

Making Food Matter Report from the Food Forum 2003

**Connecting and creating food resources
in our region
Held May 7, 2003
Victoria City Hall**

How does food matter to you and to your community?
Who else is working on local food access issues?
Come and share your thoughts, knowledge and experience.

Panel discussion

Five diverse perspectives on food

- Mary Hayes, Tsartlip Nation – Rural Community
- Dr. Kelly Barnard, Deputy MHO, VIHA – Health Policy and Planning
- Kim Carver, Esquimalt Neighbourhood House – Urban Community
- Rebecca Jehn, Local Farmer
- Judy Brownoff, CRD Chair – Local Government

Launch of the first Capital Region *Food Resources Directory!*

Followed by Small Action Group discussions:

- Food Projects
- Health and Food
- Local Economic Development through Food

“Making Food Matter” is the second in a series of community discussions on creating and connecting food resources in our community. The purpose of the forum is to create awareness about existing resources and to discuss and generate opportunities for increasing access to nutritious, safe and sustainable food resources in our region.

The Food Forum Series is hosted and supported by: CRFAIR (Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative Roundtable) Vancouver Island Health Authority, GroundWorks Learning Centre, Lifecycles, Community Council, Esquimalt Neighbourhood House, City of Victoria, and concerned citizens.

Summary of Evaluation of Making Food Matter 2003

"I feel that we need to have more of these forums and that we need to involve more policy makers."

Below are primary themes that emerged (often repeatedly) through the evaluation of this Forum. Many people observed that opportunities to connect and network are extremely valuable. A number of participants suggested the importance of linking electronically to exchange information and ideas.

Primary themes:

- I. The significance of local production and consumption of locally produced food
- II. The value and importance of connecting, networking and strengthening links
- III. The need for ongoing forums and continued learning – desire to understand issues and concerns in more depth
- IV. The desire to take action – either in the work place or community – connecting local groups (and farmers), influencing policy and affecting change in local institutions, particularly local government and schools

"I have learned more about the value of food sustainability, policy development and collective efforts and partnerships."

"I feel passionate, energized, inspired, validated and heard!"

Overall, the evaluations stated that the Forum was both positive and constructive and that there is a need to move forward and create change. A common suggestion for future direction was to continue to strengthen the links between individuals and organizations and to generate future opportunities for further learning and the planning of actions.

As this is only a summary of key points, if you would like a full record of all comments made please contact Lorie Hrycuik, tel: 744-5123.

Introduction and opening of the Forum

Emily MacNair, member of the Food Forum working committee

Last September CRFAIR and Groundworks hosted the first Food Forum. It was intended to provide a chance for organizations to learn about the food resources we currently possess as well as to identify opportunities for addressing challenges in moving toward a sustainable and healthy food supply in our region.

Mapping was used as a tool for groups to identify their geographical locations and also to discuss assets, gaps and challenges. Possibilities began to emerge and ideas were generated – it was immediately obvious that this dialogue had great potential.

Often organizations had not had the time or opportunity to explore which food resources existed in their own municipality, or in the municipalities next door. This led to the suggestion for the development of a Food Resource Directory – for the knowledge and use of those providing such resources.

CRFAIR (with support and assistance from Groundworks, Community Council, and VIHA) has developed the first such guide for our region. It has fantastic potential to grow – although the listing includes 53 groups, there are other services and resources that could be added to future editions.

I was the fortunate soul who contacted over 75 organizations and agencies throughout the region to develop this directory. In doing so, I had the opportunity to hear the thoughts of many providers of food resources about the current state of our food system. I would like to share a few of things that I heard.

Organizations providing food resources are currently unable to meet the needs of those who require assistance. Individuals working with these organizations are finding this situation increasingly stressful. A handful of those contacted about the directory declined to be listed, concerned that this would merely increase the number of people seeking their services.

Some people observed that there is simply no time, particularly for those involved in emergency food provision, to stand back and consider how to improve the situation. For those facing the challenge of turning away hungry individuals and families, information sharing and forming new partnerships, seems a distant second priority to the immediate challenge of insufficient resources.

