

Year in Review
2006–2007

Cultivating Change



Community Food Action Initiative



The Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI) is a health promotion initiative aimed at increasing food security for all British Columbians. CFAI is a collaborative effort of BC's six health authorities and the BC Ministry of Health.

CFAI is funded by the BC Ministry of Health and coordinated by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA).

Community food security exists when all citizens obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone.¹



A Collaborative Approach to Community Health

With its launch in September 2005, the Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI) became the first provincial initiative in Canada to recognize and financially support community-led solutions to the problem of food security.

Today, through the partnership of BC's health authorities and other key stakeholders, CFAI is making good progress toward its goal of increasing food security for British Columbians, particularly those living with limited incomes. In the past year, CFAI-funded initiatives have supported more than 100 communities across the province to take action on food security.

The issue of food security has gathered considerable momentum in recent years, spurred in part by concerns over the fast rise of diet-related health problems such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The connection between what we eat and our overall health is undisputed, and within the health sector food security has emerged as an area of great interest. In 2005 the Provincial Health Officer's annual report, *Food, Health and Well-Being in British Columbia*, was dedicated entirely to creating awareness of, raising issues related to, and providing recommendations for addressing food security and healthy eating in BC. Food security is also one of the 21 long-term core programs representing public health services that health authorities will now provide.

Ultimately however, many of the critical factors affecting food security in British Columbia cannot be managed through our health system alone. Achieving food security requires a coordinated, intersectoral approach, with collaboration across health authorities and provincial ministries and with other key stakeholders.

CFAI helps facilitate this collaboration through a variety of ways including through the work of the provincial advisory committee and health authority operations committee as well as committees and working groups at the regional and local levels. This collaboration continues to be a focus in our strategic planning for the future. By encouraging partnerships among a wide range of stakeholders, CFAI is **cultivating change** at the community, regional and provincial levels and fostering effective, long-term initiatives to address the food security needs of British Columbians today and into the future.

Lydia Drasic
*Director of Primary Health Care
& Population Health Strategic Planning
Provincial Health Services Authority*

Community Food Action Initiative at a Glance

Overview

The Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI) is a health promotion initiative aimed at increasing food security for all British Columbians, particularly those living with limited incomes. CFAI is funded by the BC Ministry of Health and coordinated by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA). The initiative is a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Health and BC's six health authorities.

CFAI activities are overseen by a provincial advisory committee, and implemented through an operations committee with representation from all health authorities.

Objectives

With its focus on enhancing food security across BC, CFAI is working to increase:

- Awareness about food security
- Access to local healthy food
- Food knowledge and skills
- Community capacity to address local food security
- Development and use of policy to support community food security

Key Strategies

- Facilitate networks and linkages among community groups, provincial organizations and government ministries
- Share knowledge gained from community food security interventions
- Share better practices in food security
- Support development of food security policy
- Evaluate CFAI-funded initiatives
- Work collaboratively across sectors to increase food security in BC

Highlights of 2006/07

Over the past year CFAI has made progress toward its goal of increasing food security for British Columbians as follows:

Towards our objectives of increasing access to local healthy food, increasing community capacity, and increasing food knowledge and skills...

In 2006/07 CFAI helped improve food security for people in more than 100 communities around the province through:

- 73 community-based projects
- 54 food security networks linking a cross-section of food system stakeholders

Other 2006/07 CFAI highlights:

- Published *Implementing Community Food Action in British Columbia: Criteria for Success and the Role for the Health Sector*, to share best practices
- Completed an evaluation framework for CFAI that will lead to knowledge and evidence for future program development

The year ahead...

For 2007/08, CFAI has plans to:

- Continue developing resources to support best practices, including a food security assessment guide
- Continue developing stronger mechanisms for communication and collaboration, including a web-based system for sharing information and ideas
- Continue collaborating on food security activities with other key sectors, such as with municipal governments
- Explore how best to facilitate the development of food security policy
- Develop tools to raise awareness and understanding of food security in the health sector
- Complete our evaluation of provincial food security initiatives, which will provide a baseline of evidence and knowledge for future food security activity



CFAI Year-in-Review 2006–2007



Provincially, towards our objectives of increasing awareness about food security and increasing development and use of policy to support food security...

In 2006/07 CFAI's focus has been on building the infrastructure to support collaboration and communication across the province, through the establishment of:

- a provincial advisory committee involving food security leaders and experts from government, provincial organizations and health authorities
- a health authority operations committee involving staff responsible for managing food security programs within the five regional health authorities



CFAI Health Authority Operations Committee

Joanne Bays

Northern Health

Claire Gram

Vancouver Coastal Health

Caryl Harper

Vancouver Island Health Authority

Linda Hebel

Fraser Health

(Barb Seed as of 2007)

