

## MISSION

We support Neighbourhood Groups that are inclusive, engaging, responsive, and build a sense of belonging.

## VISION

A healthy, safe community where everyone feels at home.

## VALUES

- Growing Together
- Love & Kindness
- Integrity
- Community
- Courage
- Fun

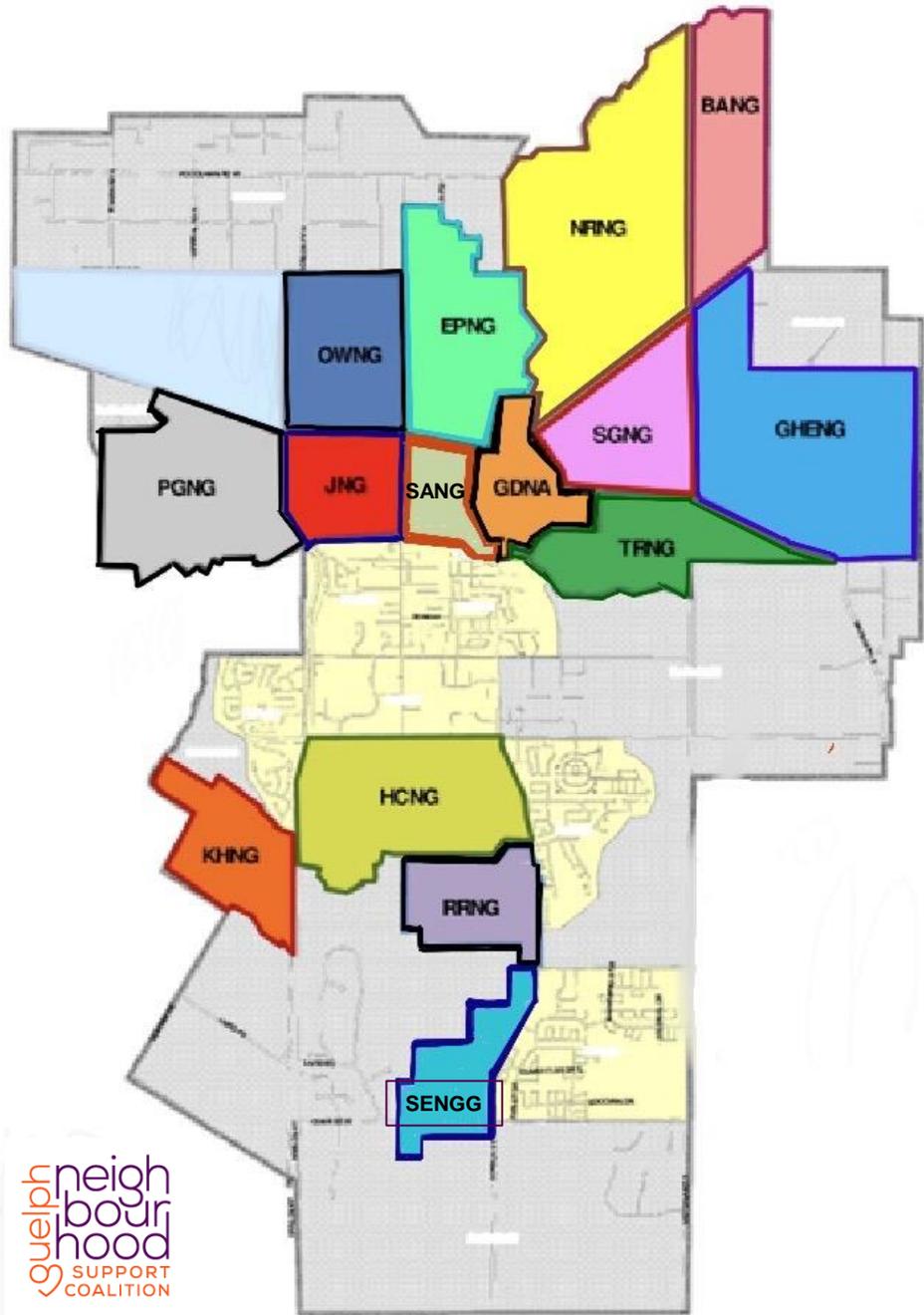
## City funding of community organizations bring 'tremendous' returns

\$1.81 million given to 15 initiatives in 2019

Oct 29, 2020 10:00 AM By: Richard Vivian



Staff from Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition summer camps, one of those that benefit from the city's Community Benefit Agreement program, strike a pose in 2019. Tony Saxon/GuelphToday file photo



guelph  
neighbourhood  
SUPPORT  
COALITION

# GNSC Goal

- Reimagining community care to create equitable access to safety, health and wellbeing, programs, services, supports, resources, and celebrations



# Activities & Participation **Pre-Covid**

**Programs** ..... **292**

**Participants** ..... **50,521**

**Volunteers** ..... **1,317**

**Volunteer Hours** ..... **35,958**

**Value of Volunteer Hours** ... **\$650,840.00**



# Reasons to Vote **Yes**

## 1. FOOD INSECURITY & EMERGENCY SUPPORT

- Our food security work such as the North End Harvest Market is key to the health and wellbeing of 1000s of community members.
- Over the next 3 years, the GNSC will play an important role in supporting our most vulnerable friends during the pandemic and recovery period
- All of the NG paths to raising funds (events, raffles, newsletters) have been lost



## 2. ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY, & ADVOCACY

- GNSC has played and will continue to play a large role in the big issues facing our community (Community Plan, Housing & Homelessness, ACEs Coalition GW).
- We bring needed community voice, advocacy, & values to every room. **“Not Us Without Us”**



# Food Insecurity: What We Did With Your Support



- 2720 people supported per month with fresh fruit and vegetables



- 400 people supported per month for Free Food Friday
- Ran two community gardens
- 400 supported people per month shop at their Affordable Fresh Food Market



