

**COMMUNITY FOOD CONNECTIONS
ASSOCIATION & COMMUNITY PARTNERS
PRESENT:**

FOOD TALK

FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING ...

February 2008 - Phase 1 Report



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Community Food Connections Association and the Food TALK Committee would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the following individuals, agencies and funders to the Phase I Food TALK Project.

- Alberta Community Development
- City of Medicine Hat , Social Development
- Growing Food Security Network of Alberta
- Palliser Health Region, Health Promotion and Community Nutrition
- Community Food Connections Association
- Healthy Alberta Communities
- Positive Culture Company

The Food TALK Committee would like to extend special thanks to focus group participants and facilitators. Thanks to your contribution the Food TALK Project was possible. Your comments, feedback and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key members of the Community Food Connections Association (Palliser Health Region Health Promotion/Community Nutrition, Healthy Alberta Communities, City of Medicine Hat, and the Growing Food Security Network of Alberta) as well as Alberta Community Development and community representatives collaborated to undertake the ***Food Talk: From Surviving to Thriving*** asset mapping project in 2006/2007. The goal of the project was to engage multi-sectoral representatives - community members & vulnerable groups, agencies, business, growers, food retail, health, local government, non-profit agencies, etc. - in the process of broad community food system planning to ensure access to healthy food for all residents. A community food system approach goes beyond individual dietary behavior, and examines the broader context of these behaviors. It seeks to build healthy communities by considering multiple conditions that determine health and quality of life. With this health determinants perspective, economic, social and environmental aspects of the food environment become relevant to public health. A food system that improves access to healthy food throughout the region, while ensuring a viable local agricultural economy, will enhance the health of all residents. An ecological paradigm emerges where a healthy food system is an embedded goal within regional growth management for the future.

The process of having community conversations to identify existing assets, barriers, and possible solutions was conceived to begin the process of community planning, which will ultimately result in a coordinated approach to strengthening the food system through policies that promote system change, and actions that improve the capacity of individuals and the community to be food secure. The Food Talk asset mapping initiative was comprised of five key elements.

- Key stakeholder participation in Community Building Workshop to develop skills, awareness and an action plan for asset mapping process
- Community consultation via a series of focus groups to gather data for the asset map
- Food Talk Networking Luncheons open to stakeholders and community members at large to keep them engaged in the process, and build awareness and understanding of food insecurity
- Participation in Food Policy Workshop based on “Thought About Food” workbook, offered via a grant from the Growing Food Security Network of Alberta to key stakeholders to develop understanding of food insecurity and best practice solutions
- Food Talk Workshop open to public to share asset map and establish working groups on identified priorities and initiate an action planning process.

- Newly established sub-committees proceed with the development of action plans, coordinating work with other stakeholders via the Food Talk committee, and the Community Food Connections Association, and contribute to the overall development of a community wide approach to food security.

The Food Talk Asset Map, the List of Community Assets, and Food Talk Challenges and Solutions Summary are available as appendices to this document, or as separate documents from the Community Food Connections Association web-site at: <http://www.foodconnections.ca/>.

The Food Talk Initiative has increased awareness of assets and barriers to food security in our community, and of solutions that address the root causes of the food insecurity or build individual and community capacity. The community has been primarily focused on meeting chronic food crises with traditional emergency food responses such as food banks and soup kitchens. This process is helping key stakeholders and the community at large to work collaboratively towards more sustainable and impactful, system change and capacity building approaches.

THEMES

Priority I	Priority II
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, Awareness, Media and Marketing • Food Procurement, Production and Distribution • Skills and Knowledge • System Change and Multi-sectoral Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's and School Programs • Cost of Living, Poverty Action • Culture, Diversity and Sensitivity • Family Supports • Housing, Clothing and Resources • Short-Term Emergency Food Relief and Philanthropy/Volunteerism • Transportation

Recommendations:

- 1) Enhance current data obtained via the Community Building Asset Mapping process through survey methods, and inventorying community resources. Including additional data, complete Community Food Assessment report and plan for sharing and advocacy, in collaboration with the Food Charter and Education and Awareness sub-committees and relevant community partners.
- 2) Although all initiatives identified are relevant and valued, due to time constraints of the day, and in order to set realistic, achievable goals, 4 themes were chosen as highest priority. The Food Talk network will be supportive of all actions arising from the twelve themes, but will focus primarily on the following 4 priority areas chosen by the working group.
 - Education & Awareness
 - Food Distribution
 - Skills & Knowledge
 - System Change – Food Charter Sub-committee
- 3) Continue to create opportunities to promote networking and collaboration regarding food security amongst community agencies and citizens, and government.
- 4) Develop an information booklet on community food security assets, and potential solutions to promote better awareness and access. Make this available on the Food Connections web-site, and ensure programs are identified in the Community Organizations data base hosted by the Volunteer Centre.
- 5) Participate in provincial and national initiatives to address the root causes of food insecurity.
- 6) Continue to partner with the Growing Food Security Network of Alberta, and other community organizations to share promising practices and collaborate when feasible.
- 7) Establish community partnerships to co-locate services for greater efficiencies, to enhance program opportunities and promote sustainability.
- 8) Utilize Community Food Connections web-site to communicate and support food security action.
- 9) Establish process for addressing school food insecurity concerns in partnership with the Moving and Choosing Project and school and health partners.
- 10) Seek out additional key stakeholders in the area of local government, agriculture, business, education, health, social services and anti-poverty organizations to ensure a multi-sectoral approach.