Cathryn Wellner

Interior Health

Lorie Hrycuik

Ministry of Health

Lydia Drasic

Provincial Health Services Authority

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MORE THAN 100 COMMUNITIES: 100 MILE HOUSE•ABBOTSFORD•ADAMS LAKE INDIAN BAND•AGASSIZ•AKISONUK FIRST NATIONS•ARMSTRONG•AVOLA•BARRIERE•BEAVERDELL•BELLA BELLA•BELLA COOLA VALLEY•BIRCH ISLAND•BLANSHARD•BLUE RIVER•BOSTON BAR•BRIDESVILLE•BRITANNIA•BURNABY•CANAL FLATS•CANIM FIRST NATION•CANIM LAKE BAND•CASTLEGAR•CHASE•CHEAM•CHEHALIS•CHEHALIS INDIAN BAND•CHILLIWACK•CLAYBURN•CLEARWATER•COLDSTREAM•COLDWATER INDIAN BAND•COLWOOD•COMOX VALLEY•COWICHAN VALLEY•CRANBOOK•CRESTON•DELTA•DUNCAN•EDGEWATER•ELKFORD•ENDERBY•FALKLAND•FERNIE•FLATHEAD•FORT NELSON•FRUITVALE•GABRIOLA ISLAND•GOLD RIVER•GOLDEN•GOLDSTREAM•GRAND FORKS•GRANDVIEW•GRASMERE•GREENWOOD•HALIBURTON•HARRISON•HAZELTON•HOPE•HOSMER•INVERMERE•KALSO•KAMLOOPS•KELOWNA•KEREMEOS•KIMBERLEY•LAC LA HACHE•LADYSMITH•LAKE COUNTRY•LANGFORD•LANGLEY•LAVINGTON•LAX KWA'LAAMS•LITTLE FORT•LOGAN LAKE•LOWER KOOTENAY BAND•LOWER NICOLA BAND•LOWER SIMILKAMEEN INDIAN BAND•LUMBY•LUXTON•MEADOWBROOK•MIDWAY•MISSION•MT. PLEASANT•NAKUSP•NELSON•NESKONLITH INDIAN BAND•NEW DENVER•NEW WESTMINSTER•NEWTON•NICOMEN•NIGHTINGALE•NOOAITCH INDIAN BAND•NORTH BURNABY•NORTH SHORE•NORTH VANCOUVER•OKANAGAN INDIAN BAND•OLIVER•OSOYOOS•OYAMA•PEACHLAND•PENTICTON•PENTICTON INDIAN BAND•PORT ALBERNI•PORT COQUITLAM•POWELL RIVER•PRINCE GEORGE•PRINCETON•QUEEN ALEXANDRA•QUESNEL•RADIUM HOT SPRINGS•RICHMOND•ROCK CREEK•ROSSLAND•SALMO•SALMON ARM•SALT SPRING ISLAND•SCWEXMX•SHAKKAN INDIAN BAND•SHUSWAP•SICAMOUS•SILVERTON•SISKA FIRST NATIONS•SIX NATIONS OF BC INTERIOR•SKATSIN INDIAN BAND•SKOOKUMCHUCK•SLOCAN•SORRENTO•SPALLUMCHEEN INDIAN BAND•SPARWOOD•SPENCES BRIDGE•SPUZZUM FIRST NATION•ST. MARY'S BAND•ST. MARY'S VALLEY•STRATHCONA•SUMMERLAND•SUNSHINE COAST•SURREY•TA TA CREEK•TOBACCO PLAINS BAND•TRAIL•UPPER NICOLA INDIAN BAND•VANCOUVER•VAVENBY•VERNON•VICTORIA•WARFIELD•WASA•WESTBANK•WESTBANK FIRST NATION•WESTBRIDGE•WHITEROCK•WINDERMERE•WINFIELD•WINLAW•WYCLIFFE•XENI GWET'IN

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Footnote

1 Adapted from Bellows and Hamm 2003

Increasing Food Security Across BC

Through the partnership of the health authorities, CFAI is raising awareness about food security and providing resources to help foster community-led solutions and to expand local knowledge, skills and policies related to food security.

Fraser Health

Moving Food Policy Forward

Among the more successful CFAI initiatives in Fraser Health over the past year was a project to achieve more recognition and integration of food policy into the everyday business of local organizations in White Rock and Surrey. The highlight of these efforts was a community forum devoted to food policy which attracted 71 attendees from local organizations and government. A survey of attendees revealed that 95 percent intended to use the knowledge and resources they acquired from the forum to make food policy changes in their organization.

Food Security Assessment and Community Forum

Another effective CFAI project in Fraser Health was the food security assessment and community forum held in Abbotsford in January 2007. This project brought together nutritionists, other health professionals and representatives from local food security projects to assess the issue of food security across Fraser Health. Results from the assessment were presented, and recommendations for Fraser Health's role in food security were reviewed. One outcome of the project is that Fraser Health has strengthened its support for food security.

Our forum and the toolkit we provided helped people understand what food policy means and how it can be implemented.

Barb Seed

Community Nutritionist, Fraser Health



fraserhealth

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Interior Health

Expanding Local Capacity

“Many of our communities have been addressing food security issues for a long time, particularly in terms of feeding the hungry,” says Cathryn Wellner, Food and Health Project Leader for Interior Health (IH). “What CFAI has done is provide resources for community forums that look at the bigger picture, including environmental and policy issues. That’s where there is potential for long-term change.”