- Student snack program 1000 lunches per month
- 110 families per month receive food support
- Host longest running community garden in the GNSC



- 80 families and individuals supported per month with fresh fruit and vegetables
- 59 families per month receiving prepared meals



- 80 families per month and 600 meals delivered
- 59 families per month receiving prepared meals



- 45 families per month receiving meals (halal, vegetarian...)
- Run 2 food cupboards supporting 90 families

# Anti-Racism, Equity, & Advocacy



The GNSC is extremely excited and honoured to announce that **Kevin Sutton** will be joining our team in the role of **Community Resilience Facilitator**. Their work will be to help to set up and support the conditions for a community-led, consent-based, trauma-informed supportive learning and working environment for all staff and volunteers of the GNSC. They have been working alongside the GNSC for the past 5 years including, but not limited to, our Equity Conference, Continuing the Conversation workshops, and Tools for a Supportive Professional workshops. Kevin brings a tremendous and varied skill set (facilitator, artist, community change maker...) and a lifetime of experience to this role. Please join me in welcoming them into the GNSC family.



The GNSC is extremely excited and honoured to announce that **Nasra Hussein** will be joining our team in the role of **Community Health Equity Lead**. Her work will be to engage with staff, volunteers, local leaders and most importantly, you, the community, to champion and advocate for equity and inclusion across the GNSC and in the community. Nasra hopes to affect change and promote health through anti-oppressive practice and interventions.

Raised in Guelph, Nasra credits her drive for impacting systemic change to her lived experience as a Black woman and daughter of Somali-Muslim immigrants, who has witnessed/experienced marginalization firsthand. She brings with her a Bachelor of Science and Master of Public Health from the University of Guelph and years of experience working in community engagement and participatory action research in Guelph, Ottawa and Africa.

Please join us in welcoming Nasra into the GNSC family.

## 2021 Highlights

Supported and informed:

- Community Plan
- Community Wellbeing & Safety Plan
- GPS & CMHA IMPACT plan
- GWLIP Discrimination Survey
- Resilience Summit
- Begun internal audit of GNSC policies and programs. Sharing learning with the City and other community partners.
- Facilitated series of sessions between our Values Team and our Board to build welcoming spaces for inclusion.
- Establishing a Creative Collective of community members to find new ways to honour and share community experiences.

# Leadership & Advocacy

A United Vision:  
**GUELPH'S  
COMMUNITY PLAN**



- GNSC serves on steering committees for City initiatives
- Has co-chaired the PTF for 3 years
- Co-Founding organization of The SEED & ACEs Coalition GW

**Community Safety  
and Wellbeing plan**

**POVERTY**  
GUELPH & WELLINGTON TASK FORCE FOR  
**ELIMINATION**



**OURFOODFuture**

GUELPH-WELLINGTON – Canada's  
first food smart community



**ACEs Coalition**

Guelph & Wellington

# Thank You



On behalf of the 15 Neighbourhood Groups and  
the thousands of volunteers and participants involved in the GNCS  
**thank you**  
for your visionary support of our collective work.



November 11, 2021

To the Mayor and City Councillors,

I am writing to support the GNSC's CBA renewal request for additional funds. I have collaborated with the GNSC on many important projects and have seen the power of their deep community connections and the strength of their advocacy. I will highlight a few here:

- 1) As external lead advisor for the **Guelph community plan**, GNSC has been a **key collaborator and partner actively ensuring that equity seeking voices are centered** and that the work is consistently viewed through an anti-racist lens. GNSC's active participation and partnership has continued and no doubt toward an outcome to the benefit of all.
- 2) One of my most compelling moments with GNSC is during the early stages of the **Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan** discussions where arbitrary timelines and direction from the provincial government to produce a community document, without real community input was moving forward. With GNSC at the table to **ask the uncomfortable questions** on behalf of community and with the chorus of other community organization's voices, it became clear that the path was misguided, and the meeting quickly pivoted to address wording, themes, need for community input and a more realistic timeline, to do the work correctly. We are grateful that the leaders had opened their minds and hearts to hearing and adapting to make necessary changes.
- 3) I was honoured to be one of the GNSC's **story-tellers** in a project that provided opportunities for a broad cross-section of community members to share their lived experiences and hear from others. It helped to highlight why we need to pursue equity of opportunity for all and resulted in a shared sense of belonging and relatability to each other. The interactions were compelling and uplifting.

In my 34-years as a resident of Parkwood Gardens neighbourhood, I have watched the growth of the neighbourhood coalitions, working with, and supporting many in their aims. The establishment of the GNSC has brought a sharpened focussed to the issues that face so many. The breadth of its advocacy work on existing and evolving issues within a world, fighting a pandemic, the effects of climate change and systemic racism, makes a difference on how individuals and families are supported in building resiliency, to overcome some of these challenges.

Their request for additional funds will lead to an even larger return on investment and create a more just and equitable city.

Sincerely,

Marva Wisdom, M.A. (Leadership)

August 18, 2021

City of Guelph Public Services  
Guelph City Hall  
1 Carden St  
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1

**Re: Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition CBA Renewal Request**

Dear Colleen Clack, Danna Evans and Alex Goss,

I am writing on behalf of CMHA Waterloo Wellington to support the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition's CBA renewal request for additional funds. We have been collaborating and partnering with the GNSC for the past 8 years and our work has been transformed by our deep connection with them.

CMHA WW was a champion of the GNSC even before they were formed (we weren't even CMHA WW then - we were still Trellis!). We believe so much in the power of our informal networks and community that we supported the creation of the GNSC. I personally sat on the Board of Directors for the first 6 years of the organization. I have been able to witness the incredible growth in the coalition and its increased importance in the larger community conversations around many important issues, including mental health, and equity, inclusion and anti-oppression.

