



## The Stop's After School Program Evaluation Results

2011-2012

### **Program Overview**

The Stop's After School Program (ASP) is a food program for kids aged 8 to 12 that runs three days a week for a period of 18 weeks. Every year, there is a fall and winter session offered. The After School Program is aimed at developing healthy, food literate, socially conscious and empowered young citizens.



Specific objectives of the program include:

- To increase kids' knowledge, skills and behaviours around healthy food;
- To increase kids' knowledge and capacity to take effective action on poverty and food systems issues; and,
- To support the positive physical, social and intellectual development of kids in the After School Program.

In addition to the After School Program, The Stop offers a special weekly program for ASP graduates where they can meet up with their old friends to cook and garden and further develop their healthy food knowledge and skills. The Stop also hosts a special cooking night for parents of After School Program participants every month. Finally, The Stop runs special March Break and Summer Programs when the regular After School Program is not running. All of these complimentary programs share the objectives of the After School Program.

### **Program Outcomes**

Each session, all of the After School Program kids are interviewed during their first and last week of programming using identical surveys. The purpose of the surveys is to capture how the program has changed their attitudes towards eating healthy food, cooking, gardening and physical activity and what new knowledge they have gained.

This year, the average scores of the knowledge portion of the survey increased from 50% (18.5/37) in the pre-survey to 83% (30.8/37) in the post-survey.

Out of the 24 participants in the After School Program who completed final evaluation surveys in 2011-12:

- 95.8% like cooking more since being in the After School Program.
- 79.2% enjoy doing physical activity more since coming to the After School Program.
- 100% learned how to prepare a healthy meal in the After School Program.
- 95.8% made new friends in the After School Program.
- 95.8% told us that they had learned new things about planting and gardening in the program. This was a significant outcome of the program because out of the 16 participants who completed a pre-survey at the start of the After School Program, 11 of them had never helped to plant or take care of a vegetable garden before and only 5 had experience with vegetable gardening.
- The number of participants who understood the concepts of local and organic more than doubled between the start and the the end of the program as did those who felt that they could make a difference in the situation of people in Toronto facing food insecurity.

A final evaluation for the Graduate Program was conducted:

- When asked how much they liked coming to the Grad Program, 8/9 participants told us they "Loved it!" and 1/9 thought "It was OK."
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being no more confident and 10 being much more confident, participants rated their increase in confidence in the kitchen as an 8.8/10.
- 6/9 participants are cooking more at home now.
- 8/9 are eating a healthier diet because of their participation in the After School Program and the Grad Program. And the reason that the one remaining participant gave for *not* eating a healthier diet was "I'm already underweight!"

Parent Night participants also completed an evaluation:

- One parent told us that what they like best about Parent Nights was: "having a night out as a family that we couldn't afford otherwise, with babysitting and food combined. And making new friends."
- Another told us that that they enjoyed: "mingling with some of the parents and having fun with my daughter and learning some tips about healthy eating."

- The most important things parents had learned included how to identify harmful products, the importance of fruits and vegetables, the nutrients that each food has, different cooking techniques, how to properly handle a knife, to check nutritional labels on food, how to reduce transfats, sugars and carbohydrates, and how to compost with worms (one parent said that they were now motivated to get their own compost bin) and about making healthy breakfasts for kids.
- 9/11 participants had improved their diet because of coming to Parent Nights at The Stop. The changes they made included making more vegetable salads that included nuts, choosing foods that are high in fibre, eating more vegetable and whole wheat bread, eating less meat and not buying fast food.

## **Some Important Feedback**

The final After School Program survey also had some additional questions about what the kids liked best about the program, what they would change about it and what they considered to be the most important things they had learned in the program.

70% of the kids mentioned all aspects of cooking as part of what they liked the best about the program. Other more specific favourite things mentioned included playing outside, the quinoa salad, gardening (especially harvesting), making homemade healthy pizzas and baking healthy versions of classic desserts like brownies. One kid told us: "I liked learning the healthy cooking because I learned a lot of recipes I never knew before and probably would never have known about."

Ideas from the kids of how they would improve the program if they were in charge included:

- Serve more children's food.
- Make the space more air-conditioned when the hot weather hits.
- Have a bigger kitchen.
- Have more sports equipment so people can have more fun.
- Have more free time.
- Have less free time.
- Cook every day instead of only some of the time.
- Have the weekly schedule on the board so they can know ahead of time what is happening.
- 4 participants did not have anything to suggest, because they thought it was all good already!

Participants told us the most important things they had learned in the After School Program:

- That not all people living in poverty are the stereotype that they are addicted to something or crippled.
- How to plant plants naturally without chemicals.
- How to eat better and how to harvest and plant things.
- How to transplant.
- About the basic necessities for all people.
- Vermicomposting.

