for decades, have worked to support Indigenous food security and food sovereignty. With the onset of COVID-19, this consortium – which includes Plenty Canada, Indigenous Food Circle, and Northern Manitoba Food, Culture and Community Collaborative – came together more intentionally based on the need for urgent action. Collectively we hold deep, trusted relationships with over 180 Indigenous Nations and communities across Canada.

CFTC is a founding member and co-host – with The Healthy School Food Coalition, Farm to Cafeteria Canada, Indigenous Food Circle, and the University of Saskatchewan, of the Indigenous School Food Working Group, established to:

- 1) inform how the Coalition advocates for funding for school food programs in Indigenous communities and for Indigenous students, and
- 2) support replication, networking and sharing of best practices among those who are coordinating and supporting school food programs in Indigenous communities and for Indigenous students.

We are uniquely positioned to support our Indigenous partners to respond to food security issues arising from the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, war, inflation, and climate change, and to support long-term planning and action at the community level.

CFTC's Indigenous Partnerships across Canada



Still, there is more work to be done. Our focus in 2023 and beyond is to:

- Grow support for existing communities and expand programming
- Establish new community programs to extend our reach
- In partnership with Indigenous communities, pursue innovations in school food, children's nutrition, and food security including food forests and other local agri-food initiatives
- Participate in ongoing research to inform policy and practice, such as the Indigenous-Led Community School Food Program Co-Design Project, which began in March 2022 through a partnership with Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, Saskatoon Public Schools, and Meadow Lake Tribal Council
- Continue to raise our voice for a national policies and programs focused on poverty reduction, food security, children's nutrition, and school food programs
- Take meaningful action towards truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples who are working toward food security and food sovereignty through committed, sustainable partnerships with Indigenous communities



For more information about CFTC's programs in Canada, visit: [Where We Work - Canada](#)

From school food to community food security in Natoageneg

CFTC's goal is to invest in local organizations and movements that will be there long after we leave. The Natoageneg experience offers a look at how a school food program, starting from humble beginnings but founded on community engagement, can achieve transformative change for communities.

Food systems have a major impact on the human, environmental and ecosystem health of our planet. By working with engaged communities, Elders and youth to support sustainable, Indigenous-led food practices, we can unleash the vast potential of food to be a lever for transformative social change.

A community in need

Natoageneg (Eel Ground First Nation) is a Mi'kmaq First Nation in northern New Brunswick on the Miramichi River. Natoageneg families face low employment rates and seasonal work. Only

54% of households have an income of more than \$30,000 and many parents are unable to meet the nutritional and other basic needs of their children. The Natoageneg food insecurity rate is 40% (compared to a national rate of 12%). Of these, 13% are severely food insecure, meaning that they regularly experience food shortages.

Since 2007, Canadian Feed The Children has worked in partnership with Natoageneg. Built on the foundation of a breakfast and lunch program in the local school, the community served as a pilot site for CFTC's renewed Theory of Change in 2011. Since then, Natoageneg has expanded its nutrition programs into a more comprehensive school- and community-based set of health and wellness initiatives called Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, Healthy Spirits.

Early achievements

In early 2015, Natoaganeg First Nation School was featured in the New Brunswick Medical Society and New Brunswick Dietitians in *Action Make*



Erica Ward, Natoaganeg Food Centre Coordinator, and Michelle Davidson-Legere, Roots to Table Coordinator, host a moose canning workshop. Photo © Allan Lissner, OCIC Transformations, 2018.

Menus Matter project. Registered dietitians analyzed over a hundred school menus to determine their alignment with provincial nutritional guidelines and Natoageneg's school food program was recognized for its quality. Later that year, the Province of New Brunswick's *Join the Wellness Movement* campaign recognized Natoageneg's unique Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, Healthy Spirits program as a provincial success story.²¹

These early successes laid the foundation for Natoageneg to become a model for community-led food security and nutrition programs in Canada.

Beyond school to the community: Program expansion

With leadership from the Community Advisory Committee and the broader community, the CFTC-Natoageneg partnership expanded beyond the school and into the community through initiatives like cooking classes, school and community gardens, a Youth Champions program, and the development of the Natoageneg Food Centre, Pistamunekemk: the first community food centre in New Brunswick and the first Indigenous food centre supported by Community Food Centres Canada, now funded and managed by the community itself.²²

The origin of the Natoageneg Food Centre stem from a leadership structure first established to develop and manage the school food program. The Community Advisory Committee included staff from the Eel Ground Health Centre, school, parents, and youth champion representatives. With support from the Chief, Council and CFTC, the committee visited a food centre in Fredericton and came back with a vision to create their own.

²¹ Canadian Feed The Children. [Eel Ground First Nation Recognized](#). The Feed, retrieved September 2022.

²² Blanch, V. [Meet the people of Eel Ground First Nation who are using food to reclaim culture](#). CBC, October 21, 2018.

