



How To Host Your Own Youth or High School Eat-In Ontario Event Updated for 2011!

Join Us in Celebrating Eat-In Ontario!

The following is a collection of ideas and activities for teachers, parents, students and other school community members to draw on as they celebrate Ontario's Harvest and encourage active participation in their school's Eat In Ontario event.

Introduction To Eat-In Ontario:

What: *Eat-In Ontario* is a province-wide fall harvest celebration with fun-filled activities, using fresh local produce to teach students of all ages the joys of cooking, growing and tasting good, healthy food. This event is part of FoodShare's *Recipe for Change* initiative, a partnership in which we aim to build Food Literacy across Ontario by delivering hands-on, curriculum-linked activities. This initiative will get students active in their own learning about where their food comes from and how to grow, cook, and enjoy nutritious food as part of an active and healthy lifestyle—transforming classrooms, school yards, and appetites across Ontario.

When: The official date is **September 30th, 2011** – but you can celebrate local food any time!

Why: *Eat-In Ontario* is not only fun, but it's also a great way to promote local food with your students. Local food education encourages a more sustainable food system where consumers know their producers, the farmland is preserved and the food is fresh! Enjoying more local food also helps support our local economy and local farmers. See “What You Need to Know About Local Food” in the Extras section of this guide for more information.

How: *Eat-In Ontario* can be as simple as crunching into a locally grown fruit or vegetable, or as special as your own day-long fall harvest celebration in class. Here in Toronto, FoodShare has registered around 500 students from JK to Grade 12 to celebrate on the front lawn of Queen's Park with local food tastings and fun, hands-on Food Literacy workshops to complement. You too can host an *Eat-In Ontario* with your students at your own school with this “How To” guide in addition to our free *Eat-In Ontario* curriculum-linked lesson plans online (www.foodshare.net).

Don't forget to register your class! We want to know about all the amazing *Eat-In Ontario* activities that happen across the province.

New for 2011! This year, *Eat-In Ontario* falls just one week before Ontario's provincial election, the perfect time to have your students fully understand what a future of “saying yes to food” would look like. We encourage you and your class to incorporate Food Literacy and election education to make your *Eat-In Ontario* even more meaningful. Join FoodShare when we “say yes to food” this coming election!

Interactive Eat-In Ontario Activities:

- **Organize Your Own Eat-In Ontario Harvest Celebration! – Page 4**

Your students will love being a part of the province-wide fun! Try our quick and easy harvest celebration activities!

- **Taste Locally Grown Produce And Cast Your Vote! – Page 7**

Eat it raw or cook it up – just make sure you taste some delicious local food this fall! Find out what your students really think when they vote on their favourite vegetable party’s “pitch”...

- **Prepare A Signature Salad Using Local Produce – Page 9**

Local Food Chef – Are you Ready!? One of FoodShare’s most popular workshops, Signature Salads will get students of all ages excited about preparing (and eating!) fresh, local ingredients... trust us.

- **Write A Letter To A Member of Provincial Parliament About Food Policy Issues – Page 11**

The timing is perfect for your students to be heard by writing to their MPP this coming election!

- **Make A 2-Minute Video About A Local Food Related Issue – Page 15**

Your students can launch their own food-related agenda virally through a powerful, short video about issues that matter most.

- **Perform A School Food Security Assessment – Page 16**

Think globally, but act locally... Students will enjoy looking at their own school food programs more closely and making recommendations based on their findings.

- **Track Your Food Choices and Food Miles – Page 18**

Ever wondered how your food magically arrived on your plate? Trace it back to its origin and create a Food Miles map to showcase how far it’s really come.

- **Plant A Seed and Plant A Seed – Page 19**

Discover the different organizations working on local food in Ontario and learn about the seeds that were planted to create a movement... and what it takes to keep them growing.

- **Let’s Talk Food Politics – Page 23**

Grass-roots advocate? Foodie? Teacher? Politician? You choose! Your students will learn about the successes and challenges of the local food movement through discussion and debate first-hand.

- **Party Shopping List – Page 25**

What does “voting with your fork” really mean? If a political party had a shopping list, what would it look like? Students will generate their own original ideas to create change this provincial election.

Extras:

- **Event Planning Tips and Hints for your *Eat-In Ontario* - **Page 27****
Get ideas for your own Eat-In Ontario by reading some of our catering and event planning tips.
- **What You Need To Know About Local Food – **Page 31****
The what, where, how and why of local food.
- **Brainstorming Connections – **Page 33****
Help students make the connections they need to understand where food and politics collide.
- **Facts About Ontario Politics – **Page 34****
Fill your class activities this September with fun facts before the election.
- **Invite A Guest To Come And Speak To The Class – **Page 35****
When it comes to careers in food, there are so many choices for guest speakers... Remember to think from “field to table” when learning about the people in our food system and the role they play every day.
- **Go On A Local Food Walking Tour Or Field Trip – **Page 38****
Field trips can be as simple as walking around your school’s community. There are markets, gardens, stores and farms to be explored!

Organize Your Own *Eat-In Ontario* Harvest Celebration!

Your students will love being a part of the *Eat-In Ontario* province-wide fun! Celebrations can be as simple as crunching into some tasty, local food or a day-long event; it's up to you!

What? An *Eat-In Ontario* harvest celebration is a celebration of all things local! It's an opportunity to get together, enjoy some fresh food and teach students of all ages about the importance of being aware of what we eat.

Where? If you're heading outdoors and are lucky enough to have green or open space at your school with access to shade, electricity (if cooking on site) and plenty of play-space, then you don't have to go anywhere! If not, get in touch with your school board's permit office to see what's available or perhaps make use of some local park space. Note: parks may require permits too!

Otherwise, any indoor space large enough to comfortably hold the students you intend to host should do the trick (e.g. classroom, school hall, auditorium, gymnasium, etc.).

When? It's really up to you when you want to host your school's harvest celebration, however this year's official *Eat-In Ontario* date is **Friday, September 30th 2011**.

Why? An *Eat-In Ontario* harvest celebration is a great way to boost the Food Literacy focus within your school. Engaging students to become interested in where their food comes from, and the journey it takes to get from field to table.... Oh yeah, and it's fun too!