Not only has the GNSC been able to support the truly amazing work of the Neighbourhood Groups, but they have also been a key contributor in the creation in new city-wide projects such as The SEED, North End Harvest Market and ACEs Coalition Guelph Wellington. They have also brought their powerful voice to organizations like the Poverty Task Force. I have sat as co-chair of the PTF alongside Brendan Johnson as the organization has done some of its most powerful work to date around housing and homelessness.

We collaborate with the GNSC because they do the day-to-day, unseen work in the community that builds trust and connection that allows us to reach the most vulnerable and oppressed members of our city. We also collaborate with them because we know positive mental health comes from being in connection with your community. Our services are vital in people's lives, but we can't always reach people – we need to leverage the trusting relationships that have been built by the GNSC, and the supports offered the Neighbourhood Groups. Together, we are truly better.

Without hesitation, we know that additional funds are needed by the GNSC to reach more people, and to offer the kind of support needed for Guelph to be a safe, inclusive and healthy community. As a core partner with the GNSC, CMHA WW looks forward to increasing our reach and partnerships with this increased funding. We sincerely appreciate the City considering this request, and would be happy to supply any additional information required.

Sincerely,



**Helen Fishburn, MSW**  
Chief Executive Officer



August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021

To Colleen Clack-Bush, Danna Evans, and Alex Goss,

I am writing to support the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition's (GNSC) Collective Benefit Agreement (CBA) renewal request for additional funds.

For the past eight (8) years, the Guelph CHC has been expanding the depth and breadth of our partnership with the GNSC. The reason for this expansion has been because of our shared understanding of and demonstrated track record of substantive improvements to health and wellbeing that we can achieve together. In fact, our partnership with the GNSC specifically helps to advance almost ALL of the Guelph CHC's Strategic Aims, including:

- Engage in Collective Impact to Address the Social Determinants of Health
- Deliver Early Help and Prevention to Marginalized Families
- Build Capacity in Priority Neighbourhoods and
- Provide Hope Inspiring Care

The Guelph CHC is committed to equity in all its forms. Our integrated partnerships with the GNSC, including many Guelph CHC staff delivering care as part of wraparound neighbourhood-based teams alongside GNSC staff, have enabled connections to populations that would not otherwise find or access our respective services.

- One example of our integrated work is the Parent Outreach Worker (POW) program, where social workers are embedded in neighbourhoods and work alongside the GNSC's Neighbourhood Support Workers (NSW). This partnership provides many benefits, including that the POWs benefit from increased accessibility to their services, and both the POWs and NSWs can leverage and build upon the one another's trusted relationships with the community. This increased accessibility and trust allows both organizations to deliver supports and access to resources to some of the most oppressed and marginalized members of the community.
- Another example of our collective impact that we achieve together is in the creation of The SEED Community Food Project. It was the Guelph CHC and the GNSC who were the key organizations that drove the community conversations, wrote grants, and did the heavy lifting to make The SEED a reality. Today, because of this codesign, thousands of food insecure Guelph residents have access to sliding scale, dignified, good food.

To sustain and amplify our collective and shared impacts, as well as the Mission Vision and Values of GNSC more broadly, increased investment is needed. Responding to and dismantling the systems that continue to marginalize oppressed groups is complex, essential work that requires dedicated resources, including time, skilled staffing, and

funding. I urge that the City of Guelph to meet the GNSC's request for increased funds to advance our shared commitment to equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression efforts that are so critical at this time.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raechelle Devereaux". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raechelle Devereaux  
CEO, Guelph CHC

Cc Brendan Johnson



## Toward Common Ground

To Colleen Clack-Bush, Danna Evans, and Alex Goss,

I am writing to support the GNSC's CBA renewal request for additional funds. Toward Common Ground (TCG) has collaborated with the GNSC on many important projects and have seen the power of their deep community connections and their strength of their advocacy.

One example of our work together is the ACEs Coalition GW. We met with the GNSC to discuss important issues and root causes of some of our persistent and complex challenges in the community. What came out of those discussions was that we should focus our work and the work of our partners on repairing and preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Some of our early work was to create greater awareness of ACEs and how people could better show up for children who were struggling. The GNSC's relationships and connections led us to running our first pilot project with the UGDSB and Brant Avenue Public School. The GNSC was key to setting up and delivering the training.

I have also seen the power of the GNSC in bringing in community perspective and advocacy to the Poverty Task force, Smart Cities and the Nutritious Food Stream Committee, and so many other projects and committees. Our work has been informed and transformed by our relationship and connection to the GNSC. The GNSC has even opened up their office for us to share their space and work alongside them.

We are huge supporters of the GNSC and see their work taking on even more importance over the coming years. As we recover from the pandemic, neighbourhood-based opportunities for connection and support are more important than ever. The GNSC provides the infrastructure that makes it easy (in some cases even possible) for community members to support each other, contribute to building a stronger community and experience and foster a sense of belonging. These connections and relationships are essential protective factors that will support the development of resilience that is so critical to our collective recovery from COVID-19.

The City's investment in the GNSC is a wise one that pays many seen and unseen dividends. Their request for additional funds will lead to a larger return on investment and create a more just and equitable city.

Sincerely,

Sarah Haanstra, Toward Common Ground

To:  
Colleen Clack-Bush,  
Danna Evans and  
Alex Goss

Re:  
The Guelph  
Neighbourhood  
Support Coalition's  
request for  
increased funding

Date:  
August 24, 2021

Dear Colleen Clack-Bush, Danna Evans and Alex Goss,

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition's (GNSC) renewal request for additional funds. The Poverty Task Force (PTF) has collaborated and partnered with the GNSC for the past 8 years and our work is stronger and deeper because of our ongoing relationship.

The support of the GNSC over the past three years has been invaluable as our work has increased and become more urgent than ever. Brendan Johnson has co-chaired the PTF during this time and the GNSC has been critical in keeping the PTF running during our transition to a new host agency. Not only were they there every step of the way, but also served as a bridge organization, keeping us employed while we finalized transition details. Another wonderful example of our work together is found in the Decent Work Project. Through the GNSC we were able to obtain a substantial grant from the Atkinson Foundation to explore the reality of decent work in Guelph and engage hundreds of workers across the community. In this initiative and others, the GNSC is a committed collaborative partner that supports planning and outreach, and shares the unique perspectives and experiences of community members from across our city to inform our work.