BACKGROUND

Food Talk: From Surviving to Thriving...

Food Talk: From Surviving to Thriving is a report of the Community Food Connections Association in support of the development of a community based approach to achieving both individual and community food security. The report is based on information gathered primarily through a series of focus groups completed over the fall and winter of 2006-2007, and primarily reflects the opinions of the citizens participating in this process. As well, where possible, factual information was gathered to further describe both the assets and weaknesses impacting food security in and around our community, and inform future action. This is not a comprehensive report or discussion of all of the factors that impact food security, nor have we conducted in depth research of all of these factors. However, the report does provide a good starting place for our community to move ***beyond surviving to thriving***, and identifies areas where further work is needed to more fully understand and impact the complex factors that ensure the accessibility, availability, quality, safety and sustainability of our food supply. These goals are of vital importance for sustaining health and quality of life for all individuals.

In general, as well as in Medicine Hat, evidence is beginning to quantify an increasing number of food related problems in our communities. Hunger and poor nutrition have risen, diet-related diseases have proven resistant to traditional educational approaches, and consumption of low-nutrient “fast-food” is increasing, resulting in the escalating incidence of obesity and diet-related diseases like type 2 diabetes. Reliance on international shipping of food has environmental implications. Food retail has been consolidated outside of urban cores resulting in more automobile trips. Centralized purchasing associated with the giant retail model has reduced opportunities for producers to sell their product locally. Both human and economic capital has left rural communities. These communities are showing signs of economic and social stress as agriculture has re-structured and consolidated. Pressures to increase agricultural production have resulted in concerns about water quality and ecosystem health.

Impacting such diverse outcomes requires a systemic approach enabling creation of a framework to support and direct a coordinated, systematic, multi-sectoral effort towards a healthier and more food secure population. The Food Talk initiative, which began approximately 1 ½ years ago, involved an extensive asset mapping process conducted through a series of focus groups, two community building workshops and three networking luncheons, culminating in a Food Talk Workshop that led to the determination of priority areas for action for the participants attending, and the start of a coordinated approach to food security, which is represented in this document.

DATA COLLECTION

Generally, focus groups were facilitated by one facilitator and one recorder. All groups were provided the handout “Understanding Food Security”, which can be seen in the appendices of this document, as well a short introduction to food security at the outset to set the context of the discussion.

Gitta Hashizume, Chaired the Steering Committee for the Food Talk Initiative. The questions (and process) for the focus groups designed by the steering committee were broad open ended intentionally, and all comments, etc. were written down on a flip chart and later transcribed into the data base. The focus groups took approximately forty-five minutes to 1 ½ hours, depending upon the group, and were made up of as few as 3 and as many as 25 participants. The primary focus group facilitator was Emily Burt, with Robbie Fairhurst and her Social Work student, as well as Joanne Smith completing the balance of them. Emily Burt and Molly Hansen Nagel compiled the data in an Access data base according to themes. Marcia Stodalka then adjusted the data into Challenges and Solution tables to create the Food Talk workbook, which was later used to by the Food Talk participants to prioritize the work and develop action plans. This data was then utilized to prepare this summary report.

a. Focus Group Questionnaire

1. Based on your experience, what is in place in our community?
2. What is working well/has value?
3. What are the challenges you have observed?
4. How could we do better?
5. What do you think the next steps should be?
6. How could you or your organization be involved?

b. Focus Groups

Organizations Represented	Number of Participants
Canadian Mental Health Association	4
Crisis Assistance Network	25
Eagle Butte High School	16
Greenhouse Growers	3
Growing Together Prenatal Group	7
Hillcrest School	3
Local Ranchers & Farmers	6
McMan Parent Link Centre	6
Palliser Health Region	8
Park Meadows Estate	9
Medicine Hat Catholic School	20
Musasa House, Level II Women's Shelter	9
REDI	9
Social Work Program, Medicine Hat College	12
Saamis Immigration	12
SEHVP and Bridges	17
Total = 16	Total = 166

