



Lynn Lake Friendship Centre provides healthy meals to children in the community three days a week.

Lynn Lake Promotes Traditional Food and Gardening

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A youth catching fish from Lynn Lake. "Lynn Lake gives us food. Whenever we want, we catch fish."

Background

The town of Lynn Lake was built with a strong mining heritage that shifted from Sherridon in 1951. The population is a core group of long-time residents who used to do small-scale farming business other than working in the mine. This, in combination of the First Nations population residing in the community who had a regular practice of growing root vegetables, made a strong gardening history for the community. Gardening was a passion as well as a necessity for Lynn Lake community members. After the mining stopped, many of the community members left Lynn Lake and the newly formed community partly lost their gardening tradition. In addition, the establishment of a commercial food store was supposed to make food access easier for people. With the emergence of store-bought food in the community, interest in gardening was partly lost. With the store bought vegetables being expensive, access to healthy food became limited for many families.

Objectives

This study asked if in the past 12 months:

- was healthy food accessible and affordable (Household Food Security Survey)?
- what were the barriers to putting healthy food on the table of Lynn Lake community members?
- what gardening and other traditional methods of harvesting provide food in Lynn Lake?
- what do Lynn Lake people need in order to eat healthier?

Methods

A door to door household food security survey and interviews of 49 Lynn Lake households (random sample) was conducted in June 2009 by Asfia Gulrukh Kamal. People interviewed ranged from 18 to 70 years of age. Survey findings were analyzed by Statistical Products and Survey Solution (SPSS). Open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted in order to get a holistic understanding of the problem and the solutions. Participatory video methods were used to record community engagements and your stories.

Findings

Prices for healthy food were too high: 43% of Lynn Lake households said they often worried they would run out of money and not be able to buy food. Many households had hungry children because there was no money to buy food. People couldn't afford to buy healthy food and children were hungry because there was no money to buy food.



Stella Hrechka's garden and greenhouse in Lynn Lake.

Gardener Keith Anderson from Leaf Rapids with Stella Hrechka, one of the key gardeners in Lynn Lake. Stella thinks that people should grow their own vegetables to get more access to healthy food.

Results

From the summer of 2008 to the summer of 2009:

- ◆ 43% of community households were often and sometimes worried that they would run out of money to buy food.
- ◆ 21% of community households could not afford to buy healthy food.
- ◆ 50% of households had children that were not eating enough because there wasn't enough money to buy food.
- ◆ 42% of the households sometimes couldn't afford feed children healthy food.
- ◆ 56% of community households gardened to improve their access to healthy food.
- ◆ 50% of community households wanted training in gardening.
- ◆ 30% of community households wanted training for youth to get food from land and promoting local food will help the situation.

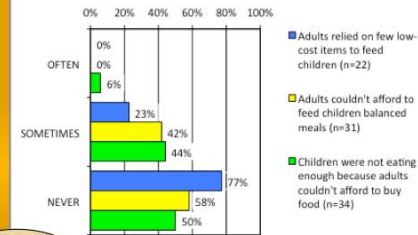


What did people say?

Almost all households interviewed wanted to garden. All of the household said when the mines were open, gardening was a regular practice every year for almost every family in Lynn Lake. Many of the community members are determined to start gardening if proper help is provided. One of them said, "we need knowledge of composting and gardening, we need soils and fertilizers at affordable prices, [and] then we can start all over again". Lynn Lake community economic development is centered in tourism and fishing. The community economic development officer, Mr. Wayne Riley, thinks involving youth in hunting and fishing is required. He is hopeful about the Frontier School Division initiating successful greenhouse and gardening projects. Mr. Riley is promoting commercial berry harvesting in the community. They supplied blueberries for the healthy meal program at West Lynn Heights School at Lynn Lake.

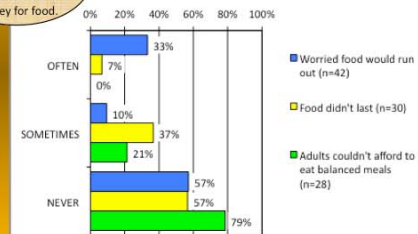
23% of families relied on a few low-cost food items for children. 50% of families could not feed their children enough.