As a former Neighbourhood Support Worker for the GNSC, I can attest to the GNSC's commitment to community wellbeing and the powerful impact the GNSC has this City. The GNSC has a solid reputation for building trust-based relationships and supporting efforts to build a more just and equitable community. The strength of this work is especially prominent within the context of the pandemic where the GNSC has been quick to adapt, connect and respond to the needs of members of our community who have been most impacted.

The PTF strongly recommends that the GNSC be considered for increased funding from the City of Guelph. It will allow the GNSC to evolve and expand their powerful and impactful work in our community.

Sincerely,



Dominica McPherson  
*Poverty Task Force Coordinator*

## Equity and Inclusion Highlights and Activities

Through the City's support we have been able to engage in the following actions and activities:

- We were able to hire two amazing team members:

 <p>The GNSC is extremely excited and honoured to announce that <b>Kevin Sutton</b> will be joining our team in the role of <b>Community Resilience Facilitator</b>. Their work will be to help to set up and support the conditions for a community-led, consent-based, trauma-informed supportive learning and working environment for all staff and volunteers of the GNSC. They have been working alongside the GNSC for the past 5 years including, but not limited to, our Equity Conference, Continuing the Conversation workshops, and Tools for a Supportive Professional workshops. Kevin brings a tremendous and varied skill set (facilitator, artist, community change maker...) and a lifetime of experience to this role. Please join me in welcoming them into the GNSC family.</p>	 <p>The GNSC is extremely excited and honoured to announce that <b>Nasra Hussein</b> will be joining our team in the role of <b>Community Health Equity Lead</b>. Her work will be to engage with staff, volunteers, local leaders and most importantly, you, the community, to champion and advocate for equity and inclusion across the GNSC and in the community. Nasra hopes to affect change and promote health through anti-oppressive practice and interventions.</p> <p>Raised in Guelph, Nasra credits her drive for impacting systemic change to her lived experience as a Black woman and daughter of Somali-Muslim immigrants, who has witnessed/experienced marginalization firsthand. She brings with her a Bachelor of Science and Master of Public Health from the University of Guelph and years of experience working in community engagement and participatory action research in Guelph, Ottawa and Africa.</p> <p>Please join us in welcoming Nasra into the GNSC family.</p>
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- Our team has played a key role in:
  - Community Plan: Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion
  - Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan
  - Guelph Police Service and CMHA WW IMPACT program
  - GWLIP Discrimination Survey
  - Resilience Summit
- We have undergone a process of self-auditing our own ways of being and knowing in the GNSC.
  - Nasra Hussein is looking at all the programs and service that we deliver to identify gaps and needs.
  - We are reviewing our policies and procedures to reflect our Values and centre equity-deserving and rights-holding people.
  - We are enhancing the role of our Values Team to be a guide in our equity and inclusion journey. We have developed a plan and resource to recruit and

welcome greater representation to our board. We have also been holding joint Board and Values Team sessions, facilitated by Kevin Sutton, to build strong relationships and define how the Values Team informs and directs the board (how we can start to raise community voice in decision making and to decolonize our governance).

- Nasra Hussein is creating ways of valuing our collective work and engage in a process of continuous improvement.
  - Kevin Sutton has been running a series of conversations with a Neighbourhood Group (NGs) to pilot a process that can be used in other NGs to build relations and increase participation.
  - We are engaging in a staff and community-led process of defining what care looks like in the GNSC. A concrete example is developing a new conflict mediation process that embraces different ways of being and knowing. Moving from punitive to restorative. Trying to create safety that enables conversations that prevent issues from escalating.
- We are deepening our relationship to our existing formal and informal partners and sharing our processes and learnings with them (and in return, listening and learning from them) to form a community practice around equity and inclusion.
    - 15 Neighbourhood Groups across the city
    - 11 Partner Organizations: City of Guelph, WDG Public Health, Immigrant Service GW, Guelph Community Health Centre, Upper Grand District School Board, Family Health Team, Family & Children's Services GW, County of Wellington Social Services, Wellington Catholic District School Board, CMHA WW, and Guelph Police Services.
    - HOPE House, Chalmers Community Services Centre, Art Not Shame, Black Lives Matter Guelph, Guelph Black Heritage Society, Toward Common Ground, The SEED, ACEs Coalition, Facilitation Wellington Dufferin, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Children's Foundation Guelph, United Way GWD, Guelph Community Foundation, Guelph Chinese Performing Arts...
- Nasra Hussein and Kevin Sutton are creating a Creative Collective to find new ways to honour community experiences outside and in addition to regular ways of evaluation and data collection. Art and storytelling as ways of sharing and creating continuous improvement in our work.
- Having Nasra Hussein and Kevin Sutton on the team has enabled other team members to support equity and inclusion work in their communities. A concrete example is that our Executive Director has partnered with 10C and Art Not Shame to deliver a monthly workshop and discussion group for white people to deconstruct, unlearn, and to build an anti-racist community of practice.



## GNSC 2021 Food Report to the City of Guelph

We asked the Neighbourhood Groups to share some stories and statistics to show you how critical and powerful your support is to the GNSC.



### Grange Hill East Food Program Summary Report

**Date: October 5, 2021**

#### Overview of any food programs:

**Food program:** Our humble Food Cupboard at 470 Auden Rd. provides emergency food to local families and individuals in need. We offer non-perishables, frozen bread, and hygiene products. Eggs, milk, cheese, and meat are often available. We have several gift cards available each month for emergency purposes (this is not something we advertise, but we do get folks in that are in dire financial need). The pantry is open twice a week and staffed by the Neighbourhood Support Worker and volunteers.

