

Fall 2023

The Wellness Weaver

## Welcome

Hello there!

After a bit of a hiatus we're back with the coalition's newsletter *The Wellness Weaver*. This is a space where we highlight coalition activities, members, and projects.

For this edition, we've decided to focus on information, resources and stories that support **healthy eating for less**. While there is still much work to do in this area, many of you are doing amazing things to support your participants, students, volunteers, and your communities to ensure that healthy food is available for all.

Many thanks to those who contributed to this newsletter by way of article or project report: *Sarah Crocker*, Food First NL; *Heather Gates*, Baby Friendly Council of NL; *Lesley Burgess*, NL Health Services-Eastern Urban; *Susan Haskell*, Saint Luke's Community Living, *Dan Rubin*, Food Producers Forum, and *Jess van Bussel*, Choices for Youth.

## What's Inside?

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## Meet a Member



[Food First NL](#) is a longstanding member of Wellness Coalition-Avalon East (WCAE), dating back to the days when they were known as the Food Security Network of NL. The organization has nearly 25 years of experience leading food security efforts in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Food First NL works with communities in our region and across the province to advance the right to food and ensure everyone can eat with joy and dignity.

Here are a few of their current initiatives:

Rethinking Food Charity <https://www.foodfirstnl.ca/rethinking-food-charity>

Food on the Move <https://www.foodstjohns.ca/food-on-the-move>

Regional Food Animators <https://www.foodfirstnl.ca/regional-animators>

Great Things in Store: <https://www.foodfirstnl.ca/great-things-in-store>



**Join our Facebook group!** Connect with other Wellness Coalition-Avalon East members, share what you're doing and find out about resources in our members-only group. [Click here](#) to find us.



## WCAE Wellness Grants Project Spotlight: Healthy Eating

### Eat Well, Move Well, Age Well at Saint Luke's Community Living

Life-long learning and living well is important to seniors residing at [Saint Luke's Community Living](#). In April 2023, they came together to move more and learn about eating nutritious food for less during the Eat Well, Move Well, Age Well project. As part of the project, seniors attended two educational sessions offered in partnership with Registered Dietitian, Heidi Murphy. During the sessions they learned about:

- the Balanced Plate model
- basic healthy meal planning
- avoiding food wastage
- and spending wisely at the supermarket.

Recipes were shared so that lessons learned could be applied at home. The movement part of the project was enjoyed through chair yoga and Ageless Grace sessions.



### Where's the Food – Public Forum

Where's the food? That's the question that [Food Producers Forum](#) answered at their public forum held at the bright and cheerful greenhouse of The Autism Society in St. John's.

Taking place in March 2023, the session highlighted information gathered from their 2022 on-line [survey titled Where's the Food](#). The survey received more than 750 responses from farmers, gardeners, foragers, fishers, and hunters in 167 communities across the province. It identified challenges and opportunities such as having easier access to land for farmers and community gardeners, an interest in tool-sharing, and a need for mentorship and training.

Following the presentation of the survey results, 54 event participants had an opportunity to ask questions and add their own perspectives and recommendations. Valuable input was received, and the whole event was recorded on video for later viewing.

The event confirmed wide public interest and concern about food security and community health along with support for the Food Producers Forum's [Provincial Food Network](#) project to address these needs.

### Choices for Youth Community Garden



The 2023 growing season saw staff, volunteers, and youth participants at Choices for Youth (CFY) unite to revitalize their community garden which had fallen into disrepair. Following significant tree pruning and repair to garden boxes, gardeners planted and grew over 28 different types of fruits, vegetables and flowers. Much of the produce grown was used to supply ingredients for the kitchen operated at the CFY Outreach and Youth Engagement Centre where healthy, home-cooked meals are prepared daily for about 70 young people. In addition, surplus produce such as lettuce was available to young people who use the centre's pantry program which usually only provides dried and canned foods.

The revitalized garden not only became a place of growth but also a place of sanctuary. During the summer, many young people lost friends to the opioid crisis. To recognize this, a tree was planted in the garden in their memory.

Contributions from partners is what helped make the garden a success. These include: Quadrangle NL, The Home Depot Canada, RBC Royal Bank, Burns and Wilcox Insurance, Mysa, and the WCAE grant.

While the beds are tucked away for the winter, plans are underway for the next growing season, with several youth and volunteers looking forward to returning in the spring.

## Resources to Support Healthy Eating for Less



Would you like to learn how to make healthy meals and snacks that use few ingredients and are easy to prepare?

Visit [Healthy Eating – Resources and Toolkits – Health Information \(easternhealth.ca\)](https://www.easternhealth.ca/healthy-eating-resources) to watch recipe videos that were developed by Compass Group Canada in partnership with Regional Nutritionists within the Eastern zones of NL Health Services.

