

# Regional Food Charter Community Input Sessions

## INTRODUCTION & UPDATE

### OUR NEW PROJECT!

With the help of our new community co-ordinators, we've begun our Regional Food Charter community input sessions! What's a food charter? It's a value, vision, or principle statement, and/or series of goals, written by a city, town or region that describes what a community wants their food system to look like. It's often used as a reference document for municipal decision makers and helps to develop policy that addresses food-related issues. Since our vast area encompasses many small communities, it was determined that a regional food charter would best suit our needs. Regional charters can and help communities to come together and connect local food projects across municipalities, as well as support our unique needs and address issues we commonly face here in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.

### WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

So far this month, we've held general community input sessions in Dryden, Sioux Lookout, and Kenora. We've had a lot of community interest in the sessions and will also be meeting directly with local community organizations, institutions, and government to gain their input. In Sioux Lookout, it was clear that cost and availability of food are major issues. One local grocery store makes shopping expensive and limits the variety of food available. Access to traditional foods (like wild game) is also a major topic on the minds of community members. In Dryden, the concerns were promoting and growing local agriculture and supporting local farmers. There was also a lot of talk on better utilization of our natural resources, how to make local food more accessible year-round, as well as ensuring that all members of the community have access to healthy, nutritious food. In Kenora, people were also greatly concerned with the accessibility of affordable and healthy food throughout all seasons. There was also a lot of concern and interest in the community's ability to produce their own food that is best suited for its landscape and representative of its cultural diversity.

# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

CLFC would like to invite any community organizations, clubs, and associations to contact us if they are interested in scheduling or participating in an input session, or have any questions about the charter. CLFC can be flexible to suit your schedule and can come to you! Wondering who should participate and what it entails? Here are some details:

- Input is needed from schools and parent groups, Friendship Centres, food banks, hospitals, restaurants, Health Units, gardening groups, hunters & anglers - really anyone in the community who has something to say about the future of food!
- Ideal group size is 10+ but we can meet with interested groups of any size
- The sessions generally take an hour or so depending on group size
- We'll be gathering input on participants' views on the current food system and what they'd like to see going forward (addressing food insecurity, supporting local food, affordability/accessibility of food, etc.)
- Input sessions make great additions to events and meetings that may already be taking place in the community!

We will be holding more sessions across the region until the end of June. These sessions are essential for gathering of information to truly understand the issues and priorities we share in our communities around food and food related issues. These sessions are your chance to share your input on what food related challenges and opportunities you see in your community and your vision for the future of food in our region.

If you are an individual or organization that wants to get involved, we would love to connect with you! If there are community groups that you think we should meet with, let us know! Please email us at [nwo@cloverbeltlocalfoodcoop.com](mailto:nwo@cloverbeltlocalfoodcoop.com) or call us at 221-3293 ext. 27.

# STAY IN THE LOOP!

As we continue to gather community input over the next few months, be sure to look for updates and surveys associated with the charter. We hope to have the charter finished in the fall of this year which will help the Kenora and Rainy River districts secure a healthy, sustainable, and thriving food system for the future!