**Serving nearby clients:** In addition to serving clients directly, we have our Parent Outreach Worker (POW) and a Senior Support Worker from VON access the cupboard to help serve clients in nearby housing complexes and in a rent-geared-to-income seniors home.

**Fresh food and non-perishables:** We receive fresh and rescued food from the SEED, and monthly allotments of non-perishables from the Food bank. When possible, we help supply food to the Senior's Association, as they sometimes host a small pay-what-you-can market at Hadati Rd. Court. Our NSW also refers folks to the North End Harvest market. Those in need can call or sign up on our online form, and she will make sure they are registered for a bi-weekly drop-off. We have a robust team of volunteers that helps pack and distribute bread donations.

**Food Bank Pilot Project:** Grange Hill's NSW is currently working with the Guelph Food Bank on a pilot project. The goal is to work more collaboratively in a way that will help increase the flow of food into the areas that need it, so that folks do not have to travel so far to the food bank, but can access what they need through their own food pantries.

#### Snapshot of the Month

We are still doing data analysis for recent months, but it looks like a peak month was in February, 2021 where we gave out over 620 meals (compared with 486 meals in January). This was for serving clients

that came directly to our Food Pantry. We generally serve between 20-30 families per month, but we have recorded as many as 50.

## Story

### Feeding a child with special needs

We recently had a new client who started coming to us on a weekly basis due to the pandemic. She told us that one of her children has special needs and can only be fed through a tube. Thanks to the wider variety of foods that we have been able to offer, especially the non-perishables (and broth bases) we have been able to bring in through additional funding and partner cultivation, the mother is able to create healthy blended soups and smoothies that her child is able to consume. It is great that we are able to help alleviate some financial stress while simultaneously offering parents a safe place close to home where they can acquire food with which to feed some of the most vulnerable within our community.

### Teens Step Up

Engaging youth is something our NG wishes to prioritize, but due to current capacity limits, we are encouraging self-directed teens to volunteer via fundraisers and food drives. In August, we had 3-4 high school students, seeking volunteer hours, help out by doing a bottle drive fundraiser and food drive. They were able to bring in over 300lbs of food and raise enough money to purchase 17 backpacks and school supplies for secondary school students. Story/slideshow associated with the backpack day:

<https://www.gheng.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Backpack-Project.mp4>



- Running two food cupboards, one at the main location (WECC) and one at our satellite location (50-60 Fife Road)
- We're just about to launch our second iteration of our FOOD program, done in partnership with BLM Guelph and HOPE House. The first run was this summer for 9 weeks, and in total we had 40-45 unique families sign-up. This program offers ready-to-eat meals that are available for all folks (halal, vegetarian, vegan).
- We're still receiving an overwhelming request for grocery gifts, but we're not able to provide them to everyone who needs them. This seems to be our neighbour's preferred method of emergency food support
- During our peak month, we had about 80-90 visitors to the food cupboards and distributed about 360 ready-to-eat meals.
- We're just shifting from backpacks to holiday supports and have seen an increase in requests for the Adopt-A-Family Program
- We started a new community garden at Gateway Drive PS this summer and have been offering barrier-free programming to kids at that school to hopefully increase access to fresh foods and to increase their capacity to garden with their families.

- We're still distributing about 400-600lbs of bread from COBS once a month. This is accessed by about 150 individuals.

It seems as though many of our community members are still in crisis-mode from March 2020.



We travel weekly, with the support of the GNSC, to the Elmira food auction to purchase food for our programs, the NEHM and other NGs.

#### **Wednesday:**

##### **Affordable Fresh Local Food Market**

We offer fresh locally grown food by market style or subscription box. We keep our prices as low as we can to help make our market accessible to as many folks as possible.

Numbers: each week we have between 50 - 100 families that shop at our market.

We have anywhere from 12-50 preordered boxes each week.

#### **Thursday:**

With the proceeds and left-over food from our Wednesday market and in partnership with North End Harvest Market we offer food hampers for pick up or delivery. This is a registration required service. This can include fresh foods, non-perishables, and/or gift cards depending on availability.

We provide 25 specific Two Rivers families with mixed food hampers each week through pick up and delivery. We get requests from other Guelph community members weekly that we try to support as well.

#### **Friday:**

We run Free Food Friday With Heart. This is a mixture of left-over produce, donated produce and foods we get from various community partnerships. This is a no questions asked program where folks come help themselves from all over the city.

This program is accessed from folks city wide. We have anywhere from 75 - 150 people who drive by starting Friday through until Sunday helping themselves to whatever is placed out on the tables.

#### **Ongoing:**

We have a partnership with 87 Neeve (a not-for-profit housing building) the building manager contacts us whenever she flags someone who needs extra support, and we supply a mixed hamper.

We have community members, local businesses, and farmers who are continuously placing items on our free tables. Almost any day of the week has some kind of free food available.

Despite all the work we are doing to support the need for fresh foods we are not able to keep up with all the demand.

We also run 2 Community Gardens. One that offers plots to community members to grow their own food. The second is a community garden when there are fruit trees, perennials, and seasonal vegetables.

One of our recent projects, with funding and support from the GNSC, is building a community cold storage root cellar so that we can continue to purchase and store fresh food year round.



The North End Harvest Market is a program of the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition, and this program provides fresh produce for struggling families in Guelph on a bi-weekly basis.

There really is not one week that could be classed as a peak month as we just kept growing steadily  
(When we do stats - a bag of produce will cover a family of 4 and we produce another half bag for families over the 4) (The same bag is given to an individual - as it is difficult to predict how many of each bag we will need.)

