



Ontario Public Health Association
l'Association pour la santé publique de l'Ontario
Established/Établi 1949

The mission of OPHA is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario.

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Constituent Societies

ANDSOOHA – Public Health Nursing
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Association of Ontario
Health Centres

Association of Public Health
Epidemiologists in Ontario

Association of Supervisors of Public Health
Inspectors of Ontario

Canadian Institute of Public Health
Inspectors (Ontario Branch)

Community Health Nurses' Initiatives Group
(RNAO)

Health Promotion Ontario

Ontario Association of Public Health
Dentistry

Ontario Public Health Libraries Association

Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in
Public Health

Public Health Research, Education and
Development (PHRED) Program

Charitable Registration
Number 11924 8771 RR0001

May 11, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA), and the OPHA Food Security Workgroup. OPHA represents over 3,500 public health practitioners through individual memberships and 11 constituent societies. OPHA's mission is to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health, and the Food Security Work Group advocates for access to affordable, nutritious and personally acceptable foods for all Ontarians.

I wish to support a proposal to the Ministry of Health Promotion's Healthy Communities Stream to support a scaling up strategy for the Community Food Centre model.

Many people in Ontario do not have access to healthy nutritious food. Some lack income to buy food, others lack skills to grow or prepare food, and still others suffer from social isolation.

The Stop Community Food Centre recognizes the power of food to affect health, the environment, the economy and the community. Their innovative programs have moved beyond simply distributing food through food banks to empowering community members to achieve food security by learning about food, about growing, cooking and preserving food, and about eating food together. Their model strives to provide fresh, locally produced foods that are seasonal, minimally processed, affordable and accessible to all.

This proposal is particularly appealing as it recognizes the full range of food issues including the importance of supporting local farmers and preserving local food systems.

As Registered Dietitians in Public Health, we are concerned about food insecurity and the impact it has on the health of those with low incomes and other barriers to adequate nutrition. We are committed to addressing the social determinants of health and health inequities in our populations.

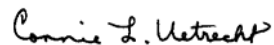
Programs such as community gardens, community kitchens, cooking classes and food markets have the potential to level the playing field and provide opportunities for food access with dignity to all. These programs can not only meet the needs of people with low incomes, but can also be adapted to serve differing age groups from children to seniors, differing skill sets of food and menu planning, and differing mental health situations.

Community food centres are needed in every city in Ontario. But they will not happen spontaneously. Starting with a few pilot sites will provide the groundwork for future best practice.

Please support this application for its ability to impact the health of our communities – nutritional health, active living components, mental health, and the health of our economy.

Please contact Vicki Edwards MS, RD, Public Health Nutritionist at Vicki.Edwards@hamilton.ca or 905-546-2424, ext 3632 for further discussion.

Sincerely,



Connie Uetrecht
Executive Director