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On the bright side, many organizations recognize the possibilities for surmounting (or at least ameliorating) these difficulties through cooperation and collective effort. Those working to provide (and to grow) food in this region, care deeply about the health and well-being of their communities. This commitment means that, even in times of difficulty, many agencies wish to connect with others, to share information and to seek ways to innovate and improve their resources.

Organizations providing food are looking for ways to increase their donations as well as the percentage of local produce they offer. While the source of food is frequently less of a concern than simply ensuring that food is available, some agencies articulate very clearly their feelings that food sources are inseparable from community health and adequate food provision.

There are already a handful of agencies that have made this a priority and have found ways to partner with local growers, wholesalers and/or organizations that provide them with locally produced food.

On the other end of the food spectrum from food provision, are those organizations assisting the producers of food – locating land, start-up funds and markets for local farmers. With such a range of food-related organizations operating across the region, it seems certain that mutually beneficial relationships can be formed and that these partnerships will become the solution to many of the problems with our food system.

On this note, I would like to urge all of you to view today's event as part of a process. We are not here just to listen to our panel and take home new information. We are also here to form working groups and to take steps toward creating lasting change in our food system. The small action groups (that will form after the panel) may view their meeting as the first in a series of meetings that will actually generate actions, meet challenges and create new opportunities.

Summaries of Panelist Contributions

Kim Carver – Outreach Worker at the Best Babies program at Esquimalt Neighborhood House

Best Babies is an Outreach Program that promotes healthy pregnancy, and healthy birth outcomes. Nutrition plays a significant role in providing these services and food security, or lack thereof, has an impact on nutrition.

Esquimalt Best Babies undertakes annual surveys of the participants in their program. Of interest is that participants clearly indicate that Food Security is a major issue. Out of 104 participants, 89 stated that they did not have sufficient food – citing a tight budget and not enough money as the reason. This is 86% of participants attending, compared with the provincial average of 33% for other pregnancy outreach programs. The cost of living in Victoria could well be significant in contributing to this average.

The Best Babies program has been in operation for 14 years. The program has been involved in the first level of Food Security since its onset. It provides:

- prenatal vitamins
- nutritious groceries and vouchers for groceries
- nutritious snacks and meals at all our gatherings
- information and education around healthy eating
- and referrals to Food Banks and other sources of food in the Community.

The Neighborhood House provides a bread cupboard with bread and baked goods, available to all citizens of Esquimalt, including Best Babies participants. In addition, the House operates an Emergency Food Cupboard – with dry and canned goods – for citizens of Esquimalt and Best Babies participants.

The House is now venturing further into Food Security, looking at approaches that are sustainable beyond the finite period of time that women are involved with the program. We are always open to new ideas and partnerships!

A few examples of initiatives currently engaged with:

Expanding Familiarity With A Variety of Foods – Some people's food repertoires are quite narrow. A "Weird Food of the Week" was started with the intent to try to introduce one new food into our weekly lunch, and encourage people to try it.

Food Preparation Skills – Another common challenge is that people lack experience with cooking -- preparing economical and nutritious food. Each month a Cooking Show is provided to demonstrate how to prepare three different items, allowing people to see how they're made, from start to finish. The food is eaten for lunch and then recipes and groceries are sent home with participants. This program has our highest monthly attendance.

Good Food Box & Community Market – The House acts as a drop off and pick up point for the Good Food Box for in our area. About 20 of the 45 women in our program use the weekly grocery vouchers they receive towards the Good Food Box.

Esquimalt has a Community Market June through September and Best Babies vouchers are now accepted as currency. This will support local producers and provide fresh and economical foods.