Households Couldn't Afford Food for Children



33% of community people worried that they would run out of money for food.

Households Ran Out of Money for Food



Prices of food are high in the Northern Store in Lynn Lake compared to stores in southern Manitoba.

Lynn Lake Northern Store: Frozen vegetables are on sale. Prices recorded on July 24, 2009. Lets grow our own vegetables.



Kathy is one of the master gardeners in Lynn Lake. She said, "Gardening is important to be healthy. But knowledge of growing, soil and composting is necessary." She has two greenhouses in her backyard.



John Perepeluk said, "We can do a lot by involving our youth in gardening."

Lynn Lake community economic development officer, Wayne Riley, leads the commercial berry picking project and employs locals to collect berries.



The Lynn Lake school greenhouse was completed in August 2009. Peter Korski, greenhouse carpenter told us, "the young generation is excited about the greenhouse. The community children come to me and ask me curiously when it is going to be finished".

John Perepeluk is one of the master gardeners in Lynn Lake. He is also in charge of the Lynn Lake school gardening program and teaching classes for school children on growing plants. In summer 2009 Frontier School Division supported making a greenhouse for the Lynn Lake school. Ask John for advice about gardening.

Conclusion

Lynn Lake people are trying to regain their tradition of gardening. This local food production is important as most community households cannot afford to buy healthy food from the Northern Store. Lynn Lake is known as a sport fishing capital of Manitoba and is has a golden opportunity to promote wild food via hunting and fishing. If gardening material and teachings about traditional land activities, food preservation and gardening are provided, the community would flourish.

Programs and Contacts

Programs are by request, to help actions in communities. Contact for help and supplies:

1. Northern Healthy Food Initiative (NHFI), Manitoba Government, funds groups like Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC), Bayline Regional Roundtable (BRRT), Four Arrows Regional Health Authority (FARHA) and Manitoba Food Matters to increase access to healthy food and to support food projects. Contacts: Jennell Majeran, Manager, Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, (204-677-6677, Jennell.Majeran@gov.mb.ca) and Jessica Paley, Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, (204-945-0569, Jessica.Paley@gov.mb.ca). Programs in communities include:
 - ◆ chicken, turkey (with chicks and chicken feed provided but not coop), goat and other small livestock production,
 - ◆ freezer loans for people to buy freezers to store healthy food,
 - ◆ community or school greenhouse and households receiving plastic for building a greenhouse,
 - ◆ provision of vegetable seeds, berry and other bedding plants, and school grow lights, and
 - ◆ an annual workshop in Thompson called the Northern Harvest Forum to provide free teaching to northern community members about food production and preservation.
2. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) provides gardening support to communities giving workshops on gardening and chicken production. Contact: Brian Hunt (204-856-9255, Fax: 204-745-5690, brian.hunt@gov.mb.ca).
3. Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC) provides seeds, plants, gardening and loans tools for community and household gardens, as well as chickens and goats. Contact: (204-947-2227, nhfi05@mts.net or nacc@mts.net).
4. Frontier School Division provides Veggie Adventure school activities and greenhouse and gardening expertise for northern climates. Contact: Chuck Stensgard (204-473-2332, chuckstensgard@hotmail.com). For gardening support in Lynn Lake contact John Perepeluk (204-356-8244).
5. Burntwood Regional Health Authority could provide community visits of a dietician to teach community people, particularly pregnant women and diabetes patients, about healthy diets and how to cook healthy meals. Contact: (204-677-5350). The Lynn Lake public health nurse provides other health assistance. Contact: (204-356-8054).
6. Apply for Green Team, a 100% government-funded program that employs youth to start community gardens, market gardens or help with household gardening. Fill out the application form at: <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/youth/employers/homestown.html>.
7. View your participatory video called Growing Hope at <http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~thomps04/Movie.html>.

Acknowledgements

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