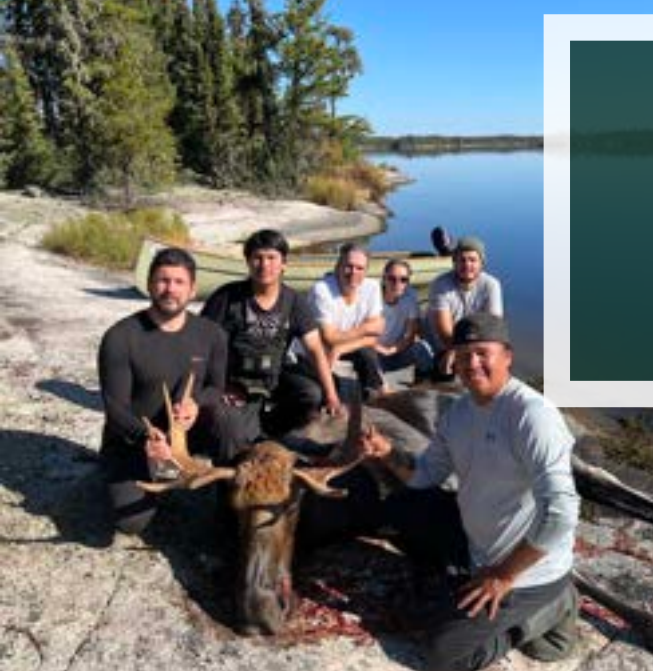




Food Matters Manitoba
Annual Report
2023



Food Matters Manitoba

*We believe that inspiration is
contagious*

A Word From The Executive Director

What an exciting year this has been! Full of learning, connections, and of course meaningful impacts across this beautiful province. From successful caribou hunts just south of the Nunavut border to maple syrup production in the southern parklands, from mentoring youth on the winter trapline in the Hudson Bay lowlands to speaking with students in the lecture halls of the University of Manitoba it remains true that there is always meaningful work happening with Food Matters Manitoba.

This year we enhanced our focus towards our longstanding Indigenous partner communities as we continue to mobilize our vast networks of support towards meaningful change. We continued our journey of endless learning and self-improvement finding the best ways we can to support the hard working individuals on the ground, as well as empower the dedicated supporters behind the scenes.

We welcomed new employees to our team, one here in Winnipeg and four up in northern communities, most of whom had already been longstanding partners of ours making considerable impacts happen in their communities. We understand that we could never have all the answers, but that what we can do is create the space where people are empowered to find the solutions that are right for their communities. As we continue to look behind us to learn from the journey that has brought us this far, and at the present at the beautiful work that so strongly ignites the spirit of change, we look forward to the possibilities that lay ahead of us.

We see immense opportunity to capitalize on substantial growing momentum, capacity, and support towards harnessing the food security potential of the north to bring about new levels of wellbeing within communities.

This next year while continuing to support and grow programming and initiatives within our many partner communities, we lay the foundation for a new push of programming designed to create the space for communities to reach new heights of food production and impactful experiences. Of course, none of this would be possible without the hard working individuals across so many sectors, from communities, through academia, industry, foundations, and government to the passionate members of the public that believe so strongly in our work and donate to our cause. Within our team, we are blessed with a skillful and inspired board, and the best team that an Executive Director could ever ask for. I extend the sincerest thank you, and invite you all to continue down this road with us towards a better tomorrow!

Demian Lawrenchuk

Executive Director

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Letter from the Board

Recently, I was at Troy Lake in the traditional territory of Treaty 5 for a gathering of five northern First Nations. They were celebrating the signing of a new agreement to protect the lands and waters. A beautiful bundle was presented with five arrows, each arrow representing one of the Nations. As one of the Chiefs shared, you can easily break one arrow, but when you hold five arrows together, it is much stronger – virtually unbreakable.

This has caused me to reflect on how Food Matters Manitoba continues to grow and strengthen. The past year with our new Executive Director has been exciting, and the organization has built a stable foundation thanks to the efforts of the staff team. We have increasing partnerships with communities, academics, funders, and sponsors. We have seen the onboarding of new Board members who are bringing new perspectives and skills to the governance of the organization. And, most excitingly, we have seen people and communities throughout our province embrace new and re-learn old ways to grow, harvest, and share food!

The board has had a busy year creating and guiding a new strategic plan, supporting the financial growth of the organization, and assisting the staff team in their increasing capacity in areas of strategic partnerships. I would like to thank my fellow Board members this year – Vice Chair Alison McCullough-Butchart, Secretary Michelle Finlay, Treasurer Erin Crymble, Thea Green, Mackenzie Kreitz, Kaylee Michnik, Sharissa Neault, Cynthia Neudoerffer, and Ramogi Nyonje. I also thank outgoing board members Michael Salomons and Curtis Brown for their important contributions over the past several years.