Some pending initiatives:

- **Community Garden and Food Preservation Skills**
Land has just been acquired for garden space, courtesy of the Military Family Resource Centre. There are participants interested in gardening – to provide food for our program lunch and to take food to their families. Dehydrating and canning workshops will be organized for the fall.
- **A Community Freezer Space**
This has been identified as a need because many participants have little or no freezer space and the House is also limited –options are being explored.
- **Parent Advisory**
One of our goals is to have participants taking a more active role in food security issues. A group of participants are interested in forming a Collective Kitchen, preparing the meal for Monday group and taking food home.
- **Food Based Business:**
There is discussion on creating an opportunity to have participants producing a specialty food product for sale or to starting a food-based business. Such an initiative would provide food, employment training and some economic independence, for both the program and participants.

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Mary Hayes – Coordinator of the Tsartlip Nation Brighter Futures Program and a member of the Tsartlip Nation.

Brief background:

- The Tsartlip community is located on the west side of the Saanich Peninsula near Brentwood Bay
- There is an on reserve population of 560 members
- On reserve services include a Health Centre, elementary school, adult education centre and band administration and health services offices
- Approximately 40% of the adult population is reliant on Social Assistance and many of our families live below the poverty line.

I coordinate the Brighter Futures Program which has 4 areas that are mandated by Health Canada:

- child development
- healthy babies
- injury prevention
- parenting

I also oversee the funding for the CPNP that provides weekly home delivery of milk and a monthly \$10 **Good Food Box**. In March 2001 we began a Good Food Bag program for the expectant moms in the community. In March 2002 we joined with a group housed in the SWAG office that had started a Good Food Box program.

Our first month we packed 36 boxes and the program has grown over the year to include all four Saanich bands. Approximately 210 boxes are distributed in the four communities each month. The Good Food Box is especially important in our communities where many people do not have transportation, produce at the nearest grocery store is expensive and local farm markets are not on bus routes.

We hope the Good Food Box will make a difference in the lives of people in our community who are dealing with diabetes and those who are at risk of diabetes. The Public Health Nurse who serves our elementary school stated that she has already seen an increase in the number of children bringing fruit in their lunches.

In 2003 we received confirmation of funding for a 3-year Health Promotion Project -- the Saanich Revitalization Project – through Aboriginal Health.

The project will include:

- a monthly cultural kitchen
- up to 20 gardens
- development of a learning pavilion on the Mayne Island reserve

The project is based on the Saanich Year calendar. This calendar is centred on the traditional life cycle of our people and is based on food gathering patterns from a traditional lifestyle. Each month the **cultural kitchen** will teach the preparation of one traditional style food dish and one conventional style. Participants will learn other skills including canning, dehydrating, planning and budgeting.

During the last two years of the project, up to 20 households will create **raised-bed gardens**. We are partnering with LifeCycles for the education and some supplies. We hope the households will feel a sense of empowerment by learning the skills for growing their own food. Composting will be taught and information will be shared about traditional medicines and herbs used by the Saanich people.

Our long term goals for the community include:

- Orchards in the community for ongoing opportunities for fresh food
- Adding more staples to the Good Food Box (dairy, baking supplies)
- Continuing to empower members of the community as they build their skills
- Continuing to create local access to healthy food in the community -- a “hand up” not a “hand out” approach.

Rebecca Jehn – farmer of organic produce in Saanich

No one has yet talked about the importance of food - a celebration and a source of pleasure. Food adds new dimensions to our social events and marks the seasons with its growing calendar. Food also means community – it brings people together to eat, but it also brings together local farmers at markets and through supportive organizations and events.

There is currently a strong community of farmers in this region and there are a number of ways that farmers are supporting food access such as:

- Farmers markets
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Distribution agencies
- Farm stands
- Grocery stores

There are a number of excellent organizations working to improve the circumstances for local farmers and to strengthen links between food needs and producers. Some of these organizations provide mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities and others link young farmers with land or provide marketing and other kinds of assistance for farmers.