Average for the 4 weeks of the Month of September 2019

# Bags Prepared -  $40+39+45+45 = 180$

# 1/2 Bags Prepared -  $16 \times 4 = 64$

Total number of people served - walk in only - 720

Average for the 4 weeks of the Month of September 2020

# Bags Prepared -  $120+120+130+130 = 500$

# 1.2 Bags Prepared  $26 \times 4 = 104$

Total number of people served through Curb Side Drive through - Walk Ins and Deliveries- 2000

average for 4 weeks of the Month of September 2021

# Bags Prepared -  $140+140+150+150 = 680$

# 1.2 Bags Prepared - 34 X 4 = 136

Total number of people served through Curb Side Pick ups - Drive through - Walk Ins and Deliveries 2720

## The Covid Story

When Covid hit - the market was shut down because it operated out of a portable of the Upper Grand District School Board and was under a use of school contract. Because the fresh produce that was provided to struggling families was so essential, we went to Public Health and spoke with the Health Inspector to make a safety Covid Plan for the market to continue. We then took this plan to the Upper Grand District School Board and they approved the plan and allowed us to open up. This was a blessing to so many families.

But for re-opening - we had to convert to a Curb Side service where people just drove through the line and volunteers would just put the bags in their vehicles. This also worked for walk ins - their bags were put on a table, and they would just pick them up. We then had to develop a delivery program for those families and individuals who were immune compromised or not able to get to the market.

We had to develop a new registration process and recruitment for delivery drivers and more volunteers as well as the many covid safety plan changes that arose. We went from 10 volunteers to now a group of 28 to 30. We also went from servicing the North end of Guelph to basically areas all around the City.

Because of the demand for food and no Sunday service for access to food on the weekends (other than prepared suppers) we were able to develop a relationship with Cobs Bread and Zehrs Bread and Mark O'Connel from the Guelph Police Services to create a Free Bread Market on Sundays which is now being accessed by 35 to 40 families every Sunday - with a Harvey's Bread Market Junior created for the children. Some Sundays we are able to offer marketers some fresh produce if there is some left over from the market.

All of the volunteer staff have been double vaccinated and marketers also have to be double vaccinated - if not, we have a plan for them to wait outside which the volunteers make up a bag for them.

This program has been running for 8 years without any sustainable funding and we did a lot of fundraising and grant writing and relying on amazing donors to keep this program operating for 50 weeks of each year. The dollars that we received through the GNCS filtered from the City dollars has given us confidence that we have some stability and that all those dollars have gone back into the purchasing of the produce.

## Covid Story # 2

There was a pregnant mom with 2 children that the husband had left them, and they were struggling to get settled. I got a call from a nurse practitioner to inquire about our service and how could we help this lady. I told her that I just needed the name -

address with postal code - contact number and the size of her family and I was sure that we would be able to help her. I got a call from this lady that was referred a day later, and I could hardly understand what she was saying - but through the tears I could hear a quaint grateful thank you for helping her with no stigma or harassment attached. I told her that our values included love and kindness and that is what we base our service on. A few weeks later - she called me again through tears of happiness and said that she would like to return the love and kindness that we showed her, and she is now one of our delivery drivers in our program where she can bring her teen with her to help deliver and she will get school hours with both mom and teen able to work together in a covid safe way.



- **Overview of any food programs you have run/are running (fresh food markets, delivery, meal prep, gift cards....)**

OWNG runs an ongoing emergency food cupboard program that helps families cover 2-3 days (often more) of meals and snacks. We also work with Kitchen Bees to offer premade meals. We offer meals to those with disabilities or illness or anyone who has more difficulty preparing their own food. Prior pandemic we were offering a hot meal on Fridays onsite. We have been lucky to be able to receive grocery cards which have also been used to help families and individuals and were working with volunteers to offer food delivery to all families we have been working with (especially through the beginning of the year).

- **A snapshot of a month. maybe a peak month of activity (how many meals, families cared for.....)**

At peak times OWNG has been helping roughly 80 families & individuals per month with fresh fruit & veg, protein, dairy, bread and more. Also, at peak times roughly 50-80 premade meals went out into the community/month.



Just reach out if you have any questions, or would like more details on anything.

- Overview of any food programs you have run/are running (fresh food markets, delivery, meal prep, gift cards....)

We run various food access programs throughout the year. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, and social distancing/isolation measures, staff will deliver as necessary.

Each month we support approx. 50 families with our Garden Fresh Program, where families can access fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables. This program is run once monthly, on the third Wednesday of each month. This program costs \$280 per month, or \$3,360 yearly and is open to everyone in our community.

We are also offering families small gift cards once monthly, to help with pantry items. Roughly 60-65 families are supported monthly with this program. which cost \$14,400 yearly. Families are provided with a small \$20 gift card (\$10 for singles) to use at a local grocery store for whichever staple items they may need.

Parents supporting school aged children may come in twice monthly and access lunch snacks for their children. Parents are supplied with a week's worth of nutritious snacks, ensuring children are sent to school with nutritious protein, grain, and vegetable snack portions daily. This program is open to all parents in the area, with children enrolled in JK-gr 12. throughout the school year, and over 1000 days of lunches are provided each month, costing roughly \$12,000.

Seasonal support- We recognize how difficult things can be for families during holiday seasons when typically accessed support services are closed or have alternative hours. We try our best to prepare families for these times by supplying a little extra beforehand. We run food drives prior to easter, thanksgiving, Christmas and other holiday closures, helping families stock-up on canned goods, breads, hams and turkeys etc.

As our snack program does not run during summer months, we were able to offer \$30 gift cards to parents who access the program year-round in July and August to help alleviate pressures, costing \$3,000.

- **A snapshot of a month**

We help over 145 families, (300+ individuals) throughout the year with a variety of issues they may face. These issues may include but are not limited to food insecurities, referrals to partner agencies, help navigating social services available throughout the community, access to computers/office/meeting space, seasonal/holiday support, community programs/events/trainings etc.

**Letters of support:**

I am writing to let you know how much the neighborhood group is needed! How much support people in the neighborhood get from the neighborhood group. So many people rely on the neighborhood group and what it does for them on a daily basis. How much it helps them daily, how much it helps them with support in their needs, where they wouldn't know where to start or where to go or what to do if they didn't have the neighborhood group and the wonderful ladies that run it.