How? All you need to do is register your school's event by emailing us at recipeforchange@foodshare.net. We'd love to hear about the activities you're doing with your school and see any accompanying photos! For event planning tips, see "Extras" at the end of this guide.

Quick Activity Ideas for your Eat-In Ontario Harvest Celebration:

Leading up to the day:

Promotional Resources:

- Include the students in deciding how to best promote the event (e.g. if including more than one class, or inviting parents, etc.). Ideas include posters, emails, PA announcements, newsletter inserts or short videos.
- Engage in art/graphic activities to create resources to promote the event.

Literature & Media:

- Introduce your students to non-fiction authors, bloggers or advocates covering food-related issues and read, research and discuss their work.
- Watch food-related movies or documentaries with your students (e.g. Food Inc., Fresh or Supersize Me, etc.).



On the Day:

Fundraising:

- Try and get a local produce basket donated by a local retailer to raffle-off (e.g. cheese, breads, condiments, vegetables, fruit).
- If it's a big event, sell food and beverages prepared on site such as smoothies, freshly squeezed juices, sandwiches, wraps, salads, vegetable soups, barbequed veggie or local meat kebabs, corn on the cob, mini whole-wheat muffin pizzas with vegetables and low fat cheese, frozen yoghurt pops, fresh fruit salad, granola, yoghurt and fruit parfait, spiced carrot whole-wheat muffins. Food safety and PPM150 standards will have to be followed, as per any school event.

Tasting Food:

- Taste-testing of local produce (read on for more details)

- Have the students shake plastic containers of whipping cream (with a marble in it for quicker results) to make butter. Once you've poured off the buttermilk, the remaining butter can be mixed with fresh, finely chopped herbs.
- Have a cooking demonstration of a local, healthy recipe and then taste it. Students can contribute by measuring out ingredients according to recipe directions ahead of time.

Displays:

- Display any classroom work done by the students in classes related to local food, nutrition and agriculture.
- Include some promotional material created by the students – don't forget to do some in French and any languages your students speak at home.
- Seasonal food centre-pieces or displays:
 - E.g. different sized and coloured pumpkins, corn stalks, scare crows

Special Guests:

- Read on for more ideas on guest speakers.

Give Your Students a Voice:

- Help facilitate a way for your students' voices to be heard, whether a peaceful demonstration, letter writing session or concert, work with your students to help them express how they feel about food issues related to them.



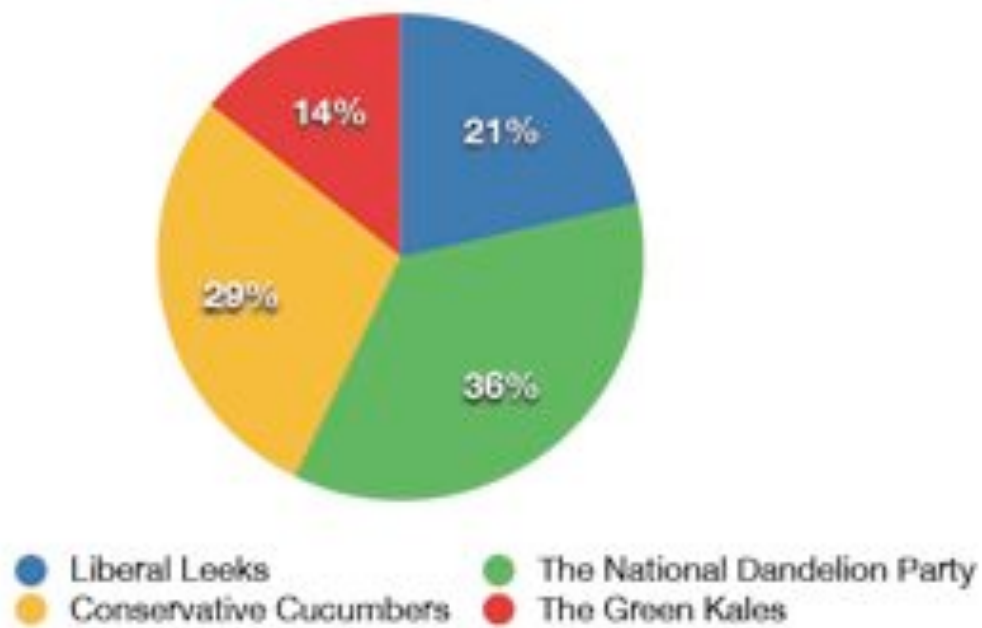
Taste Locally Grown Produce and Cast Your Vote:

For more information about the local food “movement”, see “Extras” at the end of this guide.

Okay, so now you have your fresh, seasonal produce item (e.g. corn, squash, garlic, etc.), and you’re ready to do some tastings! You can go about this with your class in the following ways:

- 1. Eat it raw.** The simplest and often the healthiest way to taste fruits and vegetables. Of course, this doesn’t apply to all produce items but we’d highly recommend trying to include at least some raw items on your tasting menu. Raw fruits go without saying. Raw vegetables such as beans, carrots, thinly sliced beets or radishes, peppers, broccoli and celery make tasty dippers. *You could serve with a simple hummus dip of blended chickpeas, tahini, olive oil and garlic.
- 2. Cook it up (but keep it real).** Try and keep cooking and processing to a minimum when preparing local food tasters. You want to preserve the natural flavour as much as possible for the purpose of the activity so usually a light steam or a quick boil will do.
- 3. Compare and Contrast.** Now the fun begins. It’s fun to compare different varieties of the same vegetable, for example, different coloured heirloom tomatoes, red vs. yellow peppers, arugula vs. spinach greens, etc. You could also do comparisons between local and imported items (e.g. local, raw honey vs. factory-made honey) and see if the students can tell the difference.
- 4. Cast Your Vote!** What better way to demonstrate class majority, or democracy, than with food!
 - Allocate 1-2 students each to a different local fruit or vegetable and political party either based in reality or totally made up (e.g. Liberal Leeks, The New Dandelion Party, Conservative Cucumbers, Green Kales...).
 - Have the party leaders make their political pitch to the class based on research done on their fruit/vegetable (e.g. nutrition content, taste, culinary uses, etc.) and political parties, outlining how they think their party would create policies as it relates to that food, for example:

- The Liberal Leeks could say that by voting for leeks this coming election, you will have an endless supply of nourishing leek soup, perfect for those chilly fall nights...
- The Green Kales might promote their status as a super food, high in iron, fibre and Vitamin K...
- You could create T-Charts to analyze the pros and cons of each fruit or vegetable in the running, or Spider Charts to showcase all of the amazing opportunities that each can provide (e.g. recipes, vitamins, minerals, complementary spices/herbs, etc.).
- The class can cast their votes based on the pitch and tasting session.
- Tastings, voting and graphing could happen every month to ensure regular changeover of the party in “power”, and so that students try lots of different fruits and vegetables and also to encourage seasonal changes.



Prepare a Signature Salad Using Local Produce:

You Will Need:

- An array of different seasonal fruits and vegetables (e.g. mixed greens, carrots, tomatoes large and small, cucumber, red onion, apples, pears, etc.).
- A few salad dressing ingredient options (e.g. olive oil, canola oil, apple cider vinegar, balsamic vinegar, plain yoghurt, honey, mustard, maple syrup, salt and pepper, etc.).
- Some protein-rich options (e.g. pressed cottage cheese, tofu, chickpeas, kidney beans, pumpkin seeds, boiled egg etc.).

Workshop and Recipe Directions:

Criteria

- Begin by discussing the *food guide* with your students. You can order copies in various languages from *Health Canada's* website (www.hc-sc.gc.ca).
- As a class, set the criteria for your *Signature Salads*, for example:
 - a. The salad must be presented well, with at least three different colours. One of the colours must be green and one must be orange.
 - b. More than three ingredients must be local. Visit *Foodland Ontario* for an availability guide: www.foodland.gov.on.ca.
 - c. The salad must contain at least one protein-rich choice.
 - d. The salad dressing must be made from scratch, using a combination of tart, sweet and salty flavours. You can use the *Tasting and Judging Graph* (see “extras”) to help you decide which ingredients have each of these flavours.

Getting to Know Your Ingredients

- When you're ready to start your salads, address each food separately, talk about how and where it's grown and how to prepare it (e.g. a carrot is a root vegetable that grows underground. You can eat it raw or cooked, either in small rounds or as "sticks" by cutting it like this!).
- Once the students have an idea of each of the foods they have to choose from, it's up to them to create their own masterpiece, however they like, according to the set criteria.

Dressings

- Salad dressings can be done all together, as small groups or in pairs. A good dressing should have a combination of sour, sweet and salty (or "vinegary") – being brought together by an oil or fat (preferably unsaturated). For those that prefer creamy dressings, try a plain yoghurt or silken tofu (in the blender or food processor). Dressings can be shaken in jars, whisked in bowls or blended in mixers.

Wrap-Up and/or Judging

- The end result is an individualized, healthy salad that students will enjoy (because they made it!).
- There is also an opportunity here to turn kitchen activities into an "Iron Chef" style salad-making contest. This could be as simple as *introducing a judge* to taste the students' salads and evaluation according to the agreed criteria.
- Students can make a "pitch" for their salad, promoting why it's so healthy, how they stuck to the criteria and why their salad dressing is the most delicious. Link this back to politicians during a rally, debate or campaign trail, promoting why the public should vote for them.



Write A Letter To A Member of Provincial Parliament About Food Policy Issues

In this activity students will learn how to write a political letter to their MP or MPP and also how to effectively influence government on policy issues.

- On the board, draw a T-Chart with two categories (Provincial and Federal). Have students brainstorm which level of government has control over certain areas of policy (i.e. jurisdictional power). The time spent on this idea may vary according to whether this information is prior knowledge to your students or is relatively new to them.

Provincial	Federal
Crown Lands	Agriculture (shared provincial, but federal is given priority)
Education	Banking
Health Care	Communication (interprovincial or international)
Municipalities	Defense
Property and Civil Rights	Foreign Affairs
Transportation (intraprovincial)	Trade
Welfare	Transportation (interprovincial or international)
	Unemployment Insurance

- Ask students who they would contact to influence *education policy* or *national defense policy*. Provincially, their Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP), and federally, their Member of Parliament (MP).

3. Ask students if they know who their MPP is. If you have access to computers, allow students to research who their representatives are. If no computers are available, a list of representatives can be brought to class for students to check.
 - Current MPPs: *Legislative Assembly of Ontario*,
http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/members/members_current.do?locale=en
4. Ask students if they can think of other influential people, aside from their own representative from their riding that can influence policy. For example:
 - Cabinet Ministers
 - Prime Minister/ Premier
 - Senators
 - Party Leaders
 - Lobby Groups
 - Media Outlets
5. Ask students where *food policy issues* would fall. Are they federal or provincial jurisdiction? Ask students who they would contact regarding food policy issues. Perhaps the provincial level for their jurisdiction over healthcare and education? Or the federal level for their jurisdiction over agriculture?
6. Decide as a class the food policy issue that you want to address. Or perhaps, after brainstorming as a class, students can choose their own subject according to their own interests. Some examples of relevant food policy issues could be:
 - a. *Getting your school cafeteria fitted with a teaching kitchen for Food Literacy education*
 - b. *Getting support for a community food garden onsite to build the students' food security*
 - c. *Getting funding (or more funding) for a healthy student nutrition program*
7. Ask students how they would contact the government about policy issues. *How would they get their attention?* Have a quick group discussion with ideas like letter writing, e-mails, petitions, phone calls, rallies, marches etc.

8. Introduce the idea of political writing to you students. Share with them the *Guidelines for an Effective Political Letter* (attached). Go through each one and discuss. For example, *Should a letter always be typed? What if you don't have access to a computer?*
9. Have students write a draft of a political letter to their MP, MPP or cabinet member.
10. When the drafts are done, have students work in pairs to edit each other's letters. Provide copies of the guidelines and have each pair go through each step to review/edit each other's letters. Provide time for students to create a final copy of their letter.
11. Students should make 2 copies, one for you and one for their representative.
12. Remember, letters to MPs can be sent without postage.

