

Tackling Poverty & Food Insecurity in First Nations



March 28, 2025

Dear Friends,

We want to express our deep appreciation for your continued support, which has made a tangible difference for Indigenous children, youth, and families in First Nations communities across Canada.

In the past year, inflation continued to disproportionately affect Indigenous communities, where food costs are already two to three times higher than in urban areas. Your generosity has been instrumental in helping Indigenous communities navigate the significant challenges posed by the rising cost of living in 2024. Through initiatives like school nutrition programs, community food distribution, and local food systems development, you have helped families facing rising rates of food insecurity.

Beyond immediate relief, you have also helped foster long-term solutions. Investments in community-led initiatives like food forests and land-based education are building pathways toward Indigenous food sovereignty guided and enacted by the communities themselves. These initiatives are reconnecting Indigenous Peoples with the traditional knowledge and sustainable practices that have sustained them for millennia.

As you may know, we've recently launched our 2024-2034 strategic directions, [The Path To Kinvia](#). This 10-year roadmap represents our commitment to inclusivity, advocacy, and deep partnership with communities. Together with partners and supporters like you, we're evolving the organization to what it should and must be: decolonized, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive. With a new mission, impact statement, and vision, we are deepening our commitment to a more just and equitable world in which children, youth, and their communities thrive, realizing their full potential.

We are grateful for your ongoing commitment to community-driven solutions which are strengthening Indigenous communities' efforts to create sustainable food systems and healthier futures for their children, youth, families and Elders. **Thank you!**

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out.

With profound gratitude,



Jacquelyn Wright
President & CEO
1-800-387-1221 ext. 226
JWright@canadianfeedthechildren.ca



Junaid Habib
Senior Manager, Major Gifts
1-800-387-1221 ext. 248
JHabib@canadianfeedthechildren.ca

Canada's Ongoing Food Security & Inflation Crisis

Throughout 2024, Canada continued to grapple with a food security crisis exacerbated by persistent inflation, the impacts of global conflict, and climate change. Rising food prices, which remain well above historical norms despite a decrease in overall inflation to 1.9% by late 2024, continue to strain household budgets. Prices for store-bought food rose 2.6% year over year in November 2024. While the increases are slowing, grocery prices remain elevated, having risen by 19.6% between November 2021 and November 2024.¹

In its 2024 *HungerCount* report, Food Banks Canada states that there were over two million visits to food banks in Canada in 2024 – the highest number in history – representing a 6% increase from 2023, and a staggering 90% increase from 2019.²

Food affordability remains a major concern for Canadians. *Canada's Food Price Report 2025* forecasts that overall food prices will increase by 3% to 5% in 2025.³

Rising Costs and Their Impact on Indigenous Communities

Inflation and the rising costs of consumer goods, including food, disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples. For those living on reserve or in remote or northern locations, the cost of food is typically at least two to three times higher than in more central locations, placing healthy foods out of reach for many families. The impact of inflation on fuel and transportation costs makes procuring food an even greater challenge for many in Indigenous communities, whether it is to travel to stores or to engage in traditional hunting or fishing.

Climate change is a growing contributor to Indigenous Peoples' lack of access to food in several ways. First, climate change affects transportation methods and costs, driving up the already-high price of groceries.^{4,5} Second, climate change disrupts Indigenous communities'

¹ Statistics Canada, [The Daily, Consumer Price Index November 2024](#), retrieved Dec 18 2024.

² Food Banks Canada, [HungerCount 2024](#), Nov 2024.

³ Dalhousie University, the University of Guelph, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Saskatchewan, [Canada's Food Price Report 2025](#), 15th edition, 2024.

⁴ Canada's National Observer, [Northern food is expensive. Is climate change to blame?](#) May 27 2024.

⁵ Dalhousie University, the University of Guelph, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Saskatchewan, [Canada's Food Price Report 2024](#), 14 th edition, 2024.

ability to engage in hunting, fishing, and agriculture in their traditional territories. Local food systems, which once supported community health and resilience, are increasingly undermined by environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, changing migratory patterns, and extreme weather events.

For example, due to a combination of geographic, social, and systemic factors, Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by wildfires. First Nations communities alone account for 42% of wildfire-related evacuations, while representing just 5% of Canada's population.⁶ As the frequency of wildfires and length of wildfire season increases due to climate change, these events create a cumulative impact on ecosystems from which it is proving difficult for First Nations communities to recover.

Wildfires have significant physical, mental, and spiritual health consequences for Indigenous people, including damaging lands integral to cultural practices, affecting traditional activities and the transmission of cultural knowledge. The disruption of their traditional relationship with and ways of stewarding the land and waters is not only a barrier to Indigenous food sovereignty, but dislocation and relocation is a deep source of economic and emotional retraumatization in these communities where there is already a long legacy of land dispossession, inadequate infrastructure, and racist colonial policies.

For all these reasons, food insecurity, poverty, and their associated health and social consequences remain much higher for Indigenous people than for the rest of the population. Of great concern, that gap is widening. According to Statistics Canada's latest (2022) Income Survey, 17.5% of the Indigenous population lived below the poverty line, nearly double that of the non-Indigenous population (9.6%), a gap that has widened over the past

two years.⁷ About one in three (31.4%) of First Nations people on reserve lived in a low-income household.⁸ These data, collected before the hyperinflation of 2023, are likely understated.