Individuals and Groups Represented

College Professors
College Students
Community Members
Environmental Health Inspectors
Family Support Workers
Farmers and Ranchers
Grade School Teachers
Greenhouse Growers
Homeless Individuals
Individuals living on limited income and/or low income
Junior High and High School Students
Mental Health Counselors
New Canadians
Nursing Students
Parents and Caregivers of Young Children
Public Health Administrators
Registered Dietitians and Health Professionals
Seniors
Single Parents
Social Justice Advocates
Social Workers

Themes Identified

Children's and School Programs
Cost of Living and Poverty Action
Culture, Diversity and Sensitivity
Education, Awareness, Media and Marketing
Social & Family Supports
Food Procurement, Production, Processing and Distribution
Housing, Clothing and Resources
Other
Short-Term Emergency Food Relief and Philanthropy/Volunteerism
Sustainable Funding?
Skills and Knowledge
System Change and Multi-sectoral Collaboration
Transportation

RESULTS

In the fall of 2007, the Asset Map, created as a result of the focus groups, was revealed and the *Food Talk* participants attending the working day were asked to prioritize the issues identified by the focus groups and action steps for moving forward. Of the numerous theme areas, the priority themes selected for this collaborative process were: Skills and Knowledge; Education, Awareness, Media and Marketing; System Change & Multi-sectoral Action; and Food Procurement, Production, Distribution, Procurement, Processing. Although the remaining themes are also important, some of them are being addressed via other community groups. For example, Cost of Living and Poverty Action, Emergency Food Relief and Housing, Clothing and Resources & Transportation are being addressed by other networking processes in the community: E.g. Crisis Assistance Network (CAN). Culture, Diversity and Sensitivity were beyond the scope of this workshop without strong representation from the multi-cultural sector, and Children's and School Programs may be best served through existing stakeholders currently working with schools: the City of Medicine Hat Community Worker, the Salvation Army, Moving and Choosing project, Food Connections Association, and Palliser Health Region Nutritionists & Public Health Nurses

To address the remaining four themes, four sub-committees were struck, and action plans initiated with leaders chosen for each group. These Food Talk sub-committees have since met to further develop the action plans. After assessing their individual feasibility, only three of the sub-committees are continuing to move forward. The Skills and Knowledge group disbanded after developing an action plan, and determining that their members did not have the dedicated time to implement these strategies. Hence, their recommendations for action will be reviewed by the Food Talk committee to determine how best this theme can be addressed.

The detailed results of the focus groups are provided in the appendices of this document in sections titled: Appendix IX, c. Summary of Assets, and d. Food Talk Workbook. In the focus groups, participants were asked to identify community resources they viewed as strengths in our communities. These are the Assets, and have been organized under 12 themes:

Priority I	Priority II
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, Awareness, Media and Marketing • Food Procurement, Production and Distribution • Skills and Knowledge • System Change and Multi-sectoral Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's and School Programs • Cost of Living, Poverty Action • Culture, Diversity and Sensitivity • Family Supports • Housing, Clothing and Resources • Short-Term Emergency Food Relief and Philanthropy/Volunteerism • Transportation

DISCUSSION

Impacts of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity has been linked to numerous health and social issues, depending upon the severity and duration, and the particular characteristics of the individual experiencing this: e.g. age (newborn infant, growing child, pregnant woman, and frail elderly), disability, illness, etc. Children in particular experiencing food insecurity, will not only experience social impacts, but their ability to learn is also jeopardized, ultimately affecting their overall education and employment and thereby income, one of the key determinants of health. Although the social and quality of life impacts of food insecurity are difficult to quantify, the health impacts can be more readily identified.

The following health statistics describe health conditions largely affected by nutrition status, and food intake. The Alberta provincial average for low birth weight per 100 live births was 6.09% in 2005 – 2006. Although still lower than the provincial average, for the same period the rate in the Palliser Health Region is increasing at 6.1 %, up from 4.5% the previous year. Lower birth weight is strongly linked to reduced cognitive development, vision, hearing, childhood/adult obesity, learning and behavioral disabilities, etc. not to mention the high cost of health services needed to care for the low birth weight baby over the course of the pre and post-natal period and years following. Maternal nutrition is a strong determinant of birth weight and overall infant health.