Workshop Extension Ideas:

1. Students could organize a school-wide letter writing campaign, sharing their letter writing tips with other classes or student organizations.
2. Students could explore other means of communicating with policy officials, creating a petition, e-mail campaign, phone call campaign or creating e-cards.
3. Students could bring their letter writing campaign to other people in their community (e.g. family members, businesses, community centres, etc.).

Guidelines for Writing an Effective Political Letter

An effective political letter should have the following components:

- Your name, street address, city, province and postal code in the top right hand corner
- The date one line below on the left hand side
- Address the person correctly, for example:
 - *Dear Mr./ Ms./ Mrs./ Dr.* if they are an MPP
 - *The Honorable (First Name) (Last Name), Minister of (XYZ)* if they are a minister
- Be brief and try to keep your letter to less than one page. Long letters are less likely to be read.
- Be courteous and respectful
- Give an indication of who or what you are (e.g. a high school student).
- Be clear in what you are asking for
- Thank them for any positive action they have taken in the past
- Request that they respond to your letter

Additional Resources:

- *Amnesty International Canada – Youth Letter Writing Guide*: Includes tips for writing an effective political letter. http://www.amnesty.ca/youth/youth_action_toolkit/guide_to_letter_writing.php
- *Check Your Head – Youth Global Education Network Letter Writing Guide*: Includes a sample political letter as well as tips. http://cyh.dreamhosters.com/?page_id=10
- *Thought About Food? – A Workbook on Food Security & Influencing Policy*: Contains information on how to engage in activities that can help influence policy, including letter writing. <http://partcfood.msvu.ca/>

Make A 2-Minute Video About A Local Food Related Issue

Making a video with your students is a fun and interactive way to get out of the classroom and explore ways of either investigating, expressing or evaluation food-related issues. You can choose to do this as a whole class, in small groups or in pairs, depending on the equipment you have available to you.

Your students will likely know all about the influence of short videos from watching You Tube, but you could show them some examples of thought-provoking videos to get their creative juices flowing. Here are a few that we like:

- The Story of Stuff, <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>
- Grocery Store Wars (2005), search on You Tube
- Mouth Revolution (2007), search on You Tube

Students can choose to cover topics of interest to them. But some prompters could be:

- The long-term and short-term benefits of eating well
- Food security (or insecurity) of students
- Local food in season and where to get it
- Cultural food
- The life of an Ontario farmer
- Why food should be considered in this Provincial election and how people can “vote for food”

Students can use their knowledge of drama and media techniques to create a persuasive piece addressing one or more key food principles. For example:

- Food Security
- Local Food/ Ontario’s Fall Harvest
- Nutrition
- Fair Trade
- LFP Certified (Organic and Sustainable)
- Food Safety
- Food Culture
- Food Traditions
- Food and Politics

Workshop Extension Ideas:

1. Send videos (or links to online videos) to your Member of Provincial Parliament in the lead up to the election (we also want to see them!)
2. Upload videos to You Tube and share with friends and family
3. Post videos to Facebook and share with as many friends as possible
4. Create a class Facebook page to promote food issues and discussion
5. Have a screening of videos at school for other students to view. You could eat fresh, GMO-free popcorn!

Perform a School Food Security Assessment

This activity will help students evaluate, assess and report on food security issues within your school.

The Lesson:

1. Prepare an example of a typical cafeteria lunch from your school. This could be an actual meal, a photo of a meal or a list of the foods in a typical meal.
2. Show the students the typical lunch.
3. Divide students into groups of four and give each group a piece of chart paper and four different coloured markers.
4. Have students consider the meal from different criteria:
 - Nutrition
 - Cost
 - Packaging
 - Sources of ingredients
5. Each marker will represent one of the four criteria. Ask groups to record on their chart paper everything they know about the meal, based on the four criteria. For example:
 - Is it very nutritious overall? What specific nutrients will it provide?
 - Is it affordable for most students? What else could you buy for that price?
 - What sort of packaging is used? Would the ingredients have come from packaging prior to being plated?
 - Where were the major ingredients likely sourced? Are they local?
6. After providing time to brainstorm, have students share their analysis “popcorn style” (one answer at a time, stand up to share, no repeats). Copy down their answers onto the board.
7. Ask students if there were any colours “missing” from their page? For example, were they able to address all of the criteria except for packaging/nutrition/cost/origin?



The Food Security Audit:

8. Explain to the students that they will be performing research to address food security in their own school. Have students work in small groups for this activity (around 4-5).
9. Each group will create a research question and methodology (e.g. questionnaire, survey, tally) to guide their research. Research questions should address the nutrition, cost, packaging or source of their cafeteria's food. Example research questions:
 - *What are the factors that lead to students choosing meals outside of the school cafeteria?*
 - *Is the cafeteria's food culturally appropriate for the majority of the student population?*
 - *Can most students afford the cafeteria lunch?*
 - *What percentage of the cafeteria's food is sourced within Ontario?*
 - *Is there a way that the school could reduce its food packaging?*
10. Provide class time for students to complete a report of their findings as a group. Each report should include their research question, methodology used, results (including a table and/or graph), discussion of results and recommendations.

Workshop Extension Ideas:

- Students can share their findings with the school administration, or at a staff meeting.
- Students can send their findings and recommendations to the company that runs their school's cafeteria.
- Students could choose one or some of their recommendations to turn into a class project or a project for a student organization.
- Students can send their findings to a local government representative as a call for greater action in student nutrition policy (Refer to the "Write a Letter to A Member of Provincial About Food Policy Issues" activity).