The recipes include lower cost healthy food such as fresh, frozen, and canned items. Recipe substitutions are also included. They show basic food skills and give food safety tips.

You can use these videos with community members and groups of all ages. This can give people the opportunity to try something new and take leftovers home.

Ways you can use the Teaching Kitchen Videos:

- in a community kitchen program or healthy eating workshop
- apply for a Wellness Coalition [grant](#) or [discretionary funding](#) to purchase food or kitchen supplies to support your group to prepare the recipes

More recipe videos will be added to the website, along with a recipe booklet.

Contact Lesley Burgess, Regional Nutritionist with any questions. [lesley.burgess@easternhealth.ca](mailto:lesley.burgess@easternhealth.ca)



### Breastfeeding: Healthy and Affordable

As the cost-of-living increases, many people are having trouble accessing food. Did you know that breastfeeding plays an important role in improving food security for families?

Breastfeeding provides food security to infants from the very beginning of life. Breastmilk is readily available, affordable, and nutritious and provides the nutrients and immune factors a baby needs to grow and develop.

Breastfeeding also contributes to food security for the whole family. Given breastfeeding costs families very little, family financial resources are available to support other food needs in the home.

Unfortunately, families who are food insecure are less likely to sustain exclusive breastfeeding or reach their breastfeeding goals. As such, municipalities and community groups can work to improve food security by promoting, protecting, and supporting breastfeeding.

Check out the Baby-Friendly Council of NL's website for more information: <https://babyfriendlynl.ca/support/communities-municipalities>.

### Did You Know?

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recently released the [Poverty Reduction Plan](#). The three year plan aims to address social factors that impact health such as income and food security. The following actions will help to reduce child poverty and improve access to food:

- Expanding the Prenatal-Infant Nutritional Supplement up to age five and renaming it the **Early Childhood Nutrition Supplement** to better reflect its expanded scope;
- Increasing the **Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit** by 300 per cent; and
- Providing additional funding to ensure **school lunch programs** are available in all Pre-Kindergarten and K-9 schools.

Other key focus areas of the plan include creating meaningful and sustainable employment, improving income, and supporting seniors.

## 211 Newfoundland and Labrador

211 NL connects folks 24/7 with local community services, including food-related programs and resources. **Call 211** or visit [www.nl.211.ca](http://www.nl.211.ca) to find information about:

- Food banks and referrals
- Community meals
- Cooking classes and facilities
- Food access for seniors/people with disabilities
- Food delivery
- Grocery stores, fresh food, and producers
- Grow/pick your own food
- Food for infants
- Other food initiatives
- School meal program

## Affordable Healthy Eating Resources

Looking for cost saving tips, or healthy meal ideas? Visit <https://www.gov.nl.ca/healthyeating/affordable/>

Need more information about healthy eating for your family, food safety, budget-friendly meal ideas, food allergies and more? Call **811** to speak to a Registered Dietitian or visit [Dial-a-Dietitian](http://Dial-a-Dietitian)

## Congratulations Fall 2023 Grant Recipients

- Anglican Homes Inc.: Winter Sports
- Beachy Cove Elementary: Being the Best I Can Be
- Brookside Intermediate: SucSeed in the Classroom
- Conception Bay Family Resource Program: Parent Committee Community Kitchen
- Cowan Heights Elementary: Chess Club
- Flatrock 50 Plus Fun Club: Dance Lessons
- Horizon Academy: Learning Resource Centre
- Juniper Ridge Intermediate: Badminton-Pickleball Club
- Kilbride to Ferryland Family Resource Coalition: Parenting Sessions
- Paradise Elementary: Classroom Calm Bins
- St. Matthew's Elementary: Dirty Learning
- Strong Harbour Strings: Strong Harbour Strings Program
- West Heights Neighbourhood Centre: Community Lunch & Learn

Next application **dead-line:**

**February 1, 2024**

More info and application at:

[wellnesscoalition-avaloneast.ca](http://wellnesscoalition-avaloneast.ca)

## Wellness Coalition-Avalon East Steering Committee

**Contact Coalition Co-chairs if you have any questions, ideas or comments:**

*Heather Powell*, Co-Chair, Public Health, NL Health Services 752-4912 or [heather.powell@easternhealth.ca](mailto:heather.powell@easternhealth.ca)

*Vacant*, Co-chair, Community Organization

*Stephanie Abbott-Trahey*, Community Sector Council NL

*Yamuna Kutty*, Multi-Cultural Women's Organization NL

*Susan Haskell*, Anglican Homes Inc.

*Lesley Burgess*, Public Health, NL Health Services

*Sarah Burton*, NL Health Services/NL English School District

*Jacob Power*, Home Again Furniture Bank

*Krista Gladney*, City of St. John's

*Robert Moran*, Community Youth Network-Southern Avalon