Additional health impacts are as follows:

- in 2005 life expectancy in Palliser Health Region for women was 81.46 years and for men 75.70, which in both cases is slightly less than the provincial average of 82.69 years for women and 77.55 for men.
- Hatter's are also more likely to be obese than individuals in other parts of the province with a rate of 18.2%, compared to the province of Alberta at 15.8%, and Canada at 15.5%.
- Medicine Hat also "sports" lower physical activity rates at 43.3%, compared to 53.5% in Alberta, and 51.0 % in Canada.
- In addition, the rate of type 2 diabetes, which is largely related to body weight and lifestyle, is also significantly above the provincial average
- Certain types of Cancer, which are outcomes of low fruit and vegetable intake and overall poorer quality diet as well as obesity, are also higher in this corner of the province compared to the Alberta average.
- Stress and depression resulting from stress of food in-security lead to loss of work and reliance on the illness care system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Enhance current data obtained via the Community Building Asset Mapping process through survey methods, and inventorying community resources. Including additional data, complete Community Food Assessment report and plan for sharing and advocacy, in collaboration with the Food Charter and Education and Awareness sub-committees.
- 2) Examples of information to be gathered include, but are not limited to the following:
 - No. and location of grocery stores
 - No. and location of local growers/farmers who sell direct to the consumer.
 - No. and location of school food programs, and their means of financial sustainability, etc.
 - No. and location of fast food outlets in the community
 - Food Policies within school districts, and other community agencies
 - No. and location of grow your own
 - No. and location of community gardens
 - No. and location of
 - Food pricing information
 - No. and location of farmers participating in the Farmers Market
 - Information about attitudes regarding food security and hunger in this community.
 - No. of individuals accessing low-income food programs and nutrition education services in the community.
- 2) Although all initiatives identified are relevant and valued, due to time constraints of the day, and in order to set realistic, achievable goals, 4 themes were chosen as highest priority. The Food Talk network will be supportive of all actions arising from the twelve themes, but will focus primarily on the following 4 priority areas chosen by the working group.
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 - Food Distribution
- 3) Continue to create opportunities to promote networking and collaboration regarding food security amongst community agencies and citizens, and government.
- 4) Develop an information booklet on community food security assets, and potential solutions to promote better awareness and access. Make this available on the Food Connections web-site, and ensure programs are

identified in the Community Organizations data base hosted by the Volunteer Centre.

- 5) Participate in provincial and national initiatives to address the root causes of food insecurity.
- 6) Continue to partner with the Growing Food Security Network of Alberta, and other community initiatives to share promising practices and collaborate when feasible.
- 7) Establish community partnerships to co-locate services for greater efficiencies and to enhance program opportunities and promote sustainability.

APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

b. Summary of Community Assets

Community assets as identified by Food TALK Focus Group Participants:

Children's and School Programs
School-Based Breakfast Programs
Christ the King Breakfast Program
Funded School Programs (e.g., Healthy Living, Hot Meal etc...)
In-Kind Support and Donations from Local Grocery Stores to Schools
Moving and Choosing Project
School-Based Snack Programs (e.g., Southview School)
School Programs (e.g., River Heights Hot Lunch and Canteen)
Hot Lunch Program
YMCA School and after School Programs
Cost of Living and Poverty Action
Coupon Swap (e.g., Parent Link Centre)
Food Hampers Provided by Various Organizations and Churches
Pot Lucks
CASA Employment and Recruitment Services
Funders and Fundraising Associations
Service Clubs
Culture, Diversity and Sensitivity
Multicultural Society
Saamis Immigration Services

Education, Awareness, Media and Marketing

Big Brothers/ Big Sisters Mentorship Program

Healthy Living Campaigns (e.g., Canadian Diabetes Association)

Newspaper Ads Provide Information and Raise Awareness

Health Watch Segment (e.g., Promotion of Healthy Living and Food Programs)

Newspapers (e.g., Medicine Hat News, The Shopper, etc...)

School Nutrition Policies and Resources (e.g., Palliser Health Region School Nutrition Handbook)

Family and Social Supports

Veiner Centre Provides Food and Social Stimulation and Enjoyment for Seniors and Community Members

Bridges Programs Connects People to Organizations and Services

Social Services

Family Members

Core Association

Dream Centre

Community Health Services

Helping Hands @ Hillcrest

Medicine Hat Regional Hospital

Pastors and Church Representatives

Salvation Army

United Way

Welcome Wagon

Parent Link Centre

Food Procurement, Production and Distribution

Community Gardens

Farmers Market

Canadian Food Grains Bank

Food Fundamentals

Good Food Box Club and it's Volunteers
Greenhouses
Meals on Wheels
Online Grocery Shopping
U-Picks
Corner Stores
Grocery Stores
Bulk Buying

Housing, Clothing and Resources

Medicine Hat Pregnancy and Family Support Centre Mom & Baby Boutique
Government aid
Income Subsidies from Government
Medicine Hat Pregnancy and Family Support Centre
The Post
Value Village
Transitional Housing and Social Housing

Short-Term Emergency Food Relief and Philanthropy/Volunteerism

Food Bank Drop-Off Bins
Local Business Donations
Parent Councils Promote a Healthy School Environment
Donations from Community Groups and Businesses
Free Community BBQ's
Individual leaders, school personnel, "school champions" who provide lunch to kids in need
Volunteer Agencies and Community Volunteers
Champion Centre (e.g., Hot Meal Program)
Christmas Hampers
Churches
Food Bank