In the North Thompson region, for example, with help from IH and CFAI, the communities of Barriere and Coldwater organized a food security forum to examine

the issue and discuss measures for increasing food security within the region. The forum provided the impetus for the community to undertake a number of initiatives, such as expanding the scope and reach of the local farmer’s markets and creating a gleaning project to ensure the collection and distribution of surplus produce that would otherwise be treated as waste.

“CFAI provided the spark that started the whole thing off for the North Thompson community,” says Cathryn. “And once the fire was lit the community found other resources to tackle food security in a much broader way.”

Communities are taking this small amount of CFAI money and they’re doing loaves and fishes – they’re creating, finding other sources of funding, getting more people excited about the issue of food security and doing a lot of local awareness-raising.

Cathryn Wellner

*Food and Health Project Leader,
Interior Health*



Interior Health

Enthusiasm and passion for local through relationships. With HEAL v together so they can get energize building is so important.

Joanne Bays

*Regional Manager, Healthy Commu
Security, Northern Health*

Northern Health

The “HEALing” Process

In the northern region of British Columbia, the benefits of Healthy Eating and Active Living have been promoted for years through a grassroots organization called HEAL, a collaborative network of communities dedicated to improving the health and local food security needs of northern residents.

“The HEAL model involves appreciating the wisdom of the community,” says Prince George-based CFAI coordinator Joanne Bays. “Acknowledging that communities know what their issues are and best understand the solutions to their problems, we work to bring everyone together and to make sure they have what



We've set up a really strong infrastructure for supporting food security across Vancouver Coastal. Having our eight committees all working from good data to plan for their food security needs is quite remarkable.

Claire Gram
*Healthy Communities and Food Security
 Coordinator, Vancouver Coastal Health*



Vancouver Island Health Authority

Communities Key to Success

Communities have been key to the success for CFAI in Vancouver Island Health Authority. Last year 16 successful community initiatives were funded in remote, rural, and urban settings within the three geographic regions of the health authority. Throughout the year communities delivered in excess of 165 CFAI focus groups, forums and strategic planning meetings and over 140 CFAI community media releases. Funding was provided to communities to build capacity, develop food security plans, implement plans and demonstrate early implementation of better practice approaches.

This year VIHA funded its second CFAI Symposium Café and provided participants a forum to profile and celebrate their successes, learn from the challenges while cross-pollinating knowledge and experiences and brainstorming future directions.

Encouraging Local Agriculture

In the West Shore area of Victoria, CFAI support for a community food festival organized by the Capital Families Association has led to the revitalization of the 98-year-old Luxton Fall Fair and the creation of a local weekly farmer's market. According to the organizers, the primary driver behind the new farmer's market is the need to encourage increased local agricultural production. The farmer's market will serve a population base of 40,000 people in the surrounding area and has the support of local farmers and food producers, crafts people, the chamber of commerce and the city of Langford.

Vancouver Coastal Health

Putting Plans into Action

With CFAI funding, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) has established eight community food security committees to cover all regions of the health authority, including the small central coast communities of Bella Coola and Bella Bella; the rural communities of Powell River, the Sunshine Coast and the Sea-to-Sky Corridor; and the large urban areas of Vancouver, Richmond and the North Shore.

These local committees have done extensive research to assess their local food systems and identify gaps and food security issues. This information was used to develop detailed action plans for each area.

Guided by these action plans, CFAI-supported community coordinators are now working to implement area-specific food security initiatives.

Powell River's 50-mile Challenge

Although Vancouver Coastal includes BC's most urban region, it also spans a variety of rural areas which have implemented a variety of CFAI-supported food security projects. The community of Powell River, for example, adopted the "50-mile diet" challenge, which involved 250 people committing to eating foods sourced from within a 50-mile radius of their community. The initiative, designed to raise awareness about local food production and food-transport issues, quickly captivated the town and spurred several local restaurants to offer 50-mile meals on their menus.

Food security are promoted
 we take the time to bring people
 ed and share ideas. Relationship

unities and Community Food



northern health

they need to address their issues." With CFAI funding and Northern Health participation, over the past year HEAL has focused its efforts on helping the communities of Prince George, Terrace and Hazelton to develop local food councils and food policies, and on launching the "Field to School" salad bar pilot project. This project aims to improve the health of children at six schools in the communities of Oliver, Kimberly, Williams Lake, Quesnel, Hazelton and Fort Nelson by providing access to local fresh food for students while at school. Altogether the project will involve about 1,475 children between the ages of five and eighteen, including the students of two aboriginal community schools.

CFAI funding has enabled us to promote food security and to take a systemic approach to all aspects of food security in our valley. We now have community and elected officials working together to tackle these issues. This would not have happened without the support we received from VIHA and CFAI.

Betty-Anne Juba
President LUSH Food Action Society, Comox Valley, BC

Our students love to hear that VIHA has made the connection between human health and local, healthy food. It gives them hope.

Karen Hurley
*Environmental Studies Instructor,
 University of Victoria*