The neighborhood group also helps daily with needs for children, if the neighborhood group wasn't there some children would go without breakfast, without lunch, without dinner, children that wouldn't be able to go to camp. The neighborhood group goes above and beyond, and supports so many people in so many ways and I know myself if I did not have Katie or Nikki and our neighborhood group I would be lost in so many ways. I can't tell you what it would do to people if we did not have our neighborhood group. The effect that it would have not having our Brant Ave neighborhood group on the people in our neighborhood and their daily lives and their mental stability. Not having a neighborhood group, someone there to help them with their needs, it would affect so many. As well the neighborhood group in doing all the things they do to help people in their daily lives with their children with supports they need someone to help with what to do?! how to go about it!! The things a lot of people don't know how to get or go about doing things without support doing them. They also bring the neighborhood together!!

They do so many things to bring the neighborhood together as well. So many things for the children in our neighborhood, that otherwise wouldn't be able to do without the neighborhood group. The things that other children in the world get to do that our children wouldn't have a chance to do if we did not have our neighborhood group and the wonderful people running it. It would be a horrible situation for so many people, so many children.

Please do whatever you can to help support, keeping our neighborhood group running, as it helps so many people, so many lives in more ways than one, and could ever know. Thank you so much from one Neighbor of so many that has received so much help in so many ways for myself, my family and my children.

One huge supporter of the Brant Ave neighborhood support group

And the wonderful ladies Katie and Nicki that support so many!!

My family has no access to a garden or outdoors as we live in an apartment. The Brant Avenue community garden has been our source of education on how to grow vegetables in an urban environment. We feel closer to the land and more responsible to tend it and observe the growing cycles of what we grow and the overall change of seasons. The Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Group has supported any of our need and inquiries and we feel we've built a trusting relationship with the group, the gardening community, and the land.

Thank you for your service and care!

Without the support from the neighbourhood group, we would most likely be in dire straights. I have been on disability and quite often have had to feed a drug addicted daughter and a son with aspergers with no additional support. We have just started to apply for disability for my son and so far nothing has come and no other help for him so I have to support these two with no extra funding. Brant Neighbourhood group has been my saving grace and has helped Max my 10 year-old in getting things

we otherwise would never be able to afford. I am so thankful for Nickie and Katie for all they have done for our family. Life would be hell without them. Thanks!



We have been running the Garden Fresh Box program for a number of years. When the pandemic hit we saw a growing need in the South End for emergency food provision. Sarah Stubbs, GNSC staff and KHNG staff, was working with the NEHM and other NGs and was able to bring her knowledge to our area.

We started a bi-weekly food delivery box with the proceeds supporting families in need. We also the launch of a youth run market in the Arkel and Victoria Road area with proceeds from sales going towards supporting the TRNG programs. The fresh food was procured by TRNG who go weekly to the Elmira food auction.



## 52 GNSC Activities, Actions, and Accomplishments

1. Took part in **United Way GWD Strategic Planning** and have been part of the team realigning the United Way's funding priorities (ACEs and Food Security).
2. Was a support in getting the ACEs framework built for the UW GWD and facilitating the All That Kids Can Be Service Network conversations and writing the Letter of Intent (LOI).
3. Brendan Johnson, Executive Director, was named United Way GWD Speaker of the Year in XXXX
4. Founding of **The SEED** with the Poverty Task Force (**PTF**) and Guelph Community Health Centre (**GCHC**).
5. Founding of the **ACEs Coalition GW** with Toward Common Ground (**TCG**) and **GCHC**.
6. Co-chair of the **PTF** 2019 - Present.
7. Guelph's 1<sup>st</sup> community-led **Equity Conference 2018** – 140 in attendance representing 40 organizations.
8. **Smart Cities** grant steering group and member of the **Nutritious Food Stream Committee**.
9. Steering committee for the City's **Community Plan**.
10. GNSC has multiple staff supporting the development of the **Community Plan's Anti-Racism** work.
11. Steering committee for the **Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan**.
12. Consulting with Guelph Police Services and CMHA WW on the role of the **IMPACT** teams and how to reimagine community care.
13. Growth of the GNSC **Partners** from 9 to 11 (with Immigrant Services GW and the Family Health Team joining the coalition).
14. Run affordable/no cost **Summer Camps** in 8 Neighbourhood Groups. This includes consistent annual youth employment and leadership opportunities (240 Canada Summer Jobs; 25 Youth Jobs Connect jobs; 25 YMCA Quebec exchange students...)
15. The growth of new **Neighbourhood Groups** from 12-15.
16. The support and/or creation of new programs that serve the city such as the **North End Harvest Market**.
17. Working alongside **7 Generations Forward** (Indigenous, Metis, Inuit, and Mixed Ancestry collective) and **Black Lives Matters Guelph**.
18. Originator of and ongoing supporter of the **Community Wide Backpack Project** Partnered for the past 7 years with HOPE House to deliver the program which annually provides 1000+ back packs and back-to-school supplies to families across the city.
19. During the pandemic, the GNSC has played a key role in keeping people connected to supports and services and providing emergency food and essential items. We have also partnered with WDG Public Health and the GCHC to offer pop up vaccine clinics to areas that were lowest in vaccinations rates and to Indigenous populations.