Food Hampers, and Christmas Hampers.
Hot Meal Program
Medicine Hat College Food Bank
Red Cross
Shelters (e.g., Phoenix Safe House, Musasa House etc...)
Soup Kitchens
Food Drives
Food Safety Training
Free meals (turkey dinner @ Christmas)
Homeless Shelter
St. Vincent de Paul

Skills and Knowledge

Community Kitchen
Locally Produced Cookbooks
Mywasin Centre Youth Kitchen
South Eastern Alberta Home Visitation Programs (e.g., Best Babies, Building Blocks, Healthy Start)
Teen Kitchen
Snacktivity Programs (e.g., Monday's at Parent Link Centre Parents Offer a Healthy Snack Rotation)
Best Babies Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program Provides Food Vouches and Prenatal Vitamins to those in Need
Healthy Living Program at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital Promotes Health and Well-Being
Love & Logic Parenting Course is Offered by the Parent Link Centre
Public Health Nurses offer Support and Education
Lactation Consultants offer Breastfeeding Support and Education
Nutrition Classes Provide Education and Awareness about Health Eating and Nutrition throughout the Lifecycle
Teachers Educate Students, Parents and Colleagues
Health Link 24-Hour Information Line
Palliser Health Region Community Nutrition Department
Dietitians and Health Professionals Promoting Healthy Weights and Food Security

Doctors and Health Professionals
Food Coordinator (CFCA)
Public Health Inspectors
South Eastern Alberta Home Visitation Programs (e.g., Best Babies, Building Blocks, Healthy Start, Bridges, FASD)
Social Work Student Society

System Change and Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

Community Food Connections Association and Food Programs
Prairie Rose School Division Commitment to Healthy Eating and Promotion of Positive/Healthy School Environments
Crisis Assistance Network and Advocacy Group
Collaboration and Networking Amongst Various Community Organizations (e.g., Community Food Connections Association and Palliser Health Region)

Transportation

Public Transit
Carpooling

APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

c. Summary of Challenges and Strategies: Priority I

EDUCATION/AWARENESS	
Challenges	Strategies
<p>Many people identified they were unaware of many of the current/existing community resources to enhance food security.</p> <p>People found it challenging to determine which charity or organization to support.</p> <p>Terminology of Food Security is difficult to communicate and explain. Need to find a better way to help people understand.</p> <p>Food has many different meanings and uses to people and can provide: stress relief, culture, reward, gift, etc.</p>	<p>Places to help advertise: CES: Use the bulletin Board to post information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College • Posters at workplaces or hand out pamphlets • Door to door petitions and written requests/letters to get more people on board • Host workshops <p>Raising Awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategic and comprehensive plan. • Have an Awareness Week regarding Food Security. • Grassroots: need community people to recognize concerns and buy in to create solutions. • Target Agencies and the grassroots about food security • Increase visually engaging resources: cereal, liquid candy • Distribution system to educate agencies • Organize a 30 hour famine <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education on giving/poverty - Children • Services in place – there are many people don't know about • Businesses that offer healthy foods, low cost foods or deals, etc. • Better food bank packages at grocery stores • Raise social consciousness about the plight of others • Organizations that need funding

Food Production, Processing, & Distribution	
Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of enough plots in the Community Gardens for everyone • Preservatives in foods • Quality food • Lack of “fully fledged Farmers Market” – open all year round, and every day of the week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create or find an existing facility where people could cook, learn, teach. • Increase access to community gardens • Need to get the producers involved • More organic growing locally • Lots of abundant produce from local gardens: Connect that with the person in need or clubs. • Full-fledged Farmers Market • Groups could be formed (clubs) at schools, colleges, organizations, to bulk buy, share groceries, car pool, and advertise. • Drop spot at the College for excess produce • Supports for people that may be coming out of jail • Pick up and drop off for donations • Police, Fireman door to door pickup • Care package membership to Good Food Box • Maybe send coupons to families • Sponsorship for the Good Food Box and other food programs • Good Food Box – offer twice a month, home delivery. • Drive thru for groceries would be great

SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE	
Challenges	Strategies
<p>Many participants identified a lack of knowledge and experience or role modeling related to numerous life skills prevented them from maximizing their food dollar and ability to provide a healthy diet for themselves or their families:</p> <p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting – personal finance management • Where to go if living in poverty or coping with debt to help get out of the situation. • Understanding nutrition information, and avoiding misinformation. <p>Food and Nutrition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to sort out conflicting or confusing nutrition and health information. • Knowing how to prepare foods to avoid relying on fast food or frozen/convenience foods like Kraft Dinner. • Preparation of foods suitable for special diets/illness such as diabetes, etc. • Preparing less familiar foods, and learning to like them. • Food Buying (Bulk) and Storage • Preparing Homemade Baby Food <p>Food Safety:</p> <p>Lack of Resources/Opportunity to enable selves</p> <p>Lack of Time</p> <p>Lack of Motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn about nutrition and acquire cooking/shopping skills • Some participants identified the importance of teaching these skills at home and in school to young people 	<p>Facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create or find an existing facility where people could cook, learn, teach. <p>Education Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands on Cooking Skills • Hands on Baby Food Making • Meal/Menu Planning, grocery planning and food budgeting • Improved labeling / education re: nutrient / label claims • Food safety awareness • Seasonality of Food • Impact of nutrition/healthy eating, and chronic disease awareness • Counter misinformation <p>Classes are accessible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on young people and parents • Target college students on money management, student loans, etc • Increase availability/frequency of Prenatal Class and Baby & You • Omit fees for parenting / prenatal classes do not charge ANYONE • Educate in various ways: E.g. grocery stores, peer counseling, • Use young people to mentor peers • Mentoring- to college students, to young parents • Offer supports such as Child Care so parents of young children can participate. • Target independent daycare rep's to in-service on nutrition and feeding children. <p>Varied Approaches to education and skill development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide self-help resources e.g. How to Prepare... • Lender donate time to teach on money • Offer in-home or individual support/education for those who are uncomfortable in groups. • Dispel myth that healthy eating is too expensive. • Raising awareness on how banks

	<p>function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early interventions on money management• Countering misinformation• Customize to skills/knowledge of group. <p>Cooking Supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insert recipes into the Good Food Box, include information about produce.• Make it easier.
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SYSTEM CHANGE	
Challenges	Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive • Low parent involvement • Begin the work on a Food Charter. • PHR – modeling healthy choices / practices • Community Food Charter with wide community support. • Writing, advocating, lobbying government for increased funding, better school programs, increased low-income wage • More healthier restaurant choices available, identified and cost effective/affordable • Families maybe reported to Children’s Services for being unable to support children • Priorities: youth, dads and moms • Continue the Asset Mapping process and carry it through. Food Solution workshop to carry this forward. • Support for injured persons or individuals dealing / recovering from acute / short term injury or with medical or mobility limitations. • Carry out study to see how much food is required to last • Food tax-everyone give food to food bank-people are made to, so then lots of food to give out • Give food and not money so they don’t buy alcohol or have too many kids & can’t afford it • Improve Workplace... • Conduct surveys • Donations at stores in cash so people can get vouchers to get fresh food • Money needed to be put to social services

Summary of Challenges and Strategies: Priority II:

CHILDREN'S/SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS	
Challenges	Strategies
Healthy Food Programs:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools concession offer poor choices • Lack of program promotion/support in schools • Lunches in schools are not provided or subsidized everyday 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast programs in every school • Snack programs in every school • More and/or improved school-lunch programs • Mandatory school milk programs • In schools, exchange table – children leaved unwanted food on the table for others to eat
Health Education for Everyone:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of practical skill development at schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating younger children – to teach parents / peers / siblings • School newsletters, Parent Link • Meet nutritionist night • Body image (not weight focused) • Increase in school / parent council presentations re: nut/healthy eating/lunches • Parent information packages
Change the School Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excess waste @ schools (suggestion: increase supervision and/or save a lunch program) • Lack of supervision & encouragement to eat well @ school (teachers/aides) • Many have removed the carbonated beverages from machines/schools, but still need to consider the sugar content of other drinks such as Fruitopia. Kids and Parents are catching on, but need the schools to move ahead with nutrition programs and go a little farther. • Regular choices available in vending/candy machines available in schools • 1 day weekly to utilize microwave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive program to make schools healthier. • Involve School Admin – Children – Parents – Teachers resources, education • Adopt a project (Kids classrooms) • Community and internal supports for parent councils • Play first / eat after (reverse lunch) • Increased school board involvement • Timers on vending machine to limit usage • May pay for school services fees/food in advance because of lack of funds at the end of school year • Expand Moving & Choosing • Eliminate vending contracts and find other sources of funding for school programs.
Impact on Families outside of the School	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage children & youth to become more involved adults • Trainer for monitors/teachers re: school lunches/eating • Educating our own kids