Piel's story: Carrying on the traditional ways in Natoageneg¹



Piel with fellow Youth Champions in the Natoageneg Food Centre. Photo © Allan Lissner, OCIC Transformations, 2018.

Piel Ward, one of Natoageneg's Youth Champions, has enthusiastically participated in the land-based education program and taken on an important role as a community hunter. At age 12, Piel harvested his first moose guided by his father and in accordance with Indigenous hunting traditions. These include offering tobacco to the Creator, respecting the animal by using every part of it, and acknowledging the animal's offering of its life with specific rituals of appreciation.

Piel learned and then demonstrated to his fellow Youth Champions how to butcher and prepare the meat. They've learned from Elders and knowledge-keepers the importance of wild and traditional food and taken part in feasts that bring the community together and celebrate cultural practices unique to the Mi'kmaq people.

Natoageneg Chief George Ginnish says that it was not long ago that his people depended on fish and game for nutrition and to survive, but that a lot of families don't have the ability to fish or to hunt themselves now. Community hunters like Ernie Ward, Piel's father, are vital to provide food and to nurture the next generation of hunters who can carry on the traditional ways. "It's important for us that we are doing it in a good way and for the right reasons. We don't do this for money. We do this for our families, and for our community, so we can all eat," Ernie explained.

¹ Canadian Feed The Children. [Carrying On The Traditional Ways](#). The Feed, retrieved September 2022.

The Natoageneg Food Centre: The hub of the community's food security movement

In 2016, the community donated a vacant building and Pistamune'kemk (which translates to 'The place to get food, but never more than what you would need') opened its doors. A drop-in centre and food sharing site with a full kitchen, freezers, storage, recreational and seating areas, the centre increased food access, ran programs to build food skills, and offered nutrition education and community engagement opportunities.²³ Soon, Pistamune'kemk hosted a weekly farmers' market, an expanded community garden, cooking classes, and an Elder café. The food bank – previously situated in the band office and accessible only by members on social assistance – was relocated to the Natoageneg Food Centre, a move that community members agree has made it more accessible, more welcoming, and less stigmatizing.²⁴

Critical Success Factors

Numerous factors have been critical to the success of Natoageneg's community food programming, but an important one is the deliberate inclusion of youth in leadership positions. The Natoageneg Youth Champion program cultivated nutrition knowledge and food skills among a group of older students who were charged with mentoring and modelling healthy behaviours to younger students.

Youth Champions organized school and community events like harvest festivals, and healthy food stations at sports events and school dances. They played a lead role in the community's Fresh4Less program, helping to pack and distribute healthy, fresh food to families in need. They helped establish the Natoaganeg Community Food Centre and were often found in the school and community gardens helping to grow, maintain, and harvest food and

traditional medicine during the school year and throughout the summer too.²⁵

Engaging youth in food security initiatives yields an ever-expanding circle of benefits. Skills-building and community engagement instills confidence, develops leadership abilities, and provides a sense of purpose among a younger generation, which has both practical and social-emotional benefits that last into adulthood. Perhaps even more importantly, the Natoageneg Youth Champions initiative connects youth and their parents with traditional knowledge and culture that has been lost because of the trauma and disruption of the residential school experience.

The Natoageneg Food Centre, aligned with the school, has become a hub for land-based education. Children, parents, Elders, and knowledge-keepers work together to learn and share traditional food practices, including hunting, fishing, and foraging for traditional food and medicine, building and maintaining school and community gardens, participating in parent-child food processing, preparing and preserving classes, and much more.

The experiences of residential school survivors are never far from the core teachings of the food movement at Natoageneg. The traumatic history of what survivors endured is carried with them and many Indigenous people continue to work out their relationship with food. Nutrition and land-based education through the Natoageneg Food Centre and the school frames healthy food behaviour and traditional food practices as an act of reconciliation: "It makes sense for us to teach about nutrition and about healthy minds, bodies and spirits as an act of reconciliation. Our survivors were malnourished and, in many cases, starved. To teach and feed our students needs to happen for our own healing and our relationship with food," said Terri-Anne Larry, Principal, Natoageneg Mi'kmaq School.²⁶

²³ Community Food Centres Canada. *What We Do: Natoageneg*, retrieved September 2022.

²⁴ Ontario Council for International Cooperation. *Transformations: Stories of Partnership, Resilience and Positive Change*, February 2018.

²⁵ Canadian Feed The Children. *Youth leaders leave a healthy legacy*. The Feed, retrieved September 2022.

²⁶ *Cultivating Change: A Just Transition to a Regenerative Food System*, Food Secure Canada, conference held Nov 12-18, 2020, reported by Lindsay Goodridge in *Indigenous-led School Food Programs: Bringing Indigenous Food Sovereignty to the Fore*, The Coalition for Healthy School Food, December 7,