These organizations include:

- Lifecycles and Groundworks - offer apprenticeship and entrepreneur programs for young farmers
- LLAFF (Linking Land and Future Farmers) – assists organic farmers seeking land to connect with land owners, also has a tool-lending library
- SIOPA - Southern Vancouver Island chapter of the Canadian Organic Growers
- WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities in Organic Farms) – helps people wishing to volunteer on organic farms internationally
- SOIL
- Farmers Markets – provide places to sell local produce and point of contact between producers and consumers
- Haliburton Community Organic Farm – Cordova Bay farming project will soon provide land for organic farmers and community education about organic farming and food

For farmers to be able to provide sustainable and affordable food, their major requirements are access to land and water. Access to affordable agricultural land continues to be a barrier. An additional requirement is for the public to understand the value of fresh local produce and the real costs of food production. This understanding is definitely growing within our region, but it does mean changes in eating habits – drawing the connections between seasonal and regional foods.

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Dr. Kelly Barnard - Deputy Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Island Health Authority

Food security impacts the health of our population in many ways. There is an increasing burden of illness occurring across the country. We are seeing increasing incidence of obesity and chronic disease. Evidence is supporting that the determinants of health, of which access to food is embedded, can have a significant burden on ill health. The health authority has an opportunity to create partnerships in addressing food security.

One of the key strategies is to focus on health promotion and build capacity of the community and the individuals living in it; the overall health of the population will improve. The Health Authority can support food security in our region in various ways. Currently staff is actively involved in building community capacity and working in food action projects, as well as identifying how to move the region towards adopting a food policy.

There is also a commitment within the Health Authority to ensure that food and access to food does impact the health of the residents living in our authority. There is an opportunity to make the efforts seamless from the grassroots level food action projects, to the focus on sustainable agriculture, and to food policy. The Provincial Health Officers Council has identified food security as a priority this year and will be meeting in the fall to identify how best to address it.

The Health Authority has the ability to monitor the health of the population and to provide important information that can support and guide responses at the community and provincial level to food insecurity. This allows the community to identify the trends and impacts from changes in government and public policies and creates opportunities to take action more quickly in response to this data.

Overall, the health of the population will improve with greater access to safe, nutritious and environmentally friendly food.

Judy Brownoff – Saanich Councillor and the Chair of CRD

Importance of Food & the Food Supply - Sustainability

Security of the food supply is an important element of a sustainable community – and a sustainable society. The security of our food supply, as well as the security of other resources is something that we can't take for granted.

We are seeing the implications of global unrest, international trade agreements, climate change and so on. These factors may require the re-thinking of our approaches to resource management – including water, energy, and food. This has significant implications for local government – and raises a number of questions about the priority we place on future management of our resources.

Role of Local Governments

Local government can play a number of roles with regard to the food supply. The most significant role is protecting the land base for agriculture / food production. In addition, local government can impact the allowable uses of agricultural land. For example, local governments are responsible for land use planning, growth management, and provision of water and sewer services and creation of economic development strategies. Some of these roles are performed in partnership with other levels of government.

Land Use Planning

- Preparation of plans, such as the Official Community Plans (OCP), which establish how lands within the community will be used
- OCPs supporting the use of land for farming operations must differentiate between agricultural land uses and rural uses
- Protection of the land base for food production requires a commitment to maintain sufficiently large land parcels to accommodate agricultural operations
- Over the last half-century, the CRD has seen much of its farmland subdivided into smaller and smaller holdings with much of the land being used for non-agricultural purposes

Policy Development

- A defining feature of government, including local government, is the ability to establish public policy
- Even with the provincial agricultural land reserve, farming operations require some form of policy “protection” from neighbouring land uses
- A common problem is new residential developments adjacent to a farm operation – people are attracted to the pastoral qualities of the rural

- environment, but are intolerant of the sounds and smells of food production
- Residential and commercial development in areas adjacent to agricultural lands also raises the cost of land, due to speculative pressure
 - Communities need to give careful thought to adjacent uses and the interface between farms and homes
 - While the regional growth strategy contains strategic initiatives related to the protection of rural land, the RGS is not a regulatory document and it is up to each municipality to develop and enforce adequate policies

Land Use Zoning

With respect to agricultural uses, the zoning bylaw may determine:

- the *intensity* of use allowed (e.g. large-scale greenhouses, or pasture land?)
- the *range* of uses permitted (e.g. how many “non-food” uses are acceptable?)
- the *minimum lot size* permitted (an important element to ensuring adequate land available for farm uses, rather than just large-lot residential)
- the location and extent of *related commercial uses* allowed (e.g., farmers markets, agri-tourism establishments, etc.)
- signage – size limits, illumination, placement on the site.