CULTURE, DIVERSITY, & SENSITIVITY	
Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse cultures create many multi-cultural concerns due to higher than usual influx due to economic boom re: meat packing plant. Brooks employees are commuting from Medicine Hat. • Different cultures contribute to sensitivities related to communication processes, and awareness of food preparation techniques and traditions. • Language barriers amongst the high influx of new Canadians interfere with food shopping and education opportunities. • When people first arrive in Canada, they have high needs as they have very little material belongings. • Supports for men are lacking such as support groups, cooking groups, etc. Due to schedules, it is difficult to access men. • Lack of language resources for newcomers. • People hesitant to search out & ask for help & hesitant to offer, will they be offended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for Reaching Hard To Reach Families: • Offer free meals • Embrace cultural and ethnic differences. • Empathy for people situations • Cultural Sensitivity training for Canadians • Respect individual rights / family environment / beliefs / values / culture • Targets: • Gear programs towards youth • People who are disabled • Offer more cross cultural info / resources / translators / physical samples / community support workers / improved services / resources for new Canadians • Expand services for new Canadian

HOUSING, CLOTHING, RESOURCES	
Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cooking tools and equipment: • Lack of space for storage for food, lack of freezers, refrigeration • Lack of facilities for cooking • Lack of convenient computer and internet access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people find a place to live will help them be able to cook for themselves. • Promote freezers so can store more food, not running to store as often • Organize a “Kitchen in a box” program • Help people get clothing will leave more money for food

MEDIA & MARKETING	
Challenges	Strategies
<p>Lack of Awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons new to the community do not know what is available. • People in Redcliff do lack awareness <p>Marketing/Media inappropriate messaging of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting kids/families in particular & promoting unhealthy choices • Promotes expensive food choices such as: convenience foods, supplements, natural health products, and meal replacements. • Over exposure to “Body” advertising • Scams “steal’ essential resources (money) from families at times • Food coupons are often for less healthy items • Marketing promotes heavier TV watching and video games, leading to over consumption of less healthy or “junk” foods, reduced physical activity. • Commercial fast food restaurants have very limited choices of healthier, tasty foods, and are also expensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter (such as the Community Food Connections) could go to a wider audience. • Use school bulletins also for promoting. • Create a data base of local food growers/producers/retailers who sell their products locally and make available in hard copy, as well as on line via the Food Connections Web-site. • Utilize Making Health Happen on Cable 10 for promotion opportunities. • Place advertisements in strategic locations, such as Tim Horton’s, for Food Programs. Promote programs. • Use opportunities where people gather for advertising programs and increasing issue awareness. • Examples: Dr’s. Offices, YMCA, Buses, Library, Parent Link. • Year round promotion. • Food Hot-Line – to call for information re: community programs and services. • Electronic newsletter • Food helps – acts as a link- provide food to bring people in. • Add Food Programs to when you NEED help flyer • Increase promotion for health eating/healthy lifestyle • Sharing success programs • PHR news releases...continued story...Community based news • Increase positive media messaging <p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create awareness to the general public not just agencies • Regular citizens, people living on the street, as well as agencies • Targeting “at risk” groups • Email to all students (school emails) • Contact charitable groups – index of needs – distribute to newsletter org.

	<p>Agencies that can help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All agencies • Welcome Wagon • Newcomer's Club
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POVERTY ACTION & COST OF LIVING	
Challenges	Strategies
<p>Poverty determines what we eat</p> <p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of Living - necessities are too expensive • Usually food that can't afford after paying for other living expense • Health food can be more expensive/Fast Food is cheaper Living on a Student Loan = very restricted budget • Market Place: • Healthy Food should be more affordable rather than a supply and demand/ or commodity approach. • Lack of access to sale flyers, etc. • Cost of infant formula <p>Donations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited donations <p>Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Security <p>Young or large families most challenged.</p>	<p>ACTION – rather than just talking about it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved income assistance • Increased earning power - income • Helping people find jobs • Advocate for minimum wage increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government subsidy for basic breakfast items (cereal & milk etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations of food prices (Safeway vs. Superstore) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal coupons • Access and quality food at cheaper rate • Coupling with other programs (i.e.: buying milk get free cereal)

SHORT-TERM/EMERGENCY RELIEF	
Challenges	Strategies
<p>Accessibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services not co-located, hard to get to. • Lack of awareness and cross promotion by short-term and capacity building programs/services limits access for those in need. • Short-term food relief sources are not open on weekends. • Limited free food available requires stringent guidelines to determine eligibility. Result, emergency food sources cannot meet the ongoing need for food for individuals or families who then go hungry. <p>Food Quality & Personal Acceptability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis food sources have limited availability of fresh foods <p>Social Stigma:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals' experience of accessing food from short-term relief/charitable sources is often distressing due to feeling of shame or inadequacy or sense of being judged for needing charity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic in utilization of resources to maximize benefit to those in need, and save on overhead. • Policy that no outdated foods will be issued at charitable food sources. • Policy or practice that ensure the selection of foods available at charitable food sources include more fresh food. • Policy changes that prioritize families with children. • Provide sensitivity training etc. for staff and volunteers who work with charitable programs. • ID cards/advocacy cards can be issued to users of charitable programs so they don't have to go through eligibility process each time. <p>Food Drives to increase capacity of charitable programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase fund-raising and food drives to increase food available to be distributed at no cost. • Make it a community thing to donate • Food drives at schools

