

Thunder Bay Good Food Box YEAR END REPORT 2021

FRESH

Engaging

AFFORDABLE

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY
IN OUR HANDS SINCE 2005

ACCESSIBLE



The Good Food Box is administered by
NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE THEIR NEEDS



2021: a year in review

As the pandemic rolled into its second year, the Good Food Box continued to roll with the punches.

- We packed and distributed 5512 Good Food Boxes – Over 100,000 lbs of fresh produce!
- We worked to re-establish our network of Host-Sites - from 4 at the beginning of the pandemic back to 30
- We slowly welcomed back our community volunteers – we welcomed 72 volunteers in 2021.
- We shifted operations, and upgraded safety procedures regularly, to keep in line with evolving recommendations and ensure our pack / distribution days were as safe and welcoming as possible.
- We tried to find new ways to engage with our customers (ran on online cooking zoom classes with Metis Nation and created a zine cookbook in partnership with local restaurants.
- We continued to distribute GFCs to subsidize the cost of the box for individuals struggling to afford the entire amount
- We conducted our biennial survey of customer, host-Sites and volunteers in the spring of 2021.
- We launched a new website, and continued to run our local box fundraiser, engaging with new local producers and raising over \$12,000 for the Good Food Box

GFB NUMBERS:

| Month | total # | First box | Children | Adults | Seniors | # of boxes |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| (2021) | of boxes | 2021 | 0-17 | 18-54 | 55+ | Reporting stats |
| January | 333 | 333 | 344 | 352 | 158 | 308 |
| February | 402 | 95 | 380 | 335 | 165 | 302 |
| March | 524 | 134 | 472 | 440 | 254 | 411 |
| April | 475 | 36 | 465 | 431 | 247 | 401 |
| May | 510 | 27 | 472 | 466 | 231 | 431 |
| June | 517 | 44 | 449 | 446 | 224 | 428 |
| July | 538 | 19 | 492 | 463 | 251 | 421 |
| August | 512 | 20 | 408 | 373 | 238 | 382 |
| September | 454 | 6 | 420 | 366 | 254 | 378 |
| October | 459 | 14 | 485 | 429 | 255 | 405 |
| November | 368 | 15 | 423 | 349 | 174 | 304 |
| December | 420 | 17 | 451 | 352 | 202 | 323 |
| TOTALS: | 5512 | 760 | 5261 | 4802 | 2653 | 4494 |

* CALCULATIONS

To estimate total unique households and belly stats:

$$\frac{\text{stat collected}}{\text{total \# boxes reporting}} = \frac{X}{\text{total \# of boxes}}$$

ie. $\frac{760}{4494} = \frac{X}{5512}$

$$4494X = 760 (5512)$$

$$X = \frac{760 (5512)}{4494}$$

We packed and distributed 5512 Good Food Boxes.

We had 82% of boxes report stats in 2021. Based on the # of boxes reporting*, we can estimate that we served **932 unique households** and that our boxes fed the following number of bellies: **6453 children, 5890 adults, and 3253 seniors**

THE BOX: cost, subsidies & quantity of produce distributed

- **COST:** The Cost of the box remained at \$22 throughout 2021. 100% of the Cost goes towards the purchase of produce for the box. All other expenses (truck rental, hall rental, wages, volunteer lunches, bus tickets, subsidies, cardboard, administration fees, etc.) come from funders and community donations.
- **SUBSIDIES (INN THE FORM OF GFCs):** To assist customers who are have difficulty affording the entire amount, we continued to **distribute GFCs (Good Food Coupons)**, in \$5 and \$10 denominations to subsidize the cost. In 2021 we distributed 66 GFCs with a total value of \$545.00. As these coupons are purchased by community members and given out as needed, the demand for them, far exceeds the supply. It would be great to have a more reliable and consistent source of GFCs in 2022.
- **Quantity of food distributed:** we distributed over 100,000lbs of FRESH HEALTHY produce in 2021!

