

Progress Report

STUDENT NUTRITION PROGRAM



2009-2010

Central East Region

Durham, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland, Peterborough,
Simcoe & York

CENTRAL EAST REGION STUDENT NUTRITION PROGRAM

In 2005, the Province of Ontario transferred funding for Student Nutrition Programs to the communities in which they serve. This process resulted in a significant increase in financial support to programs in the Central East Region. In 2008 as part of the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Ontario Government added additional funding to the Student Nutrition Programs.

The purpose of Student Nutrition Programs is to support communities wishing to provide nutritious food, including breakfast, lunch and/or snacks, to children and youth aged 5 – 18 years. The central objective of the program is to support the healthy development of children and youth arriving at school ready to learn. Government funding operates within a broader group of contributors to deliver the program including parents/caregivers, corporate sponsors, local charities, community organizations and municipalities.

Student Nutrition Programs are community driven initiatives with a large voluntary component. The individuals who prepare and serve meals to students are often parents/caregivers, teachers, principals, educational assistants and community volunteers who are not paid for their work. Their commitment, dedication and support are essential to the ongoing operation and success of the program.

The Central East Region's Student Nutrition Program is directly linked to the government's key priorities of Success for Students and Better Health and is an integral component of a larger collection of programs designed to improve outcomes for children and youth. The program supports initiatives to increase levels of school readiness among young people and provide a healthy nutritional environment in schools. The Student Nutrition Program also complements efforts to improve the eating habits of children and youth as well as to reduce rates of childhood obesity.



There is much to be celebrated!

We are proud to share the many accomplishments in The Central East Region that has enhanced the lives of over 107,829 children and youth.



Growth

In 2005, there were 515 active breakfast, snack or lunch programs facilitated throughout the Central East Region. Within five years, programs have grown to 683 marking a 33% increase. The number of schools offering programs increased from 362 to 497. Most importantly, we saw service delivery increase from approximately 2,674,290 meals served to children and youth in 2005-06 to 13,748,091 meals served in 2009-10. The ability to grow to this extent was largely due to funding increases at the program level.

Yet here is a great deal of work to be done. It is our ultimate goal to ensure that all children and youth have access to a Student Nutrition Program within the Central East Region.



You guys rock! Emma,
Haliburton, ON

Growth May 2005 - March 2010, # Schools - Central East Region

Region	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Durham	51	68	63	79	84
Haliburton	7	7	7	7	7
Kawartha Lakes	32	32	32	32	32
Northumberland	33	37	35	36	37
Peterborough	38	41	41	41	45
Simcoe	139	157	192	182	188
York	62	70	75	90	104
TOTAL	362	412	445	467	497

A Principal Remembers

“Thank you very much for your donation of two cheques to our school. When two volunteers who run the programs here saw the cheques, they gave loud cheers, shed a few tears, and went quickly to tell staff and students that money had come to continue our program for students. Thank you on behalf of our students, staff and volunteers. Your donation will make a difference in all our classes, and to the readiness of students to learn because they had something nutritious to eat.”

**Elementary Principal,
Durham District School Board**



Program Impacts

Research supports the existing link between nutrition and a child's readiness to learn. Studies indicate that students arriving at school hungry have difficulty concentrating, display behavioural problems, are less alert and often lethargic. These children are more likely to cause disruptions in class, are less curious, involved in bullying and are more irritable.

Our program extends well beyond nutrition and health related issues. From a social perspective, Student Nutrition Programs provide a safe environment for children to establish a sense of belonging and develop relationships with caring volunteers. This further increases a child's self confidence; improved behaviours in the classroom; resiliency; improved academic performance; strengthening of social relationships and alertness and energy levels. The children receive so much more than a healthy meal, they are provided with a sense of community, a chance to make new friends

and someone to talk to before the start of their day.

We provide a non-stigmatizing environment where all children are welcome. Programs are unique, reflecting each school environment: from full breakfast programs to in-class snack programs, from front hallway grab and go stations to senior students and volunteers delivering food baskets to classes ...ensuring children do not go hungry.

As we become more aware of eating disorders, the alarming rates in child and youth obesity (it has tripled since 1981) and increased poverty, our service is needed more than ever. One in ten children arrive at school without having breakfast, snacks or lunch to sustain them throughout an entire school day. For many children, our service is a lifeline.