Municipal Servicing:

- Local governments can influence food production through policies on water distribution and cost
- Access to inexpensive water supplies was a key issue raised through the Agricultural Strategy for the Saanich Peninsula completed in 1997. The CRD has been managing this resource through major projects – such as the raising of the Sooke reservoir, and water conservation policies
- In addressing demands for municipal water the challenge in subsidizing is: who should pay and how much
- In communities, such as the Okanagan, the residential customers subsidise the agricultural/irrigation -- this requires the support (or at least the absence of active revolt!) of the region’s taxpayers.

Economic Development

- Partnerships between CRD and Greater Victoria Enterprise Development Society – to develop a regional economic development strategy (component of the Regional Growth Strategy)
- Growth strategy recognizes the contribution of agriculture to region’s character and economy – calls for increasing economic activity in agriculture, including high-value and specialised farming
- The fragmented nature and cost of farmland in the region makes it difficult to carry out land-extensive operations such as grain production

- Our advantages lie in being close to the local consumer and the tourist, which provides opportunities for market gardens, agri-tourism, organic foods etc.
- The real challenge is moving from good idea – to actual implementation.

Challenges Faced by Local Government

- Competing demands – for services, land, and subsidies, etc.
- Public support for farming confused at best – although people like the idea of farmland – because it evokes certain bucolic images – the support gets “softer” when it comes to actual operations – such as fertilising, spreading manure, driving slow vehicles along the road, even having people drive up to your farm market.

What can local government do to help you?

- Develop & enforce agricultural policies
- Work with senior levels of government to support the food industry
- Provide needed services & infrastructure
- Establish land use regulations that minimize land use conflicts – but respond to the needs of farm operators
- Undertake and/or support, working groups, analytical reports, and plans
- Work with people involved in food production to ensure that our plans, policies and programs respect your needs and concerns.

What can you do to help local government?

Share your concerns, and communicate your benefits, to the public – local governments can't create markets, change consumer demands, or build public support. The public – and their government representatives – is more willing to make necessary tradeoffs when they understand and support the reason. The agricultural industry needs to help build public support.

Elements beyond the control of local government

- Trade agreements
- Commodity trading procedures and policies
- International markets
- Groundwater – *no one regulates this within BC*
- Consumer preferences (can't create or deny demand)
- Local government is a “creature of the province” – cannot enact legislation which is “ultra-vires”, or beyond our legislated authority. However, we do have the ability to work with the province and enter into partnerships to accomplish goals.

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Small group discussions

Following the panel speakers, forum participants broke into small discussion and action planning groups based on topics from the panel. The topics were: Food Projects, Health and Food and Community Economic Development. Each group had just over an hour to identify potential initiatives, the necessary steps for success and next steps. Each group defined the structure of their dialogue and as such, the groups went about their discussions in a different ways. Below are summaries of each group discussion.

The following questions were asked of each group:

1) Food Projects

- How do we increase the capacity of local projects to generate and distribute food?
- How do we increase support and linkages between groups in this region?

Health and Food

- How can we create more opportunities for providing healthy local, food to our community?
- What are the obstacles for this?

Local Economic Development and Food

- What supports and policies are in place to support local food production and distribution?

2) What can and will you do?

3) What have you learned?