LBS of produce distributed each month:

| | lbs/box x #of Boxes | Total lbs |
|-----|----------------------|-----------|
| JAN | (16.5lbs x 333 GFBs) | 5495 |
| FEB | (18lbs x 402 GFBs) | 7236 |
| MAR | (18.5lbs x 524 GFBs) | 9694 |
| APR | (20.5lbs x 475 GFBs) | 9734 |
| MAY | (18.5lbs x 510 GFBs) | 9435 |
| JUN | (17lbs x 517 GFBs) | 8789 |
| JUL | (18.5lbs x 538 GFBs) | 9953 |
| AUG | (17.5lbs x 512 GFBs) | 8960 |
| SEP | (19lbs x 454 GFBs) | 8626 |
| OCT | (19lbs x 459 GFBs) | 8721 |
| NOV | (20lbs x 368 GFBs) | 7360 |
| DEC | (18lbs x 420 GFBs) | 7560 |

Average GFB contains 18.5lbs **101563 lbs**
of fresh produce



*"I started getting a food box years ago because my doctor told me to get it so that I'd have to face the reality of what I SHOULD be eating."
- Customer (Wardrope Court)*



Paul preparing GFBs for delivery

THE GFB CUSTOMERS:

Our program is intended for, and primarily serves families & individuals with low or fixed incomes including young families, sole support parents, students, seniors, and people with disabilities. To avoid stigma, we do not use any eligibility criteria.

- 54% of GFB customers indicated they often run out of money to buy food or buy food that is less healthy because it is less expensive
- 83% of our customers say they eat more fruits and vegetables when they purchase a good food box
- 69% of our customers, are getting at least half of all their monthly fresh fruit and vegetables from their GFB
- 65% of our customers say, they are still not getting the recommend amount of fruits and vegetables recommended by the Canada Food Guide.
- 98% of our customers feel the program is accessible
- 40% of our customers reported feeling less connected to their community since covid. Simply purchasing a box from a neighborhood host-site, makes 69% of customers feel more connected to their community.
- 32% of our customers have been participating in the GFB program for 5 years or more

*"I don't have to carry groceries on the bus and I get to visit with people in my building."
- customer (McIvor Court)*

*"For me this is a better option than the food bank. I am a stroke survivor with diabetes living on OW and trying to eat healthy. I can't eat most of the carbohydrates the food bank offers, and I can't afford enough vegetables from the store to get by."
- customer (McIvor Court)*

GFB HOST-SITE NETWORK: 70% of Host-Sites have been acting as GFB Host-Sites for 4 years or longer!

| | HOST SITES | ACCESSIBLE to | Administered by: |
|----|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Matawa Health Co-operative | Band members and clients of clinic | Clinic staff |
| 2 | Thunder Bay 55+ Centre | GENERAL PUBLIC | Centre staff |
| 3 | Anishnawbe Mushkiki | Clients of clinic | Clinic staff |
| 4 | Lakehead University (FUFT/ FS committee) | LU students | LUFFT members |
| 5 | WF-MJLB Library | GENERAL PUBLIC | Library staff |
| 6 | Manion Court / Glenwood - Safeway in northwood | Residents | volunteer coordinator/ DSSAB staff assist |
| 7 | Patterson Court (ts-Paula) - across from Miles st Park | Residents | volunteer coordinator/ DSSAB staff assist |
| 8 | Norwest Community Health Centre | GENERAL PUBLIC | Clinic staff |
| 9 | Our Kids Count | Clients/GENERAL PUBLIC | Centre staff |
| 10 | AZA | Band members | AZA staff |
| 11 | Matawa First Nation | Band members (mostly elders) | MFN staff |
| 12 | Upsala - UVASA Home support | Upsala Elders | UVASA staff |
| 13 | Indigenous Friendship Centre | Clients/GENERAL PUBLIC | Centre staff |
| 14 | Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic | GENERAL PUBLIC | Clinic staff |
| 15 | Clarke Towers (9 Regent) - | Residents | Volunteer coordinator |
| 16 | NOWC | GENERAL PUBLIC | Centre staff |
| 17 | Lappe | GENERAL PUBLIC | Volunteer coordinator |
| 18 | Fort William First Nation | Open to all members of FWFN | FWFN staff |
| 19 | CAS | clients | CAS workers |
| 20 | Jasper Place | Residents | City staff |
| 21 | Brad Tucker | Neighbors & Friends | Volunteer coordinator |
| 22 | Andras Court | Residents | TBDSSAB staff |
| 23 | Castlegreen Co-op | Residents | Co-op staff |
| 24 | Superiorview | Residents | Volunteer coordinator |
| 25 | MOOSE- 21 | GENERAL PUBLIC | NOWC staff |
| 26 | Wardope Court - near blvd lake | Residents | Volunteer coordinator |
| 27 | Adelaide Apartments | Residents | Volunteer coordinator |
| 28 | Upsala | GENERAL PUBLIC | Volunteer coordinator |
| 29 | Mclvor Court (ts-Tammy) | Residents | Volunteer coordinator/ DSSAB staff assist |
| 30 | Metro Lions** (Payment on pickup \$93) | Residents | Volunteer coordinator |

Host-Site Safety Plans: Safe Distribution plans worked out with all host-sites.