A grateful parent

"I wish to thank everyone who has supported this program over the last couple of years. The donations of food and money have allowed us to provide healthy, nutritious snacks for our entire school population, which is 250 students. I would like to offer my special thanks to the Ministry of Children and Youth for their financial support. Without it, we would not be able to continue this very important program. Our program allows every child to have a better opportunity for learning. As studies have show those children who eat a nutritious breakfast are far better equipped to learn and achieve higher standings, which in turn boosts confidence and gives them incentive to strive even harder. Our school's program offers a variety of snacks which include home backed muffins and fruit breads; along with fresh fruits and vegetables, and drinks. Children (my own included) come up and thank me for the snacks and tell me how much they love the food. Not only do parents appreciate these programs, but the children do as well. Poverty is a known fact and a way of life for many. With this program and the other programs like it, we as a community care helping in a little way to alleviate some of the burden from families who struggle every day. Again, many thanks to all who have made this program possible and to the volunteers who donate their time."

Parent & Site Co-ordinator

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

Community Partnerships

Our ability to leverage community support has been unprecedented. Collectively, in Central East Ontario over \$182,630.00 cash as well as in-kind donations was raised this year through community grants, corporate funding, cash and in-kind donations and fundraising. This funding, in combination with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services support, has ensured that at minimum, one paid staff person exists in each community, who is responsible for program facilitation. The additional funding has inspired new program development, expansion of existing programs, an increase in the quality of foods served to children and youth and finally, has increased the profile of Student Nutrition Programs and the issue of child hunger. One of the greatest accomplishments we have seen was our ability to engage businesses and services to donate in-kind product (primarily food) to our programs. This remarkable show of support ranged from grocery stores to established businesses to local farms, all who gave extensively allowing cost savings at the programs level.

A THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Numerous businesses, agencies, organizations and individuals continue to contribute to the Student Nutrition Programs in Central east Ontario. A listing of them can be found on our website.

www.studentnutritionprogram.ca



Loud Cheers from Students

June 2007
Dear Mrs. Peterson;
Thank you for running
the Breakfast Program, my
favorite foods were muffins,
fruits like strawberries and pineapples.
I also liked
granola bars. all I'm trying
to say is thank you for sharing
your time. From Adam

June 18 2007

“Dear Helpers,

We thank you for giving us healthy snacks and we will miss you. And thank you for giving us rice cakes, I really like them. I will miss having healthy snack. We will all miss the snack. I really don't want you to go, but what is done is done.

P.S. I really really really don't want you to go because then we Won't have healthy snack and I will miss you.”

From Jamie

Volunteer Support

Volunteers are the lifeline of Student Nutrition Programs and without them, our services would be non-existent.

There are approximately 1400 active community volunteers as well As students, teachers, parents, and dedicated site co-ordinators who work diligently to ensure children and youth receive service within the Central East Region.

Sourcing volunteers is an ongoing task and several methods were used to engage the community that included: high school students, older adult volunteers, reaching to the multicultural sector, service clubs and employee volunteer programs. Our greatest success is with parents themselves who recognize the importance of their role in contributing to a healthy and vibrant school community.

Throughout the region, several volunteer resources central to our program are available to assist program volunteers. Program Manuals offer a how-to guide for volunteers and school administrators to effectively operate a student nutrition program. It is recognized that establishing a new program is a daunting task that requires a great deal of time, planning and support for success. These manuals have also proven to be a valuable aid for new program development.



Changing the world, one child at a time

While we work diligently addressing the various aspects of Student Nutrition Programs, our focus will always be the needs of children and youth. Child hunger is an issue we must recognize as a contributing factor that impacts the physical, academic, cognitive, behavioural and psychological needs of children. Although Student Nutrition Programs are not a complete solution, the preventative nature through provision of food, a basic human need, does impact each child's and youth's ability to function, thrive, develop resiliency and contribute to their community. We have become increasingly aware that the provision of healthy food can in fact, diminish the need for more costly and extensive interventions.

Looking to the Future....

Our focus in the coming year will be to build on our success. We will continue to source funding to allow the development of new program launches. We will further engage the community through volunteerism and community partnerships. We will maintain our commitment to providing a cost-effective program ensuring every dollar spent will have impact on children and youth. Finally, we remain committed to facilitating a program, where every child who is in need of food, shall be nourished.



"Thank you for the healthy snack
We really enjoyed it. It was good. The healthy snack
program rocks because they make us healthy."

Kenndal

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