Food Projects (Group 1) Facilitator: Michele Recorder: Christina

Immediate solutions:

- Access surplus food from suppliers and restaurants
- More opportunity for dialogue between groups including the public ie: steering working group, monthly meetings, web based communication
- Possibility of list serve for ongoing communications
- Include large institutions in events b/c they own land (need access to land)
- Need for safe-secure food sharing spaces

Potential new initiatives:

- More local garden projects

- More education/advocacy and more media involvement
- Information sharing is key
- Community celebrations around food / community potlucks
- Empowerment of those using these services/programs – community ownership has to be part of any new initiative
- The programs that work are still here, other ones that don't work aren't
- Is there infrastructure/grants/proposals for groups to share _ time coordinator – coordinate administrative infrastructure on food related issues
- Write a grant for the next SCPI funding?
- Partnerships

Barriers & Issues:

- Religion – having to go to a church and the charity model
- Need to move away from the emergency and crisis approach to sustainability and education
- Fear and shame of the clients
- Transportation and time – problems with child care and accessibility
- Not all solutions will fit each group -- specific needs

Policy and local government:

- Need for more “political” approach to food issues – find people to champion issue
- Advocate at the local level
- Red flag system – when there is a food/land issue we need to work collectively and organize.

Long term goals:

- Need to have long-term vision growing our own food
- Pull the community together/ look for donations
- Involvement of more institutions – university, churches, schools.

Food Projects (Group 2)

Facilitator: Linda

Recorder: Kim

Question: How do we increase the capacity of local food projects to generate and distribute food?

- Cooking show “workshop” for agencies - recipe ideas
- Are school kitchens accessible to other groups?
- Link food projects with school boards, food security curriculum, and teachings
- Shift from dependency food security eg. good food box program
- Gardening, food prep, storage, composting, etc
- Fruit trees in school yards
- Expansion of fruit tree project link to community centres
- Develop corporate and media partners
- Hold mall parking lot demos



- Apple day festival Celebration of Foods (had identifiers of brands of apples)
- Processing to more “storable” form ie: juice, apple sauce, drying
- Canning, drying and skills
- In season resources, share, distribute
- Linking wasted food composting

To Do:

- Visits to “Cooking Show”
- Visit LifeCycles Fruit Tree Project
- Connect with community centres
- To support/expand Fruit Tree Project
- Celebrate foods seasonally in our programming
- Accessing seniors – what to do with various foods
- “Traveling” Cooking Show going to different groups
- Website – Food Guide on ‘Line’ and also part that indicates what’s in season and how to prepare
- Contribute extra money to Good Food Box to support the project
- Skill development workshop – pay people to come to do on site
- Bring back to others – enthusiasm, resources
- Feeding kids, healthy info/workshops

Community Economic Development: (Group 3)

Facilitator: Tim

Community Assets - Resources & Expertise

- Space (physical office) meeting rooms, computers and learning centres
- Community gardens and land for gardens
- Community and commercial kitchens – food prep skill building opportunity
- Tools (gardening) – refrigeration (large)
- Youth programs for training and employment on food and agriculture
- Food cupboards for individuals and families (basic needs)
- Meals for those in need
- Volunteers and donations (money, food, time)
- Temporary housing (men, women, children)
- Connections between people and organizations
- Neighbourhood based program delivery approach and school partnerships
- Good food box

Gaps/Needs

- Volunteer insurance coverage
- Access to more nutritional / high quality food . . .not just processed foods
- More education about nutrition
- Shift focus from emergency food relief – to sustainable solutions
- Education of public about needs (need exists year-round, not just at Christmas) and encourage, request support
- Increased awareness of available resources – networking
- More community gardens in urban environments
- Societal change, lifestyle – encourage backyard gardens
- Leadership to organize and mobilize from the regional perspective (creating a framework to bring volunteers together to for actions)
- SLP only happens 7 months per year
- Transportation issues to access food (particularly with young families)
- Gaps in “walk” able grocery stores
- Seasonal fluctuation of food availability could be dealt with better
- Not enough storage or pickers for over abundance of food

Vision (Feedback)