- Each Host-Site assigned a set time to pick up their boxes
- Offering completely contactless pickup (during surges of the virus) →
- Drop-Knock & Go: Contactless method to distribute GFBs directly to customers' doorsteps. The customer knows the window of delivery, the time is written on the top of the box when it is dropped, the doorbell is rung, and the driver walks away before door is opened. Drop, Knock and Go is used inside many of our apartment buildings as well with Boxes dropped in front of customers' doors
- Drive through pick-ups: customers drive up to a stopping point, give their names, and their box is placed in their trunk. This is done with walk up traffic too. Payments can be put in envelopes, mailboxes, or one site even uses a long-pole fishing net so customers can drop their payments into.
- PPE kits continually on offer (and distributed to host-sites upon request).

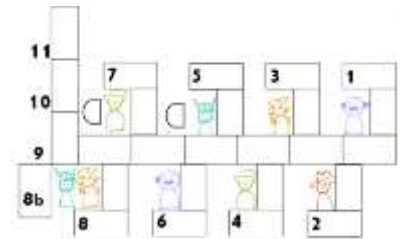


GFB VOLUNTEERS:



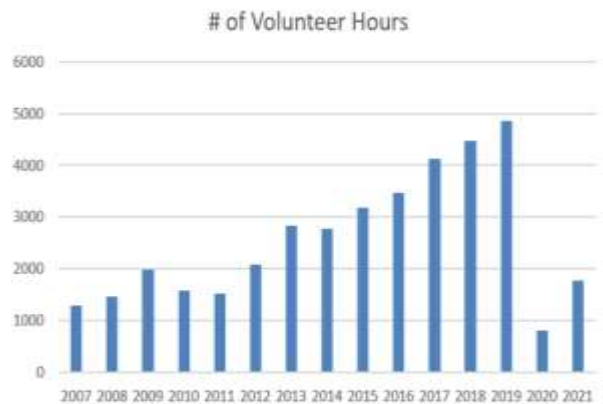
Prior to the pandemic, we had over 200 volunteers on our annual roster; then in March of 2020 when the lockdown began, we dropped to 4 volunteers. Throughout 2021, we shifted operations, and upgraded safety procedures regularly to keep in line with evolving recommendations and ensure our pack / distribution days, were as safe and welcoming as possible. Some of the things we've done to increase the safety of our pack days for volunteers (with relation to Covid) include:

- Adjusting our floorplans to improve social distancing on the line. *example*→
- Screening volunteers upon entry, limiting the number of people at the pack and reviewing safety protocols with our volunteers regularly
- Providing PPE to all volunteers (packing, host-site, drivers)
- Instituting a vaccination requirement for volunteers working at the pack day facility (Moose Hall)
- Attending volunteer safety webinars (hosted by PAVRO): Volunteer Workplace Health and Safety – with Sue Boychuck AND Putting Mental Health in Health and Safety - Workplace Safety North, Angele Poitras



Volunteers by the numbers:

- We had 24 pack days in 2021 (We packed over a 2-day period each month)
- We welcomed 55 unique pack day volunteers
- 5 volunteer delivery drivers (that are not included in pack volunteers)
- 13 host-Site Volunteers (11 unique as 2 are also listed as pack day volunteers)
- And 4 Volunteers who sit on our board (1 unique as other 3 are also pack day volunteers)
- **For a total of 72 unique Volunteers on our 2021 roster, who combined, shared 1786 hours with the Good Food Box program**



According to our most recent survey:

- 88% of our volunteers report eating more fruits and vegetables when they get a GFB
- 96% of our volunteers said they have made new friends since they started volunteering!
- 96% reported feeling appreciated for their volunteer efforts
- 87% feel more connected to the community
- And 61% have learned new skills they didn't have prior to volunteering



Volunteer Engagement:

- From January to June of 2021, we teamed up with Metis Nation of Ontario to offer fun and lighthearted Cooking with the Box workshops via Zoom.
- We worked with local restaurants to come up with easy to make dishes, with items typically found in a Good Food Box. We made a hearty veg Stew from Bliss Café, Good Energy Bowls with In Common, Ouzi with Royal Aleppo and much more.
- Between January and June 2021, we hosted 94 zoom participants who, with their cooked meals, fed 250 bellies. All the recipes were then compiled into a 25-page zine and shared with all participants→

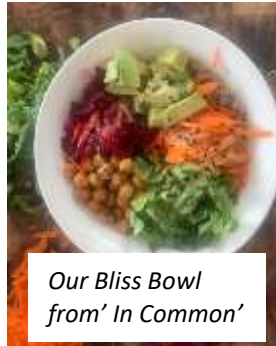


Some customer feedback:

"I ended up feeding 7 people because I had so much stew that I brought some to 3 of my elderly neighbours." "Thank you this was very fun!"



home set up for Zoom cooking



Our Bliss Bowl from In Common



Participant pick of their hearty winter stew!