Track Your Food Choices and Food Miles

1. Ask students to either photograph or write down the contents of a meal they've eaten. For example, last night's dinner, the cafeteria's lunch, a school nutrition program snack etc.
2. Break down the ingredients of what went into the meal. For example, spaghetti bolognese could be broken down into the following ingredients:
 - Pasta
 - Ground Beef /Pork
 - Tomatoes (fresh or canned)
 - Garlic
 - Onion
 - Carrot
 - Celery
 - Stock or water
 - Parsley
 - Parmesan cheese
3. Spend some time researching *where* these ingredients came from. This may involve some investigation, for example, asking the cafeteria staff where they source items, a trip to the local supermarket or searching online.
4. If possible, a world map with an expanded section of Ontario would be ideal for this activity.
5. Mark on the map where each ingredient came from using a pin or tack – this is the “Food Miles” for that item.
6. Using some yarn, join the origin of the ingredient, back to your school or region.
7. Students can use the scale provided on the map, a ruler and the yarn to judge how far each ingredient has come.
8. Discuss if some meals were typically more local than others. *What were the common ingredients that were sourced locally? Why?*
9. List ways that the “food miles” could have been reduced.

Workshop Extension Ideas:

1. Who are the *people* that were involved in getting your food from field to table?
2. When it comes to “Food Miles” we need to consider the *mode* of transport, not just the distance travelled. Discuss how each of the ingredients mapped would likely have been transported: car, truck, ship, train? Use a different coloured yarn to represent each mode of transport.
3. To further investigate food mile carbon emissions, visit FoodShare's website (www.foodshare.net) for a copy of our “Time To Talk Turkey” workshop.

Plant a Seed and Plant a Seed

Growing Ideas and Growing Plants

Learn about supporting plant growth and supporting social change in your community by starting seeds with your students!

1. Research Activity

Begin by looking at the rise of local food organizations in Ontario. You can see a comprehensive list of “Eat Local” groups on Sustain Ontario’s website: <http://sustainontario.com/resources/ontario-eats-local>.

Include different types of organizations such as government supported and community-run organizations. The class could be divided into small groups to collectively research each one or this could be given as a homework assignment.

Some example research questions for your students could be:

- *How and why did this organization begin? What “seed” was planted to lead to the creation of this organization?*
- *What does the organizations do? What are their goals?*
- *Who makes up the organization’s community?*
- *What makes the organization successful? What does it need to continue to grow?*
- *How could you (or other students) get involved with this organization?*

2. Let’s Get Creative!

For classes that can include art projects, have students create a display, collage, poster or sculpture to showcase their organization and their “community”. This will vary greatly from organization to organization and may not be obvious in some cases. Students could also demonstrate the organization’s programs, goals, employees or volunteers and how students can get involved.

3. Learning about Ecological Communities

Now consider an *ecological* community, when at least two different species live together, sharing a habitat or environment and becoming interdependent in some cases. Members of an ecological community can be in competition, in a predator/prey scenario or have a mutual relationship. An example of an ecological community that is mutual is *The Three Sisters* story:

The Three Sisters

When people in South America began to farm corn and beans and squash, they worked out a system for growing all three plants in the same field that was good for all of the plants and made them grow better than they would have on their own.

Women planted the corn first, in the center of a garden circle.

Two or three weeks later, women planted the beans, all around the little corn plants in a larger circle. As the beans grew, they could wind their stems around the strong corn plants, and be lifted off the ground so their beans wouldn't rot. At the same time, the beans added nitrogen to the soil, which helped the corn to grow.

In and around the corn, women planted summer squash, or pumpkins, and the low leaves of these squash plants spread out and covered the ground, keeping the water from evaporating, so that the corn could absorb it, and keeping weeds from growing up and choking the corn and the beans.

And to make this Three Sisters arrangement even better, when you eat corn, beans, and squash together (which North American people called succotash), they give you all the different kinds of vitamins and proteins that you need to be healthy.

People told a lot of stories about how the Three Sisters got together. You can read one of those stories here:

<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/northamerica/before/1500/religion/threesisters.htm>



4. Making Connections

Ask students to link ecological communities with the communities they identified in their organization. Consider the diverse participants involved, for example, volunteers, students, community members, families, employees, animators, funders or fundees, partnering organizations, and board members. Some student question examples could be:

- *How do the community members work together?*
- *What members do you think are dependent? On who?*
- *Are there any that are interdependent or “mutual”?*
- *Are there any community members that are competitive?*

5. Planting Activity

If possible, plant a seed for every organization studied. This activity could be used to further discuss the needs of a plant (e.g. soil/compost, water, sun...) and with the needs of an organization (e.g. community, funding, support, clear goals...). *What is needed to grow an idea, and grow a seed?*

6. Planting a Seed for Social Change

Now that you have all the details about some local food groups in Ontario, focus in on one or more that students thought most accessible for student participation. Contact the organization and ask how you can get involved!

If you're unable to participate with any of these organizations, brainstorm with your class the potential areas of action, or ways they can get involved in their own community. For example,

- Talking with your friends and family about the issues
- Cooking a meal together and sharing it with your friends
- Recipe swaps
- Studying more food-related issues in class, or as elective project themes in various subjects

- Contributing to the school's cafeteria or snack program by helping out, providing suggestions based on an audit (see *Perform a School Food Security Assessment* activity), recipes etc.
- Talking with the local supermarket, grocer or store about local food availability
- Composting food scraps at school
- Choosing a *Harvest of the Month* produce item and inserting it into the school newsletter. See FoodShare's website for more details on our *Harvest of the Month*: www.foodshare.net.
- Starting a small garden and learning how to grow food as you go!



Let's Talk Food Politics

In this activity, students will develop a deeper understanding of the political structure in our province/municipality and of a local food organization through discussion and role-playing.

I. Discussion about Local Politics and Local Food

Local Politics

- *What happens at Queen's Park in Toronto?*
- *Who works there?*
- *What are their goals?*
- *What role do they play when it comes to local food?*
- *Is there anything more they could do regarding local food?*

Local Food

- *Who are the major players in Ontario for local food? (pick one or some)*
- *Where do they work?*
- *What are their goals?*
- *What role do they play when it comes to local food?*
- *What connection do they have with Queen's Park, if any?*



To read more about Local Food and Ontario Politics, see “extras”.