20. We developed new **Values** that direct and inspire our work. Out of this came a **Values Team** that tackles and discusses important and complex topics such as white supremacy, colonialism, and racism.
21. Through the support of the city, we have brought on two new highly skilled and gifted staff: **Kevin Sutton** as our **Community Care Facilitator** and **Nasra Hussein** as our **Community Health Equity Lead**. They have both made immediate and important contributions and will help move the GNSC into the next phase of our journey where we will measure wellbeing and reimagine what community care means and looks like in our city.
22. Over the 8 years of our history, we have averaged yearly (excluding the pandemic year):

<b>Programs</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>New Volunteers</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<b>292</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>35,958</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>50,521</b>

23. GNSC was one of the lead partners that helped deliver the **Energize Guelph** funding directly to community members (programs and activities) consistently for a three-year period.
24. Partnered to bring a 3-yr community-based **Restorative Justice** pilot to Guelph in partnership with Community Justice Initiatives (CJI).
25. **Community Trainings** open to all: Helped start and run a "Community Mediation" training series with Shelldale; no-cost Bridges out of Poverty; no-cost SafeTalk and ASIST community trainings; no- and low-cost annual First Aid trainings (Red Cross CPR-C and AED).
26. Started the annual **Community Gardens Festival** (previously called Salsa Fest).
27. Helped incubate short term pet fostering program for vulnerable community members called **Pet Protect Guelph**
28. Helped the **Guelph Tool Library** get established (loaned org status; sat in on visioning; shared space and insurance).
29. Supported the first **Ward One Community Food Market** (The Tytler/ Two Rivers market).
30. Supported the development of the Tool Library's **Zero Waste Fest** (first of its kind in Guelph).
31. Supported the establishment of **Girls Rock Camp**.
32. Supporting partner with Frontier College to incubate a **summer camp for Syrian Refugee families at the Muslim Society of Guelph**.
33. Created the **GO! grants** with the Guelph Community Foundation (first neighbourhood based micro grant program).
34. Partner with the **Guelph Film Festival** on an ongoing project called **Hidden Histories** which enables marginalized and underrepresented members of the community to tell their own stories <https://guelphfilmfestival.ca/videos>
35. Partnered with the **GCHC, WDG Public Health** and **Family & Children's Services GW** on the development and valuation of the **Parent Outreach Worker (POW)** program. This program is to have social workers based out of **Neighbourhood Group (NG)** spaces work along GNSC **Neighbourhood Support Workers (NSW)** to support families. There are POWs in Brant Aven NG, Grange Hill East NG, Two Rivers NG, and Onward Willow NG <https://vimeo.com/175382910>
36. Part of the planning team for the **Community Resilience Summit** happening in partnership with the city.

37. **All Camps Day**. Each year we celebrate our summer camps by gathering all our campers, staff, supporters and volunteers for team activities and a BBQ. Usual we have ~230 people take part in the day.
38. **Pandemic Response**. One example is the **North End Harvest Market (NEHM)**. When the pandemic hit the NEHM had to shut down as all Community Use of School access was stopped (we run the program out of a portable at Waverley Drive Public School). We worked with WDG Public Health to create a safety plan and UGDSB saw our diligence and that our program was an essential service and allowed us to reopen. What was a pick-up market quickly became a 75% delivery-style market. We had to recruit more volunteers, require PPE, purchase bags, and other supplies. At the same time, need for the program went up ~250%. We are still delivering services through delivery and social distancing and the need has not subsided. At smaller scales we have seen this same increase at Neighbourhood Group based food programs and pantries. We believe that pandemic recovery will happen very slowly, and these program's increased need will continue for years to come.
39. Partnered with the PTF to obtain an Atkinson Foundation grant to pilot a tow-year **Decent Work project** in Guelph. The goal was to raise awareness around the principles of Decent Work and to help in the development of community advocates.
40. Hold two annual **GNSC events** (per-pandemic): AGM and party, and Year End Party. Both are open, at accessible spaces and with free, on-demand transportation. We have community members deliver activities and buy from local food vendors. We average between 120-150 community members per event. When we surveyed attendees, they told us that in average they met 2-5 new people at the events.
41. Received the **Award of Merit** from Family & Children's Services, "In recognition of significant contribution to the well-being of children, youth, and families..."
42. We have been asked to speak about and share the **GNSC model** with other municipalities including Toronto, London, Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo, Calgary, and Hamilton.
43. Helped 10 C with the start up of **42 Carden Shared Space**.
44. Had two successful **delegations to City Hall** which brought many new community members into the municipal decision-making process as delegates, letter writer's or delegation night attendees. Many had told us they had never been to city hall or city council before these delegations.
45. With **Innovation Guelph** we helped pilot, develop, and execute **Rhyze on the Road**, a neighbourhood-based young women's empowerment program that included summer camps and day-long conferences.
46. Have assisted with the City's **Transportation Master Plan** by creating opportunities for community inclusion and feedback.
47. Have worked with the Guelph Jazz Festival, Guelph Dance Festival, Kazoo and Musagetes to bring performances into neighbourhood parks and spaces. The next collaboration is with the GJF <https://guelphjazzfestival.com/2021/parks/>
48. Worked alongside Guelph Black Heritage Society, Musagetes, University of Guelph, CFRU, Immigrant Services GW and Postcommodity ( <http://postcommodity.com/About.html> ) in a collaborative one-year project called **People of Good Will** to reinforce the importance and living history of Heritage Hall.
49. During the pandemic, the PTF's umbrella organization WDG Public Health asked that they find a new home as their focus and direction had changed drastically,

and they felt it was no longer a good fit. The GNSC in the co-chair role, along with Helen Fishburn of CMHA WW, initiated a search for a new host organization. While this process was underway, the GNSC acted as the temporary host organization ensuring payroll and continuity of work was maintained. After months of process with the Steering Committee, the United Way GWD was chosen and the PTF will be hosted their as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

50. Have developed a trusted and collaborative partnership with Art Not Shame to support community participation in their amazing programs like the [The Mural Project](#)
51. Speaking engagements about the GNSC at conferences (Children's Aid of Ontario Director's Conference, ROMA...), and organizational meetings (Guelph Community Foundation, Rotary Guelph, Facilitation Guelph Wellington...).
52. Currently facilitating a continuing series of [Connecting Circles](#) community conversations with 10C on white privilege and anti-racism. Had previous hosted an evening on Food Insecurity.