



The Local Community Food Centre: An Overview

Source: Community Food Centres Canada

For several years, the United Way of Perth-Huron has convened a Food Security Coalition made up of food-based initiatives in Stratford and surrounding counties. The group identified a lack of capacity for food banks, drop-in meals and student nutrition programs to access large-scale food donations. This became the foundation from which to start collaborating on a community food centre.

Director Steve Stacey has consulted extensively with stakeholders in Stratford and the surrounding county to develop a locally relevant suite of programs for The Local Community Food Centre. These programs launched in November 2012, and include drop-in meal programs, community kitchens, a greenhouse for year-round educational programming, a community advocacy office, and community gardens. It also houses a food distribution centre that meets the original need identified by the community. With mentorship from CFCC, the food distribution centre now has a focus on distributing healthy, fresh foods to The Local's programs, thus ensuring the highest nutritional impact possible.

Several partnerships have arisen through our collaboration in Stratford. Hilditch Architect provided the designs to repurpose an old farm-supply store into the new Community Food Centre. Collaboration with Savour Stratford resulted in a donation of kitchen equipment from GE Canada. And, last fall, the Stratford Festival supported The Local by offering the proceeds of one of their productions of *The Grapes of Wrath* to the centre, a partnership we expect will continue in the years to come.

For more information, visit www.thelocalcfc.org.