To see a comprehensive list of local food groups in Ontario, visit Sustain Ontario's website:

<http://sustainontario.com/resources/ontario-eats-local>

2. Role Playing Activity

After discussing the key players in each area, learning about what they do on a daily basis and their long-term goals, act it out!

Fishbowl Activity

- Set up two chairs facing each other in the middle of an area where all students can sit in a circle around the two chairs.
- Choose one “player” from both the political and local food arenas. For example, a politician and a community-based local food advocate.
- In character, two students will begin the discussion, taking the position of each figure chosen by the class.
- The chairs could be marked with props so that everyone is aware of which character is in each chair.
- The students who begin the activity can start a conversation in their character’s role, or discussion questions could be used to prompt discussion.
- As the discussion continues, other students can tap the shoulder of either character to switch positions and take on one of the two characters to continue the discussion and pose questions they may have for one of the two characters.

Example Prompt Questions:

- *What’s your understanding of local food and why it’s important?*
- *What role do you play to promote local food in Ontario?*
- *Why are you or your team vital to the local food “movement”?*
- *What members of the community do you involve with your work?*
- *How do you promote sustainability when it comes to food?*
- *What else could you be doing to promote local food?*

Party Shopping List

1. Provincial Election Discussion/Research

Talk about the next provincial election (October 6th, 2011). Allocate a different party to each group of students to investigate. Discussion questions could include:

- *Who's running? (Parties and/or candidates)*
- *What has been the "public opinion" to date?*
- *What happened in the last election?*
- *Summarize the party platforms. Which most appeals to you?*
- *Where can people in your community vote this coming election?*

2. "Voting with your Fork" Discussion

- *If you consume food, then you have a say... When shopping for food (wherever that may be), we are all voting for particular types of food with the money we spend. Food industry stakeholders take notice of what consumers buy.*
- *But what kinds of foods are we "voting" for?*
 - *We can vote for local vs. imported foods, nutritious vs. "junk" foods, organic vs. conventional foods, fresh vs. processed, etc.*
- *What impact do our food choices have?*
 - *Environmentally, Economically, Socially, Nutritionally, etc.*
- *Local Food Plus has launched a campaign about voting for local and sustainable food specifically, called "Buy to Vote". Visit LFP's website for more details and to take the pledge with your students: www.localfoodplus.ca.*

3. "Shopping List" Activity

- *Using the different party platform summaries created by the students earlier, and the new knowledge around local food, create a "shopping list" for each party using the template provided.*
- *Ask students to list the different things that they think are missing from their case study party's platform as it relates to the local food movement.*

Party Shopping List

Party Name:

Party Platform Summary:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*Fill in this table with the Party's "shopping list" of ideas and resources you think are needed to improve their involvement in the **local food movement**.*

Education	Health	Agriculture	Environment	Economy	Job Creation

What Local Food grade would you give your Party? _____

Extras:

Event Planning Tips and Hints for Your *Eat-In Ontario*

How do I prepare suitable foods for our fall harvest celebration?

There are a few things to consider when preparing food for a harvest festival:

- Consult your school's **nutrition policy** for guidelines surrounding the production of food for students or visit the Ontario Ministry of Education website (www.edu.gov.on.ca) to review the new "**PPMI50**" guidelines for schools and cafeterias *if you plan to sell your food*.
- Use as many **locally produced ingredients** as possible for each recipe. Read on for more guidelines on sourcing locally.
- Include foods from each of the **four food groups** and minimize excess sugars, fats and salt (as per *Canada's Food Guide* and the new PPMI50 guidelines).
- Be sure to adhere to **food safety standards** as outlined on the *Health Canada* website (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>). To summarize,
 - Always cook food to the safe internal temperature. You can check this using a digital food thermometer.
 - Wash your hands and surfaces often with warm, soapy water.
 - Always refrigerate food and leftovers promptly at 4°C or below.
 - Make sure to always separate your raw foods, such as meat and eggs, from cooked foods and vegetables to avoid cross-contamination.
- Be aware of any **allergies or intolerances** in your class. The most common allergies seen in children are nuts, eggs, soy and milk. Only in severe cases would it be necessary to omit any of these ingredients entirely from the day's menu, however, it's easy enough to skip the nuts from any recipe to be sure.
- Be conscious of any **cultural or special dietary needs** in your class. Some examples of common restrictions are:
 - *Vegetarian* – no animal flesh (sometimes includes eggs)

- *Vegan* – no animal products at all, including eggs, honey and dairy
- *Lactose-free* – minimal milk from cows, goats or sheep. Hard cheese and yoghurt is relatively low in lactose. Soy products are an easy alternative for those who are sensitive.
- *Celiac Disease/Gluten Intolerance* – no gluten (wheat, rye, barley and oats). It is safe to include maize (corn), quinoa, millet, sorghum, teff, amaranth, buckwheat, rice, and wild rice instead.
- *Diabetes* – not too much sugar or carbohydrate-containing foods at once (includes candy, sweets/desserts, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, pasta, bread, rice, cereals, grains, dairy and fruits). Keep portions modest for these foods as per *Canada's Food Guide*. Special menus are not necessary for students with Diabetes.
- *Kosher* – no meat and milk combinations, kosher meats only. Strict kosher food needs to be prepared in a certified kosher kitchen.
- *Halaal* – Halaal meats only, no pork, bacon, ham or gelatin
- *Hindu* – no beef or sometimes vegetarian

Who should prepare the food for our *Eat-In Ontario* celebration?

Here at FoodShare, we believe that learning how to cook good, healthy food should be a part of every student's education. We encourage you to include your students in the menu planning, preparation, and clean-up for your celebration.

Who is going to eat the food?

Hopefully everyone! Depending on whom you decide to invite to your celebration, it is assumed that everyone present will be able to sit and enjoy the food together.

It's very powerful if parents, volunteers, teachers, staff and students all eat the same food together. This will also encourage those students who are otherwise "picky eaters" to get involved and try new foods.

How should the food be served?