FMM has a remarkable staff that embodies adaptability and creativity. We offer sincere thanks to this hardworking team, led by our ED Demian Lawrenchuk. On behalf of the board, I also want to bid farewell to staff members Yoni Coodin, Myreille Fortin, and Amalia Santiago, who have all left for new opportunities.

Finally, we want to thank all the supporters who continue to provide us with the resources and expertise that we need as we work toward our vision of sustainable food systems rooted in food justice.

When our family of staff, Board, partners, funders, sponsors, and communities comes together to work for food solutions, we truly are stronger together – virtually unbreakable.

Kirsten Earl McCorrister
Chair of the Board



Meet Our Board



Kirsten Earl McCorrister
CHAIR



Alison McCullough-Butchart
VICE-CHAIR



Michelle Finley
SECRETARY



Erin Crymble
TREASURER



Cynthia
Neudoerffer



Ramogi
Nyonje



Mackenzie
Kreitz



Kaylee
Michnik



Sharissa
Neault



Thea
Green

Meet Our Team



Demian Lawrenchuk
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



Debby Lute-Storey
OFFICE
MANAGER



Myles King
NORTHERN
COORDINATOR



Lawrence Saunders
COMMUNITY PROJECT
COORDINATOR



Morgan McCurdy
NORTHERN
FACILITATOR



Cameron
YOUTH
EMPLOYEE



Shante
YOUTH
EMPLOYEE

Where We Work



We collaborate with 13 distinct partner communities throughout Northern Manitoba, tailoring our approach to each community's unique capacities and priorities. Our commitment to cultivating meaningful relationships with our partners underscores our dedication to fostering sustainable, positive change.



Partner Communities

1. Lac Brochet
2. Brochet
3. Cross Lake
4. Split Lake
5. Misipawistik
6. Fox Lake/ Gillam
7. O-Pipon-Na-Piwin
8. Shamattawa
9. Moose Lake
10. Norway House
11. York Landing
12. Crane River
13. Sherridon



What We Do

Harvester Program

Our Harvester Program is crafted to enhance community access to local food sources. We offer comprehensive support to local harvesters, aiming to dismantle barriers such as limited land access and the absence of necessary equipment, along with any other challenges they may encounter. These dedicated harvesters supply local foods to various community members, with a particular focus on assisting elders and single-parent households.



We support harvesters in...

Sherridon
York Landing
Fox Lake
Brochet
Lac Brochet
Shamattawa
Norway House
Crane River
Churchill

Meet Gordon

Gordon is a member of Kinosao Sipi he has been trapping, hunting, and fishing for his entire life while mentoring the next generation through language, land, and ceremony. This mentorship extends beyond the community of Norway House Cree Nation, routinely connecting with other communities across the country to share traditional teachings. Gordon has supported Food Matters Manitoba for years, ever welcoming our staff and network into the community, providing guidance as we continue to learn how best to serve his community and many others. Throughout the many roles he plays, he always finds time to get onto the land, teaching the individuals who join him, and sharing the harvest with the community.



Agriculture Support

We are dedicated to bolstering local agriculture within the communities we collaborate with. Annually, we extend the opportunity to our partners to acquire seeds for their garden beds through our program. However, our commitment to their agricultural success goes beyond this initial offering. We conduct informative gardening workshops to assist communities in the early stages of their agricultural endeavors. Furthermore, we provide vital infrastructure support, including raised garden beds, greenhouses, equipment provisions, soil enrichment, and grow lights.

We also support raising and upkeep of livestock, throughout the years, we have implemented a range of programs. These initiatives include a chicken coop project in Shamattawa and a fully-functioning farm in Cross Lake, that raised a variety of livestock, including pigs, ducks, cows, and chickens

Over 500
seed packs
sent

~ 50 garden
beds built



Some Projects This Year Include ...



Building raised garden beds for elders in Fox Lake



Building a greenhouse in Lac Brochet



Providing grow lights for the Grand Rapids School Garden Club

Youth Wellness

We place value in the future, which means we place value in the coming generation. We strive to include youth in the work that we do. This can be as simple as funding school gardening clubs or holding workshops at schools, teaching kids how to use the land and emphasizing the positive impacts of being outside, as well as growing and eating healthy foods.

Additionally, we have a Youth Harvester Program. This program allows youth to go out on the land with one of our harvesters to learn from them. It enables knowledge to be passed down to the next generation through hands-on learning and connection.



“The part that made me feel good about doing this [harvesting] was learning from it and also helping out and actually providing meat for the elders and the people in my community.” - Makeso Sakahikanihk youth, 2023



Meet Myron

We'd like to introduce you to Myron, a harvester in Brochet.

Myron is a skilled harvester; he has snared rabbits, harvested fish, hunted caribou, and geese for his community. Myron not only provides food for members of his community but also mentors youth, teaching land-based knowledge.