There are other ways we engage with volunteers (and volunteers engage with each other) during pack days:

- Our small team of kitchen volunteers works together to make beautiful salads and fruit trays (to compliment the pizza we are fortunate to received from eat local). The lunch is a popular feature of the pack day tradition. It's a time to sit (at your own 8ft" table!) and get to socialize and catch up with the other volunteers
- We made little kitchen herb grow kits for all the volunteers, that included instructions, the dirt, and even a little grow container (produce clamshell!) to grow them in.



Marilyn with her DIY herb grow kit



Fay sharing her knit dishcloths w/ the volunteers



June setting up the lunchtime feast!

to help engage our volunteers in the GFB program, we offer Volunteer Discounts to offset the cost of a box

Many years ago we noticed that our hard working volunteers had difficulty affording a box for themselves, so we began to offer Volunteer Discounts - a \$7 discount off the cost of a Good Food Box. In 2021 we gave out 248 Volunteer discounts with a total value of \$1736.00

When volunteers were asked what the GFB means to them:

- ❖ *"Really enjoy. look forward to it every month"*
- ❖ *"Great people, like a family"*
- ❖ *"Love it all. Socialization and contact. Being involved."*
- ❖ *"Interaction, helpful support, sharing and new friends."*



THE GFB BOARD:

Our Board is a mix of volunteers, Hos-site coordinators, community partners and NOWC staff. The board meets every 6-8 weeks to offer input and direction for the program.

- Gwen O'Reilly - since Sep. 2005 (Executive Director NOWC) →
- Sandy Kennedy - since Jan. 2016 (Volunteer + HS coordinator: LAPPE)
- Michelle Kolobutin - since Jan. 2018 (HS coordinator: Norwest Community H.C.)
- Bill Jean-Louis - since Oct. 2018 (volunteer)
- Ivan Ho - since Apr. 2018 (Community Partner: TBDHU)
- Emily Mackenzie - Dec. 2020 (HS Coordinator: Indigenous Friendship Centre)
- Nusrat Haider Khan - since Dec. 2020 (Volunteer)
- Lark Mask - since Dec. 2020 (Volunteer)



THE LOCALLY GROWN (& MADE) FUNDRAISER BOXES:

The **Locally Grown Good Food Fundraiser Box (or GFFB)** is our social enterprise that raises funds for the GFB Program. Our Local Boxes (GFFBs) are packed entirely with locally grown and produced goods that are distributed through community connections that strengthen the capacity of our local food system.



Each box is sold for \$60 (the cost includes a \$20 charitable donation to the Thunder Bay GFB Program). The Local Box fundraiser allows food secure individuals in our community to participate in the GFB program; money raised supports the program, the money spent supports our local farmers and producers!!

There are currently 10 Different Local Boxes that we offer:

- 1 local Valentine Box (Feb), 1 locally grown good garden box (Spring), 5 locally grown good food fundraiser boxes (July – Nov) and 3 locally made Holiday Boxes (Gift, Goodie & Dinner Box)
- 87% of local box customers indicated that purchasing the Local Food Box has influenced them to buy produce from farmers/suppliers featured in the box
- 90% of local box customers indicated the Local Food Box has introduced them to new suppliers



"Keep up the great work! I love sampling new items from producers before I buy them. The unique gifts and goodies are wonderful surprises and a great introduction to new businesses."

← Between the GFB & GFFB, we purchased **28,055 lbs** of local potatoes!!



In 2021 we raised **\$12,220.00** through the sale of our GFFBs, and spent **\$40,106.94** on locally grown and produced good (\$23,626.24 through the local box and 16,480.70 through the regular GFB)

WE WOULD LIKE TO GRATEFULLY ACKKNOWLEGE OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS:



Report prepared by Sherry Scott (Jan. 2022) | All Statistics and quotes taken from the 2022 GFB Biennial Survey