



FOOD MATTERS
MANITOBA

OUR FOOD – OUR HEALTH – OUR CULTURE REPORT 2018/19





We believe in **good food** for all.

We are building up a province where good food nourishes strong communities by



WORKING TOGETHER

Partnering with communities to increase access to good food.



BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

Providing food skills education that gives people tools to choose food that is right for them.



PLANNING FOR CHANGE

Improving food systems through community planning and policy change.

We envision a Manitoba where good food nourishes strong communities and healthy people.

RESULTS THIS YEAR

WORKING TOGETHER



18

different communities enriched by programs brought to them



57

partner agencies grew in capacity

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE



193

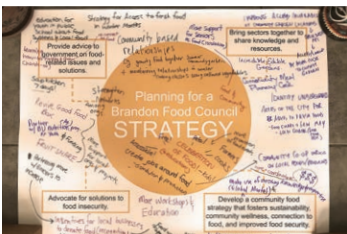
agency leaders making healthy food choices for clients



219

Northern youth deepened their connection to the land

PLANNING FOR CHANGE



5

rural communities committed to food system education for youth



800,000

Manitobans now represented by Municipal Food Councils

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER, JOANNA PLATER

2018-2019 was a year of many transitions for Food Matters Manitoba. The departure of some staff and Board members has given us opportunity to reflect on and appreciate the quality of work and commitment that FMM personnel and volunteers are known for.

With a change also comes the opportunity to regroup and reimagine, and this process got underway during this year and is continuing. New staff and new Board members are contributing from their diversity of experience and perspective.

Through the transition FMM has maintained a high level of service to the communities we partner with and have delivered on the commitments we have with our funders. Working with our partners we delivered programs throughout the province: Shamattawa, Portage la Prairie, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Brandon and Winnipeg, along with many other communities.

The mandate and mission of FMM to make sure people get the good food they need is carried out in three major ways: by making change through planning and policy to ensure universal access to good food; by increasing capacity by partnering with organizations working locally; and, by building knowledge so people and organizations are equipped to make good decisions.

The three stories below provide a lens into our work. In brief, some other notables from this year:

- Working with key stakeholders, such as Southern

Health – Santé Sud, City Councils in Brandon and Winnipeg, and Fox Lake Cree Nation resulted in concrete actions toward organizing for systemic change

- Modifications to the curricula for programs with newcomers and Indigenous people enhanced cultural appropriateness and improved the effectiveness of programs
- Expansion of partnering agencies and a greater engagement of schools in the northern based land education strengthened local connections
- Refining “Beyond Our Plate”, a brand new program to engage high school youth in understanding the food system which will be rolled out in southern Manitoba in the fall
- Collaborated on a poverty reduction strategy “A Winnipeg without Poverty” and its recommendation for a Winnipeg Food Council Coordinator which was realized recently when FMM appointed staff to this role

Overcoming food insecurity; the inability for families, communities, even nations, to feed themselves, is cited by the United Nations as one of the key Sustainability Goals. The dedication of Food Matters Manitoba to addressing food insecurity enables us to make progress toward this goal.



“THE CAMP IS ALL ABOUT HEALING, SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND THE CONTINUATION OF INNINUWUK (SWAMPY CREE) KNOWLEDGE.”

WORKING TOGETHER

THE GOOSE CAMP STORY

“It’s Goose Camp, but goose camp doesn’t really describe it,” explains Demian Lawrenchuk, the Camp’s director. “I describe it as a high out-put, inter-generational, food production camp. It’s a big cultural camp.”

Partnering with organizations well rooted in their communities, like the Fox Lake Goose Camp, is an effective way that Food Matters has increased access to good food.

The northern Manitoba Camp is artfully designed to maximize the benefit for everyone involved. Harvesters, men and women who are experienced hunters, go out on the land well in advance of the week-long camp held in May. The geese, ducks, beaver, fish and other harvested wildlife are frozen whole then defrosted prior to the camp so the young people can experience processing wild meat right from the start.

“The youth get to hunt, sitting out in the blind for hours is a good teaching time. When a flock comes down, they can shoot, but the camp isn’t depended on what they manage to hit,” says Demian with a smile. Demian, became a member of the FMM staff in February, 2019. He is committed to using land-based education as a tool to addressing root causes of food insecurity in the north.

FMM is a partner in the Camp through its Land Based Education Small Grants Fund. FMM shares the view that land-based education is transformative, and has actively supported the camp as it has grown in significance to

the community. FMM’s long term commitment and the flexibility of the grant which respects local decision making to put money where it is most needed, are appreciated by the Camp’s leaders.

Other partners in the Camp include the schools at Fox Lake, Gillam and Split Lake. Spring is the new year in Cree culture and traditionally a time for celebration. Elders tell stories, teach about medicines and provide sweats. As the 100 or so daily participants work together, youth get experience as harvesters, and land-based skills like smoking fish, building shelters and cleaning and butchering meat.

Takeaways from the Camp are multilayered and impressive. Besides the obvious benefits of supplying the community with food from the land and extending opportunities for land-based workers, there are cultural and social benefits. Planning seven months in advance, community members are learning transferable skills for community and economic development. The intentional relationship building across generations facilitates knowledge transfer through a traditional Cree method of mentoring. Growth in individual and community skills along with the increased self-confidence which comes with being self-reliant and successful contributes to community self-esteem.



“HEALTH IS WEALTH, AND GOOD NUTRITION IS WHAT IT TAKES.”