### **What the After School Program Kids Had to Say ...**

At the end of each session of the After School Program, the answers that the kids provided during their final interviews demonstrate significant increases in knowledge and understanding in the areas of cooking, gardening and poverty and food systems issues. They also show more positive attitudes towards healthy eating and an increased sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy to make a change on issues that they feel are important.

Here are some quotes provided by a group of participants in the winter program during their final interviews!

NAME: Laura

Q. What do you like best about gardening?  
A. Planting the seed because you know it will grow.

Q. Do you feel that as a young person you could make a real change in the situation of some people in Toronto not having enough to eat?  
A. Yes, because I'm learning things. I can tell people why bad food is bad and why good food is good.





NAME: Gavin

Q. Can you think of a food that is not healthy?

A. Twinkie. Because it's full of grease and fat and I bet if you took the filling out and left it in the sun, it would stay there for a very long time!

Q. Do you feel that as a young person you could make a real change in the situation of some people in Toronto not having enough to eat?

A. Yes, because we are the next generation of voters.

Quote: "How old do I need to be to get a job here?"

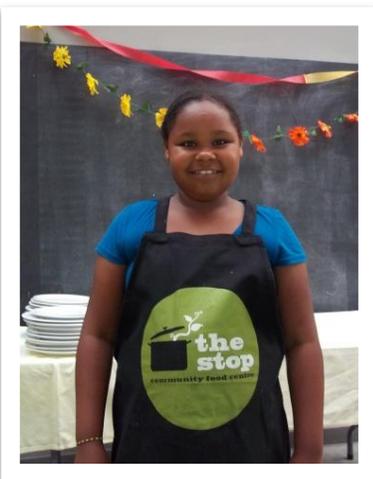
NAME: Russell

Q. What was your favourite part of the After School Program?

A. Cooking healthy foods, making salads and talking about healthy foods.

Q. What was the most important thing that you learned in the After School program?

A. To say "knife behind" in the kitchen so you don't stab anybody.



NAME: Michelle

Q. What can you do to help make sure that everyone in Toronto has enough healthy food to eat?

A. Become the Prime Minister!

Q. If you wanted to make a recipe with chicken in it, what steps would you take to make sure not to contaminate your food and make yourself sick?

A. When you stop touching the chicken, wash your hands but don't touch the faucet. Use your elbow or get someone to help you.

NAME: Shayna

Q. What is a benefit of vermicomposting?

A. Worm poop is good for the soil!

Q. What is the most important you thing you learned in the After School Program?

A. About poverty and writing letters of support.



NAME: Ella

Q. What do you like best about gardening?

A. (PRE) Well, I like to get my hands dirty. I love everything about gardening EXCEPT the worm picking.

A. (POST) I like getting my hands dirty AND feeling the worms.

Q. If you wanted to make some "Healthy French Fries," name some steps you would take to prepare them.

A. First, I would plant potatoes and pick them ...

Q. What are some things the government can do to help people who cannot afford the basic necessities (shelter, food, clothing, etc.) live better healthier lives?

A. Give them some money to live on, like a year's worth of money and try to give them enough time to find a job and enough money to keep them healthy.

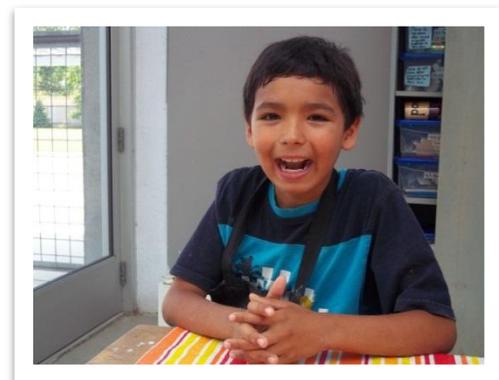
NAME: Jaicee

Q. Would you say you like cooking more since being in the After School Program?

A. Yes. Before I didn't even know how to cook!

Q. Do you feel that as a young person you could make a real change in the situation of some people in Toronto not having enough to eat?

A. Yes. Because every penny counts!



Q. If you had to create a healthy balanced meal, can you think of two things you would do?

A. (PRE): Go to the grocery store and buy meat, vegetables and fruit.

A. (POST): Get organic food at the farmers' market and cook it myself.



NAME: Gibran

Q. Can you explain how you would prepare a healthy meal?

A. Have fruits and vegetables in the meal. Use healthier ingredients like less salt and more organic stuff. Instead of junk food, make healthy desserts like healthy beet brownies.