- Organize people (backyard gardens), community gardens, neighbourhood farms, etc – to generate more food locally
- Community markets for produce
- More community dinners at community centres (with educational themes)

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- Central locations for preservation – canning, freezing
- Partnering of organizations (less territorial) to serve those in need
- Education on how to create nutritious meals, give meal ideas, etc.
- Create a meaningful vision so people understand how to contribute
- Involve experts in food preparation – intergenerational partnerships

Next Steps

- Network / share resources / regular forums to discuss solutions
- Need for a coordinating body to ensure it happens (“a project manager”)
- Encourage involvement from those receiving aid / empower people
- Do surveys to assess needs – door-to-door, mail pamphlets
- Integrate resources . . . not just food issues, but related issues
- Get stories out – success and inspiring
- Campaign – what are key points or goals – what we buy into and will promote eg: school lunch programs (need to sustain)
- Campaign to support what we are already doing – more nutritious food
- Strengthen rural/urban connections

Ideas

- Target – Early/Preschool lunch and food programs
- Include government sectors in strategy / solutions (region and province)
- Advocacy to tie together strategies on housing, food and services
- Use of university to assist with research
- Models – Winnipeg – “lots” / food banks and Saskatoon – backyard programs “Grow A Row” (Nursery)
- Growing Victory Garden
- Engaging various projects (Polis at UVic etc)
- Access assets/seniors!
Mentors
- Downtown Working Group (monthly)
- Pressure/Profile on Government “More”
- Scale-up by working together

Region-wide Strategy

- STRATEGY TO ENGAGE WEALTH (both physical energy and monetary)
Advocacy at Regional (Provincial) level for expenditure priorities of Health Authority
- Support School/Day Care Lunch Programs.
- Scale Up Fruit Tree/Grow a Row Potential!!! (Build pilot to a regional wide framework)

Health and Food (Group 4)

Facilitator: Lorie

Recorder: Jen H

Question: How can we create more opportunities for providing local healthy food to our community?

Summary:

1. Right to Food
2. Connect people to food
 - a. Access to land
 - b. Education and awareness
 - c. Skills and knowledge
 - d. Safe and nutritious food (organic)
 - e. Social connection
3. Schools and Recreation Centers
 - a. policy and grassroots
 - b. lead by example
 - c. school board commitment

Issues & Concerns:

- Poverty – right to food and health for all
- Genetically engineered foods
- Determinants, resources and capacity
- Access to land (for gardens and growing food)
- School board – need to connect kids with healthy food (nutrition programs)
- Food culture and low spending on food

Next steps...

- Urban agriculture – (land, government and private support, education)
- Kitchens in public buildings available to the community
- Cultural and social change -- more gardens, knowledge about cooking
- Emotional energy, many people simply trying to survive from day to day
- Schools – vending machines, meal programs not always nutritious, kids influence families and drive food purchases
- Gardening – need to appeal through value-added – ex social event, child care – anything that's offered should provide social connections

Commitment:

- Need a combined effort: grassroots and policy, coordinated at multiple levels to move forward
- Parent Advisory councils, CRD, VIHA, University, student clubs, US!, school districts, Healthy Schools

Next Steps:

Through the forum evaluations and feedback from small working groups, it is clear that there is interest and there is momentum in the community to continue working on food access issues for our region.

The forums are a part of CRFAIR's strategic plan to address the larger challenges of food security for the region. CRFAIR is in the process of refining its plan to support food for all in our region through the creation of a food policy or food charter.

In order to ensure that the momentum generated thus far continues toward action, subsequent forums will be held in the coming months. Please consider attending these forums which will address each of the following primary themes which have emerged as priorities:

- 1) Food Policy
- 2) Focus on schools
- 3) Food Production and community economic development

Your ideas and energy are vital in working towards creating a food secure region!

The Next Food Forum will be on 24 September 2003

Time: 2:00-4:30pm

Place: Victoria City Hall Ante-Chamber

Look out for more forums to come in November 2003 and more in 2004!

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