It's a good opportunity to get creative with packaging of food. Of course the goal is to reduce waste from the event. Some alternative ideas could include:

- Large leaf or corn husk plates or wrapping (e.g. rice salad parcels) – non edible
- Lettuce leaf or steamed green leafy vegetable– edible
- Recycled glass bottles or jars for individual servings (e.g. for soup)
- Hollowed out melon halves for bowls (e.g. for fruit salad)
- Bring-your-own plate/Tupperware/cutlery
- Brown paper bags (at least they can be composted)
- Newspaper wrapping (e.g. for a roasted vegetable salad)
- Use foods that don't require plates (e.g. fresh fruit, veggie skewers, sandwiches)
- Make it a fun activity to let the student's imagination run wild – who knows what they'll come up with!



If disposable plates, cups and cutlery are absolutely necessary, ensure that they're 100% recyclable. Extra recycling bins would be a good idea for the day. On that note, ensure extra compost bins are available for organic leftovers too.

It's up to you how you want to present the food. It really depends on how many people are present at the celebration.

1. *For a small number* (e.g. a class): having a "picnic blanket buffet" would be easy. It is attractive to look at, is accessible and encourages interaction, co-operation and discussion over the food.
2. *For a larger group* (e.g. a grade level): You may want to take the above suggestion and split the plates into several mini-blanket buffets (i.e. one per class). The other option would be to have a

line-up and people serving each item onto the plate. This may be a good option to ensure portion-control if you feel you may run out of certain items.

3. *For a large group* (e.g. a whole school): Separate stations may be a good idea for very large groups as it won't be possible to ensure that everyone gets to try everything. You could have stalls, just like a farmers market, where people can line up. This will reduce the crowdedness that would arise with a table or blanket buffet. Alternatively, you could stagger the times when students eat (e.g. grades 9 first, followed by 10, 11 and then 12).

Signage and labeling of food will be a very important part of the day. Let the students create decorative labels of each food item, what's in it (e.g. Halaal), where it came from and perhaps how far it traveled (in kilometers/miles) to get there. A world map with food origins mapped out is a great visual resource to show how far conventional food can travel.



What You Need To Know About Local Food

How to define the term “local food” with your class

The term “local” can often mean different things for different cities or for different types of produce (i.e. local cheese can often take in a broader range than vegetables). *Local Food Plus*

(www.localfoodplus.ca) defines local as “produced, processed and distributed within the province (i.e. Ontario) in which they are consumed”. The term “100 kilometre diet” is also often used to describe a local diet but doesn’t really apply to Ontario, as the US/Canada border is within this limit, meaning that purchase of produce grown within this range may not actually be supporting local farmers. A lot of Ontario’s produce is grown within the *Greenbelt*, a collection of over 7000 farms spreading from Northumberland County to the Niagara River. For maps and statistics, you can see their website (www.greenbelt.ca/).

Background to the “Local Food Movement”

“A collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies – one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place” (*Agriculture and Human Values*, 2002). Those who prefer to purchase and consume locally produced food often call themselves “Locavores”.

The Local Food Movement is considered part of the broader “Sustainability Movement”. *Local Food Plus* believes a food system is sustainable when it achieves the following conditions:

1. Financially viable for all stakeholders
2. Primarily local and regional
3. Ecologically responsible in its operations
4. Socially responsible
5. Respectful of humans and other species

Why choose a local food system?

As an alternative to global corporate models, local food systems link consumers directly with producers (i.e. “bypassing the middle-man”). This enables the consumer to play a bigger, more direct role in the quality control of produce by building relationships with local farmers.

Find out what's growing locally!

Foodland Ontario has a user-friendly website (www.foodland.gov.on.ca/) for fun food facts, what's in season and nutritious recipe ideas. Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Availability Guides are also available for order on their website. You could also use the Greenbelt's Fresh Food Finder to get more information: <http://greenbeltfresh.ca>.

How to know what you're looking for (and then look for it)

Firstly, it's a good idea (and perhaps a huge time-saver) to check if your local supermarket, grocer or deli already has a wide variety of Ontario-grown produce. If it's not clearly labeled, you can check with the manager of the store to find out. This is important to do anyway, to make stores aware that this is something of interest and worth pursuing in the future.

If this isn't an option, you can purchase local food from the following suppliers:

- *Farmer's markets* - indoor or open-air, in neighbourhood parks, market halls and parking lots – farmers' markets bring fresh, local seasonal food to the city. Visit Farmers' Markets Ontario to find yours: www.farmersmarketsontario.com.
- *Food co-ops* – Worker or customer-owned businesses that provide grocery items for their members. Co-ops can be retail stores or buying clubs.
- *CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture)* – Individuals purchase a small share of a farm and, once the growing season begins, receive or pick-up seasonal food each week.
- *Food Stands* – A temporary or mobile storefront preparing and selling a variety of foods and beverages to customers. You'll often see food stands at special events, sporting events, street parties or festivals.
- Visit *Sustain Ontario's* website for "local food" groups near you!
<http://sustainontario.com/resources/ontario-eats-local>

If all else fails, simply look for the following labels on your food:



Local:

Local and Sustainable:



Or, "**Grown in Ontario**" (i.e. in the supermarket fresh produce section)

Brainstorming Connections

Brainstorm, illustrate, connect and write about ways that *Public Spaces*, *Politics*, *Local Food* and *Ontario Students* are all related (or *not* related).

Create a relationship or brainstorming chart on the board. You can do this by writing and circling all of your main brainstorming topics first. After some discussion, connect these circles with lines. The stronger the relationship, the thicker the line. Include some details of the relationship by writing along the line connecting the two.