Q. Can you list some reasons why some people in Toronto don't have enough healthy food to eat?

A. They don't have money, minimum wage is too low, rent is expensive and some organic food costs more money.

Q. We know some people in Toronto cannot afford basic necessities (shelter, food, clothing, etc.). What are two things WE can do in our communities to help these people live better/healthier lives?

A. Start community gardens and form community kitchens. Teamwork.

NAME: Jacob

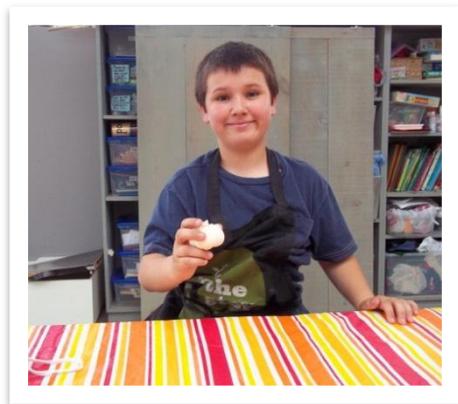
Q. Do you feel that as a young person you could make a real change in the situation of some people in Toronto not having enough to eat?

A. Yes. I could do a fundraiser or write on Twitter.

Q. What can we do in our communities to help people in Toronto who cannot afford basic necessities live better/healthier lives?

A. Create knowledge sharing websites.





NAME: Jonathan C.

Q. Can you think of a food that is not healthy?

A. Yes. Cake, because of all of the sweet stuff and it has a lot of calories that are not good for your body - saturated fats that can give your body diseases.

Q. Do you think there are people in Toronto who are not able to eat enough healthy food?

A. Yes. Because they're in poverty. They have a poor job so they get little wages.

Q. How do you feel about this?

A. Sad, depressed and angry that the government doesn't do anything about it.

NAME: Jonathan S.

Q. What do you like about gardening?

A. When you buy something from the store you have to use money, but when you garden it's free.

Q. Do you feel that as a young person you could make a real change in the situation of some people in Toronto not having enough to eat?

A. Yes, cause no matter how old you are, you can still change the situation.



NAME: Isabella

Q. Can you tell me some reasons why you think some people in Toronto don't have enough healthy food to eat?

A. They don't have enough money to buy it. Organic food is more expensive and other expenses like housing are a lot of money to pay for.

Q. How do you feel about this?

A. Unfair to people because not everyone can get equal access to healthy food. Poor people won't have food, only rich people.



Q. What are two things we can do in our communities to help people in Toronto who cannot afford the basic necessities live better, healthier lives?

A. Share facts about wasting food and that some people in the world can't afford food. Build more centres and programs like The Stop!

NAME: Demitri

Q. Can you explain the steps in planting or caring for a vegetable plant?

A. Water it every day, but don't water it too much or you'll drown it. It has to be in a well-lighted area and it has to be around other plants that help it grow and keep the bugs away, like garlic.

Q. Do you feel that as a young person you could make a real change in the situation of some people in Toronto not having enough to eat?

A. Yes. I think so because if it's coming from a younger kid, they might take it more seriously than from an adult.



NAME: Faith

Q. Can you name benefits of organic farming, compared to industrial farming?

A. Industrial farming uses machines which could pollute the air and they waste their money to buy machines.

Q. What is the most important thing you learned in the After School Program?

A. Vermicomposting!

Q. What is vermicomposting?

A. Worm composting.

Q. Can you name some benefits of vermicomposting?

A. Because it would turn back to soil and the worms love to eat it.

NAME: Megan

Q. Have you learned at the After School Program how to prepare a healthy meal?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you tell me how you would make a healthy meal?

A. I would prepare a healthy meal by getting organic fruits and vegetables, making sure there's enough colour on the plate and getting one of every type of food group.



Q. How do you feel about the fact that some people in Toronto don't have enough healthy food to eat?

A. I don't think it's giving them justice.



NAME: Elisabeth

Q. Can you describe why you like to eat healthy foods?

A. Because generally they're better for the environment and it makes me feel like I'm going to live way longer. And I see all my friends eating their popcorn chicken, and I'm like, have fun with your heart attacks!

Q. Do you feel that you as a young person could make a real change in the situation of not everyone having enough to eat in Toronto?

A. Yes, because I've got so much time and everyone listens to little kids.

NAME: Leo Ramos Jr.

Q. What do you like about gardening?

A. The best thing about gardening is that you get to have a lot of worms and it's like a pet because you give it lots of healthy food and in return it helps you grow your plants.

Q. What is the most important thing you learned in the After School Program?

A. To grow and eat healthy foods and not waste any of the trash by composting. And keep the cycle going so it's infinite food for the worms and they can make the soil.