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

ALA'A'S STORY

“Food is medicine and I want to heal the people,” says Ala’a Eideh, a FMM Nutrition Mentor and educator who is helping people make positive change so they are better fed.

Ala’a first became involved with Food Matters Manitoba when the Immigrant Centre, an organization in partnership with FMM, requested the Newcomer Nutrition Program be taught in Arabic to support Syrian refugees. In taking up this challenge, FMM widened our program reach to meet an important community need. Ala’a was perfect for the job with fluency in Arabic and with her plentiful experience in facilitating nutrition programs.

In 2007, while working on her Masters in Jordan, where she is from, she started a Community Nutrition Program for displaced Iraqis. Now in Canada as an international student and a PhD candidate in Nutrition, she continues with her work at the community level. Ala’a is able to translate more than just the recipes and knowledge of where to find ingredients in Canada. She is able to connect with people through her own experience and share her wide knowledge in culturally appropriate ways so that participants are better positioned to make positive choices. “I can help people to adjust well in a really short time and that is very satisfying.”

The FMM curriculum includes instruction about preparing the familiar foods from back home with ingredients that are available in Canada as well as teaching about Canadian foods. “People want to be able to fit in here, and it is important. They had enough adventure to come to Canada, they are willing to try new things.”

“One of the big differences I have found in Canada,” Ala’a explains, “is the interest to meet the needs of diverse cultural groups.” The support she gets from FMM staff has been an important resource as she has integrated this into her teaching. “People at Food Matters are friendly, they really know how to deal with people from outside the country,” she adds. Ala’a found a friendly, warm welcome from FMM, and sees this is consistent for program participants too, which she knows is not always the case for newcomers. Learning is more effective for people when they know that they are respected and affirmed and this contributes to the success of FMM programs. Ala’a is herself ‘good medicine’ for the people she works with.



“I BELIEVE THAT FOOD WASTE IS A BIG PROBLEM AND THAT WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM TOGETHER.”

PLANNING FOR CHANGE

ARIANNA'S STORY

Arianna Laluk is no ordinary 16 year old. For one thing, she is a member of the Brandon Food Council, its youngest inaugural member. Getting involved with monitoring the impact of public food policy and facilitating collaboration between government and community groups could be daunting at any age. Arianna acknowledges, “Sometimes I feel nervous, even usually. I am not as experienced as other members of the Council, but I am also excited by what I am learning. Everyone is participating and sharing ideas, and we are going to make a difference. That helps me to overcome my nerves.”

What do her peers think? “Mostly they say,” she shares, “‘good for you’, but I don’t think most of them really understand what [the Food Council] is for. When I tell them, I say, ‘The Brandon Food Council is looking to make sure everyone, everywhere has enough food.’”

Arianna’s activism was stirred by conversations with her grandparents who farm near Brandon. Their concerns that the hard work they put into growing good food was undermined by all the food waste helped to open her eyes. When delivering food raised at her school to a local food bank, she was shocked by the amount of need. She sensed that the problem required a community wide response to make any progress.

The Brandon Food Council Steering Committee, established as a preliminary body to the permanent 11 member Council, put out a call for Council members. Arianna explains, “My interest was already there, and it was just perfect timing. I am so glad it all happened. Now I tell people that Food Matters are the people who create food councils... they are helping the whole province to get good food to the people.”

In 2014, Brandon’s Mayor Shari Decter Hirst and City Council Poverty Chair Jan Chaboyer, signed Food Matters’ “Manitoba Food Charter” with the express hope that the Charter would be a catalyst for new initiatives and policy. The Brandon Food Council is clear evidence that this hope was realistic. Food Matters fostered the development of the Food Council from the beginning.

The first meeting of the Council was in February 2019. With a mission to develop and implement a sustainable community-based food system through collaborative partnerships, the Council’s first project is a public forum on food security issues to contribute to an Alternative Provincial Budget. The Brandon Food Council, with the support and nurture provided by Food Matters Manitoba, is uniquely poised to keep food systems issues top of mind for Brandon residents and leaders.

Arianna concludes, “It is my generation which is going to be experiencing the consequences of the action, or inaction, today. We can bring our ideas to the table, when we know that there is a table, and we know we are invited.”



STAFF

- Joanna Plater, General Manager
- Rob Moquin, Policy Director
- Amalia Santiago, Program Coordinator
- Caryn Douglas, Special Projects Coordinator
- David Heinrichs, Program Coordinator
- Demian Lawrenchuk, Program Coordinator
- Jeanette Sivilay, Winnipeg Food Council Coordinator
- Mukesh Marwari, Book Keeper
- Myreille Fortin, Program Coordinator
- Olivia Boyce, Program Coordinator

BOARD MEMBERS

- Tyler Pearce, Chair
- Brittany Sandberg
- Devon Kirkwood
- Erin Yaremko
- Gabriela Klimes
- Kayla Farquhar

OUR FUNDERS

Thank you to all of our generous 2018/19 Donors and Committed Partners!

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada Career Focus
- Western Economic Diversification Canada

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (Healthy Together Now)
- Indigenous and Northern Relations (Northern Healthy Foods Initiative)

FOUNDATIONS

- Tides Canada (Northern Manitoba Food, Culture and Community Collaborative)

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

and in-kind support from many organizations

Join us in helping all people in Manitoba get the good food they need by donating monthly. <https://foodmattersmanitoba.ca/why-food-matters/donate/>



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