SOCIAL & FAMILY SUPPORTS	
Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual lack of time due to working extra jobs, etc. • Less extended family • Less family mealtime – leads to poorer eating habits and increased family stress • Work schedules (multitasking challenges) • Single family (shift work role) • “Latch key” Kids • Shift work results in irregular eating & sleeping schedule, and constant change in family routine • Irregular lifestyle/business makes pre-planning meals difficult • No eating together / increase of family stress • Children who come home to empty home – safety, skills • Lack of motivation to prepare meals = over reliance on fast food. • Depression – contributes to lack of care and concern about food, nutrition, wellness • Addictions interfere with making a living, and are expensive to support, displacing necessities of life. • Stress – leads to poor school performance and drop out. • Using food for comfort • Over reliance on food bank by some makes it difficult for others. • Parenting issues lead to and result in family stress. • People can’t break a cycle without supports • Diet restrictions /affects modeling • Unhealthy dieting, and weight obsessions • Physical and Mental Abuse • Schools: Competition with lunch time/recess & play time 	<p>Organize a mom’s group to share ideas with</p> <p>Make grocery shopping, cooking, storing easier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daycares in grocery stores • Moms/parent helper to push grocery cart or stroller (seatbelt /car seat friendly) or cart friendly baby seats <p>Stores may need to open earlier or open later.</p>

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING	
Challenges	Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs require significant costs for operation including staff, operating costs, volunteer support, etc. • Funding is often short-term creating concerns about the ethics of starting initiatives and not being able to sustain them, or not doing them at all due to unstable funding. • Some participants specifically identified schools as a particular challenge for funding related to food initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding is needed to expand what we are already doing well, but can't meet the demand/need. • Resources (other than direct funding) should also be considered as a viable option. • Sustainable funding/resources would enable programs to be available to everyone. • Some participants identified the importance of reaching the rural areas.

TRANSPORTATION	
Challenges	Strategies
<p>Bussing Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several people felt bussing was expensive at \$2.00 per child. • Difficult for people in Wheel Chairs • Due to the bussing routes/schedules, some programs and services are not accessible. • Often must use a taxi to return home which is even more expensive. • Bussing was time consuming due to routes/transfers, etc. <p>Urban Sprawl:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services tend not to be clustered together making it even more challenging to access them. 	<p>Individual Based Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine grocery lists to share shopping for groceries – save time and reduce no. of times having to travel to the store. • Car Pool for groceries • Use delivery offered by grocery stores <p>Agency Based Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide vouchers for grocery store delivery. • Making things more accessible with programs providing transportation. • Provide vouchers for food or grocery store delivery. <p>Community Based Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a Co-op bus to transport families & groceries • Have maps at stores • Make transportation to essential services easier

APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

d. Community Food Connections Association of South Eastern Alberta

The Community Food Connections Association was formed in 1996, becoming a Registered Non-profit Society in 2002, with a mission to “promote food security for all people in South Eastern Alberta”. The organization is comprised of representatives from the community at large, various community organizations, and established linkages to the provincial Growing Food Security Network. In addition to significant in-kind contributions from Community Nutritionists of the Palliser Health Region, Community Nutrition Program, funding for staff and specific programs has been obtained via the Action for Health grants made available through the Palliser Health Region since 1998. Short-term funding has also been received from time to time for specific projects from various sources such as Healthy Alberta Communities, Canadian Diabetes Association Keep Your Body in Check Program, etc. This Food Assessment was sponsored through a grant from Healthy Alberta Communities, and contributions from the Palliser Health Region, and the provincial Growing Food Security Network.

VISION: The vision of the Community Food Connections Association is that “ All People, At All Times, Have Access To And Ability To Utilize Nutritious, Safe, Personally Acceptable And Culturally Appropriate Food.”

MISSION: Community Food Connections Association and partners are committed to a comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative approach towards the achievement of food security through the development of partnerships, promotion of awareness, networking, education, support and the impact of policy development.

The Food Connections Association is dedicated to both the achievement of community food security as well as the prevention of food crisis and individual hunger. This approach is based on those of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion: building personal skills, strengthening community action, building healthy public policy and creating supportive environments (including the general principles of food safety that are ensured by monitoring and enforcement activities).

Current projects sponsored by the Community Food Connections Association include: Community Kitchens, Good Food Box Club, Community Gardens, Food FUN-damentals, and recently, the Food Talk initiative. Whereas these earlier programs primarily target individual capacity in achieving food security, the Food Talk initiative addresses issues in the economic, environmental, agricultural, and social aspects of the food system.

e. **Food Talk Representatives** (alphabetical order)

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