He has also overcome many challenges; being a harvester in the North comes with its own set of difficulties. Myron has taught himself how to become his own boat and snowmobile mechanic, showcasing his resilience and commitment!



Knowledge Transfer and Learning

FMM is dedicated to promoting knowledge sharing and transfer through a diverse range of tools and initiatives. We place a strong emphasis on fostering intergenerational mentorship, providing young individuals with the invaluable opportunity to learn from experienced mentors. Simultaneously, we encourage elders and knowledge holders to pass down their wisdom to anyone eager to learn.

Furthermore, we actively promote collaboration and knowledge exchange among our partners, facilitating an environment where they can share stories, learn from each other's experiences, and collectively grow. Additionally, we regularly organize workshops that focus on various aspects of the agricultural sector, such as gardening and canning, to facilitate knowledge sharing within our partner communities.



Gatherings



Hosting and attending gatherings is an important way to bring people together to connect, have ceremonies, share meals and share stories. We believe the more connected we are to our partners the more impactful our work will be. This year we hosted 2 gatherings, our annual Grow North Gathering in Norway House as well as a goose hunt in Churchill.

Meet Barry

Barry has been an invaluable partner with FMM for an extensive period, fostering strong connections with many communities in the North and assuming a pivotal role in several of FMM's operations.

Every winter, Barry lends his expertise to guide us through the intricate ice roads, delivering essential supplies to remote communities. His contributions enable these communities to acquire the resources necessary for their winter harvesting and spring planting season.

Furthermore, Barry's involvement extends to his role as a potato farmer. In the spring, he plays a vital role in supplying our partners with high-quality potato seedlings, ensuring a bountiful start to the growing season



Highlights

Churchill Goose Hunt

Our community project coordinator Lawrence, took 8 youth to Churchill to learn how to hunt and process geese over the long weekend in May. They had a successful harvest despite less than ideal weather conditions. The youth that joined Lawrence were from Fox Lake and York Landing. They had a tremendous amount of fun learning skills from Lawrence and spending time together on the land.



Grow North Gathering

In Norway House, we convened for the annual Grow North Gathering, joined by our esteemed partners.

This event spanned three enriching days dedicated to celebration, learning, and the nurturing of meaningful connections.

During this gathering, we engaged in a diverse range of activities that offered participants valuable insights. There were lessons in making bannock, learning the art of snowshoe making and a workshop in gravity irrigation. The group also had the chance to learn how to harvest and prepare grouse and beaver, as well as clean and smoke fish and geese, which later turned into a lovely supper for the group to enjoy.

There was also time for berry harvesting, new berry patch planting, visits to ancient sacred sites, and a memorable boat ride.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to Madeline and Gordie, who generously opened the doors of their cultural camp to us, creating the perfect backdrop for our endeavors.

As we reflect on the bonds forged and knowledge acquired during the Grow North Gathering, we are reminded of our collective journey toward growth and unity. Let us cherish and nurture these connections as we move forward together.



Looking Forward

Food Matters Manitoba has spent years working with our community partners across Northern Manitoba to solve the growing food insecurity problem. Our emphasis on building and enhancing relationships has put us in a unique position of understanding community needs and capacity, prevailing barriers to success, as well as existing potential. We've been able to establish vast networks of support that reach way up from governments and foundations, through academic institutions and industry all the way down to the community level where workers on the front lines are fighting to making change happen.

We are now at an exciting time where the opportunity exists to put all the pieces together, with our community partners. We are preparing to create a prototype for a Northern Community Food Centre: a facility that harnesses potential, enhances capacity, develops infrastructure, and implements substantial lasting solutions towards food security through a sustainable economic model. From here, we improve the model, replicate and scale. The end goal is to methodically harness the food security potential of the north, while empowering communities, increasing health and wellbeing, and enhancing local economies.

This project has emerged organically through two decades of committed partnerships led by our northern community partners. Our agricultural support program empowers communities to develop the skills, knowledge, experience, momentum and capacity needed to pursue a Northern Community Food Centre. And likewise, successful Centers will serve to help inspire and guide surrounding communities along their own journey to food security.

Food Matters Manitoba is excited to invite organizations and individuals alike to support this approach, joining a movement of sustainable change in Northern Manitoba.



Coming Together For Change



Thank you Funders !

Government of Canada

Province of Manitoba

Dillon Consulting

Bell

Roquette

The Lawson Foundation

Winnipeg Foundation

Anonymous Donor

Makeway

Queens University

John Humphrey Centre for Peace

Canadian Red Cross

Max Bell

Community Food Centres Canada

**WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO
ANOTHER YEAR AT FOOD MATTERS
MANITOBA, THANK YOU FOR JOINING
US.**



FOOD MATTERS
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