



MIDDLESEX LONDON FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (MLFPC)

Food Literacy Action Group

Food Literacy Networking Event, Friday March 2, 2018

List of those in Attendance: David Corke, Jana Keller, Andrew Fleet, Ellen Lakusiak, Christine Scheer, Anne Zok, Amy Donaldson, Patricia M. (FCA/MCC), Leigh Robinson, Danielle Tobin, Ginette Blake, Aimee Tyler-Smith (Intern), James Smith, Maddy Wilson, Vanessa Kingsley, Chris Callaghan, Samantha Penlington (intern), Joanne Fuller, Sean Hunter, Les Kozachuku, Janene Ford.

Summary of Information Shared at this event

MLFPC

- David Corke outlined the MLFPC mission and introduced the working group concept. He reassured the group that The Food Literacy Action Group wants to help those many dedicated people in Middlesex London with their current work of improving food literacy within the region. He suggested that developing relationships across the food sector could help strengthen the impact within and across all relevant places where we do our work. The March 2, 2018 meeting was just the beginning of the greater collaboration.

Western University

- *Hospitality services* is now embedded in the *food services*.
- This includes inventories of the various dietary needs of those who populate the campus in the residences and across the vast number of educational, institutional supports and activities.
- This includes the FRESH program and FRESH food literacy education that includes loyalty programs that provide incentives to choose healthy and/or local foods and peer to peer education on basic food skills.

Fanshawe Culinary Program.

- Culinary students dislike the science/nutrition component of training (2 hours of overall dedicated to nutrition) and there is a desire to increase interest in the food literacy component
- Fanshawe College has an opportunity to engage more readily with the general population by moving its culinary program to London's city core.
- Artisanal program will be offered again in Fall, 2018 where focus is on local food and more on food science and agriculture.

Community Based Programs

- Many of the services related to the London Middlesex and Provincial supports for the more marginalized within our population were present and



shared the various programming that is occurring within Child and Youth Network, Healthy Kids Community Challenge (Middlesex County) and Middlesex Libraries (Grow towers and seed libraries), and the community-based Food Families activities that includes growing, harvesting, and cooking programs.

- Many of these programs work across our marginalized populations involving refugee families, and those in unstable economic situations. My Sister's Place and the London Road Coffee house (both essentially supported by CMHA) also provide some basic food literacy through meal and snack programs but they would like to do more in terms of food education.

London Training Centre

- London Training Centre's food education programs – the 3-week Local Food Skills program and the 6-month Culinary Pre-Apprenticeship program

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

- Resources available; current focus on food literacy
- Attempting to work with school boards to support food literacy in the curriculum

Ontario Student Nutrition Program

- Would like to have more local food distributed and more food literacy as part of OSNP but limited by curriculum and volunteer capacity.

Middlesex London Health Unit-

Chris Callaghan RD

- In conjunction with Public Health Nurses support elementary schools in Middlesex-London with respect to healthy eating. Develop healthy eating related resources and programming that can be used by schools.
- Nutrition Resources related to healthy eating and schools can be found on our [school health section](#) of the MLHU website (curriculum connected activities, presentations, factsheets and other resources).
- In conjunction with colleagues have developed a [Vegetable and Fruit Toolkit](#) based on the Ministry of Education Healthy School Framework. There is a toolkit for elementary schools (k-Gr. 8) and secondary schools (Gr. 9 – 12). The ultimate goal of the toolkit is to increase vegetable and fruit intake among children and youth. The toolkit is a user friendly resource that can be used by teachers and the school community to promote and educate about vegetables and fruit and create supportive environments.
- Involved in supporting Ontario Student Nutrition Programming through the local Children's Nutrition Network Partnership.

- Involved in the development and maintenance of a food literacy program called [Let's Get Cookin'](#) – a cooking program for grade 5 and up.
- Support two aeroponic grow towers at a local elementary school. Working with the teachers and students to grow, transplant, and prepare food from the grow towers.
- Also was involved in the HKCC Middlesex-London Water Does Wonders Theme and Choose to Boost Veggies and Fruit.

Ginette Blake RD

- Responsible for food literacy programming for women of reproductive health age, and parents of young children
- Coordinate food literacy activities at Smart Start for Babies and the MLHU Prenatal Immigrant Program (PiP) a weekly prenatal, nutrition education program for women with complex social challenges
- Offer a 12 month, monthly food literacy program for women of reproductive health age who live in poverty
- Sit on the London Good Food Box Advisory Group

Heather Thomas, RD, PhD

- Involved in food literacy activities with at-risk youth in residential care (e.g., detention centres, group homes, foster care) and along with a nurse colleague, provides health and nutrition education while instructing this population about cooking skills and food literacy. A recent program addition that is in the early development stages Heather is involved with is a food literacy program for residents in the Ailsa Craig/Parkhill area. The program will run as a pilot starting April 27, 2018 at the Parkhill Community Centre (Kitchen Facility) with the provision of a hands-on exploration in cooking, using healthy, economical, locally produced items as well as ingredients typically found in the food bank hamper. The program will be evaluated to determine usefulness as well as other metrics looking at food literacy.
- Additionally, Heather is part of a provincial research team funded by Public Health Ontario. This team previously worked on developing a list of the attributes or characteristics that describe and define food literacy and is currently conducting research on the development, testing, and evaluation of a food literacy measurement tool. This tool will be validated with youth aged 16-19 years; young parents 16-25 years; and young pregnant women 16-25 years. It is hoped that the measurement tool can be used not only with the youth group with whom it was evaluated, but also with other community groups participating in food literacy programs locally. For more information, please contact Heather at heather.thomas@mlhu.on.ca.



- Andrew Fleet outlined his current and future goals for food education. He discussed the concept of wrap-around food literacy which imbeds developing the curiosity of food and integrating food science. Andrew's suggestion that all in the room could collaborate in drafting a letter to the TVDSB to outline why a modern, comprehensive food literacy program is needed in the public schools.

Covent Garden Market

- This group should work towards planning something for the Fall Harvest festival; many children/families attend and this would be an opportunity for the community to celebrate what's happening in food literacy in the region.
- The Covent Garden Market offers FREE cooking classes on Saturdays in conjunction with the Farmers' Market.
- Their kitchen space and market spaces is available for use by community groups. The Covent Garden Market is also open to collaboration with community groups. Contact Maddy Wilson for reservation details.

Next Steps

- A centralized registry for sharing food literacy initiatives and information within our region was supported; the MLFPC website can serve as home for this; a template for information required will be circulated and work on getting this posted on the website will go forward in next year
- Everyone supported sharing of resources so registry should also include any teaching tools available for sharing
- We should approach school boards with the strength of our groups together to support stronger/consistent food literacy programming in our schools and in the curriculum
- Opportunity of the Fall Harvest Fair at Covent Market to celebrate food literacy in our community
- Desire to have common language around food literacy; how to define and measure; are we meaning the same things? Heather Thomas, MLHU RD, involved with Ontario work on this and she will be asked to share progress so far.
- There is a gap in Middlesex County with access to food literacy programming.
- How can we work with our Educational Institutions (Brescia, Fanshawe, School Boards) to make the science of food and "where food comes from" more engaging for students and how do we bring this to broader public? Collaboration of all groups will assist in achieving this.