Some brainstorming examples are:

- **Public Spaces** – Queen’s Park, urban agriculture, school or community gardens, city squares, parks, access, social change and engaging
- **Politics** – Queen’s Park, *Eat-In Ontario*, food policy, elections, student engagement, advocacy, importance of voting
- **Local Food** – Local food organizations across Ontario, Sustain Ontario, Toronto (Youth) Food Policy Council, Farmers’ Markets, and local food policies, local food and Food Literacy education
- **Ontario Students** – Lunch or student nutrition programs, school kitchens, school and community gardens, nutrition, empowerment through engagement, Food Literacy education



Facts About Ontario Politics

- Ontario has 3 major political parties: Liberal, New Democratic and Progressive Conservative
- Up to 12 political parties ran in the last election
- There are 107 electoral districts (these are different neighborhoods that help us divide our province into areas for the sake of the election)
- There are also 107 seats in Ontario's Parliament – each electoral district has one seat, or one representative, in parliament
- The major parties run candidates in all 107 ridings
- The candidate with the most votes in an Electoral District becomes the Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) representing that district
- After the election, the Lieutenant Governor, the representative of the Queen, asks the leader of the party with the **most** seats in the Legislative Assembly to become Premier of Ontario and form a Government
- If that party has more than 50% of the seats, they are called a *majority government*
- The majority government can stay in power for up to 5 years before the next election
- The new Premier chooses an 'executive council', this group of MPPs are called the *cabinet* and they each have an area of government that they are responsible for, such as Health or Transportation
- The Ministers and the other MPPs work together in the Legislative Assembly to introduce new ideas or discuss old one.

What is the Legislative Assembly?

- The building was started in 1886 and officially opened in 1893
- The Legislative Assembly is where all of the elected Ministers and members of parliament work
- They discuss proposals for new laws, bills ideas, and work together to pass, change and change new and old laws
- The Legislative Assembly is sometimes called The House of Commons, or The House
- "The House" and committees are open to the public so you can watch them on television all over Ontario
- It is located at Queens Park where FoodShare hosts its annual *Eat-In Ontario* fall harvest celebration!

Adapted from: www.ontario.ca/en/your_government

Invite A Guest to Come and Speak to the Class

Organize a guest speaker for your class, focusing on the whole food system, from *field to table*. Getting to know the people in your food system is an important element of Food Literacy education. Make sure that guest presenters know how to engage high school-aged students (with hands-on, interactive presentations!). Some examples of guest speakers could be:

A Farmer, Food Producer or Bee Keeper

- Check the *Ontario Fresh Farm Marketing Association* website for farm contacts: <http://ontariofarmfresh.com/locator/>
- Get to know the farmers at your local farmers' market. You may also find interns working at the market who might be interested in addressing a class. For your local farmers' market, check *FoodShare's* website: <http://www.foodshare.net/animations04.htm#gfm>
- Visit the *Ontario Beekeepers Association* website: <http://www.ontariobee.com/>. You can search on their website for the beekeeper closest to your school or home!

Possible Talking Points:

- How they came to be a farmer/producer
- A "day in the life"
- Funny stories and pictures
- Props and resources, for example, an old butter churner for the students to try
- The type of farm they run and the people/animals involved
- Some tastings of the produce grown/produced (very important!)

Someone who grows their own food at home or in a community garden

- Ask the students if they have a family member or friend that grows their own food. This would be a simple way to locate a local green thumb who might be willing to come and talk with the class.
- Alternatively, locate your closest community garden and ask one of the participants. Many regions have a community gardening network; a quick internet search should help you find a nearby gardener.

Community Gardening Network of Ottawa: <http://www.justfood.ca/community-gardening-network/>

Sudbury Community Gardens: http://www.eatlocalsudbury.com/community_gardens.html

Toronto Community Garden Network: <http://www.tcgn.ca/wiki/wiki.php>

Possible Talking Points:

- Pictures of their garden (e.g. before and after)
- The foods they grow and how they use them (demonstration)
- The different types of people that garden together
- Any community swapping/cooperation stories from the garden
- Funny stories from the garden
- Tastings of the produce

A Local Business Owner

- It's as simple as asking around your neighborhood restaurants, cafes or stores for this one.

Possible Talking Points:

- Their path to becoming a business owner
- Challenges, stories and advice
- Networking opportunities or methods

A Chef, Cook or Baker

- Call some local restaurants in your school's area to gauge interest. This would be a great opportunity to seek a food professional who is interested in using local produce in their cuisine.



- If you're within Toronto, contact FoodShare to get in touch with Slow Food Toronto chefs interested in coming to your classroom! You can get connected with chefs by emailing recipeforchange@foodshare.net.

Possible talking Points:

- How they came to be interested in food
- Their favourite thing to cook
- How they learned to cook
- How they learned about local food
- A "day in the life"
- Photos and stories from their job
- Tastings of local food

A Food Industry Employee

- A representative responsible for promoting or selling different products
- Someone who works in a processing plant in the downtown area
- A delivery driver
- A café, catering or restaurant owner
- A nutritionist or Registered Dietitian. Visit the *Dietitians of Canada* website: <http://www.dietitians.ca/>
- A food safety officer. Visit the *Public Health Ontario* website to find your local Public Health Unit: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca>

A Politician

- Ask your local MP or MPP to speak to your class or school about the joys of local food. Ask them to address the key food issues that your students elect to be the most important.

Potential Talking Points:

- Their stance on food, local food and food policy
- Why food is important to them
- What role they play in the community to improve good food access
- How they're helping to improve access to good, healthy and affordable food for youth

Go On A Local Food Walking Tour or Field Trip

Thinking broadly about our food system can provide a number of opportunities for interesting and engaging field trips whether it is a quick walk around the neighborhood or an organized visit offsite.

Greenbelt Farm

Visit the Greenbelt website to find a suitable farm field trip for your class. Use the *Greenbelt's Fresh Food Finder* to get more information: http://greenbeltfresh.ca/advanced_finder/1.

Farmers' or Good Food Market

Visit FoodShare's website (<http://www.foodshare.net/animations04.htm#gfm>) or *Farmer's Markets Ontario* (<http://www.farmersmarketsontario.com/>) to see if there is a Farmers' or Good Food Market within walking or public transport distance from your school.

Café or Restaurant

If there is a café or restaurant near you that sources local produce, arrange for field trip where the owner or cook/chef addresses local food and encourages participation in hands-on food activities.

Local Food Foraging

It's likely that there is some food growing in or around the neighborhood of your school. There might be some fruit trees, dandelion greens or berry bushes that you could point out to the students as food growing "wild".

Food Retailer

Visit a food retailer such as a green grocer or supermarket that stocks local produce. Preferably the site will also have some production for the students to see (e.g. bakery or deli).