Also of grave concern is the rising rate of food insecurity among Indigenous people. Statistics Canada's Indigenous Peoples Survey,⁹ which was released in 2024 and is conducted every five years, shows that 43.1% of First Nations people living **off reserve** experienced some level of food insecurity:

16.3% severe (missing meals, reducing food intake and, at the most extreme, going days without food)

18.8% moderate (the quality and/or quantity of food was compromised)

8.1% marginal (worried about running out of food and/or experienced limited food selection due to a lack of money for food)



Elsipogtog

⁵ Public Health Agency of Canada, [Rapid Review: An intersectional analysis of the disproportionate health impacts of wildfires on diverse populations and communities](#), July 2024.

⁶ Statistics Canada, [Canadian Income Survey 2022](#), Apr 26, 2024, retrieved Dec 18, 2024.

⁷ Assembly of First Nations, [Our Right to Health: First Nations' Perspectives Across the Generations](#), 2021

⁸ Statistics Canada, [Indigenous Peoples Survey](#), July 2024

Food insecurity among First Nations **on reserve** is undoubtedly even higher given the underrepresentation of Indigenous people in these surveys and the lack of data collected for on-reserve First Nations, who experience the highest rates of poverty in Canada.¹⁰



Impacts on Children and Youth

The consequences of poverty and food insecurity are particularly severe for Indigenous children, who make up almost a quarter of the total Indigenous population.¹¹ Nearly one-quarter (24.6%) of Indigenous children aged 14 years and younger lived in a low-income household, more than double the rate of non-Indigenous children (11.1%). Over half (53%) of First Nations children on reserve live in poverty—roughly three times the national rate.¹²

This economic precarity has profound implications for child and youth physical and mental health. Chronic malnutrition, poor dietary diversity with a reliance on less expensive processed food, and limited access to fresh and traditional foods contribute to higher rates of nutrition-related illnesses, such as obesity and type 2 diabetes,

which are already double those observed in the general Canadian population.¹³

Children's well-being is also deeply connected with their cultural identity and sense of belonging. The erosion of traditional knowledge systems and practices, including language, and the loss of Elders and Knowledge-keepers who retain and pass on cultural knowledge, further compound the intergenerational effects of colonial policies and degrade the overall health of Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.

The Path Forward: Centering Indigenous-Led Solutions

Addressing food insecurity among First Nations communities requires systemic change rooted in Indigenous-led solutions. Efforts must prioritize food sovereignty, land stewardship, and the revitalization of traditional food systems. Investments in programs that promote land-based education, enhance local food production, and support traditional hunting, fishing, food and medicine gathering are critical not only for addressing food insecurity but also for fostering resilience, cultural continuity, and holistic health and well-being among First Nations people.

Collaborative initiatives, such as those supported Kinvia's generous supporters like you, demonstrate the transformative potential of community-led approaches. By fostering connections between Elders, youth, and families, these programs help rebuild food systems that are sustainable, culturally appropriate, and resilient to climate and economic shocks. Supporting First Nations children, youth, families, and communities in this way is not just a matter of addressing food security; it is part of our shared commitment to truth, reconciliation and justice for Indigenous people.

Thank you for being part of this work.

⁹ PROOF (Food Insecurity Policy Research), [Indigenous Food Insecurity](#), updated Sept 4, 2024.

¹¹ Arriagada, P and Racine, A, Statistics Canada. [First Nations children living off reserve, Métis children, and Inuit children and their families: Selected findings from the 2022 Indigenous Peoples Survey](#), Aug 16, 2024.

¹² Assembly of First Nations, Children & Families, <https://afn.ca/community-services/children-families/>, retrieved Dec 13, 2024

¹³ Arriagada, P and Racine, A, Statistics Canada. Op. cit.

Indigenous Partner Communities 2024



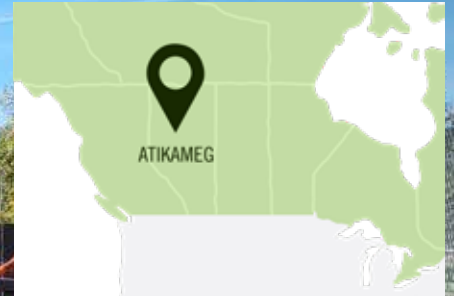
* As of Jan 1, 2025, LÍIDLÍ KÚÉ has developed their own self-sustaining food growing systems and has indicated they no longer require Kinvia funding.

N.B.: As of publishing, some communities had not yet reported full-year data. A Canada-wide summary report will be prepared once all data has been collected. For some communities, we are reporting interim data (as noted).

Canada's New National School Food Program: What We Know So Far

In June 2024, the Government of Canada pledged to invest \$1 billion over five years in a new national school food program to address disparities in food security for children across Canada. The program has not yet been fully implemented and it remains unclear how it will impact students in the Indigenous communities where Kinvia works where food costs and food insecurity are much higher than average.

More details in our [May 2024 topic brief](#).



ATIKAMEG (WHITEFISH LAKE FIRST NATION)

MAKING AN IMPACT

One of the hallmarks of Atikameg's programming is the involvement of Elders. At a community event held in May 2024, students served Elders a traditional meal of duck soup and baked fish, using the fish students caught and helped prepare. There was enough fish for each Elder to take home with them.

One of the advantages to this intergenerational knowledge sharing is that the Cree language is being used and taught to students and staff whenever possible.

Students are excited to help out with the land-based learning activities and see Elders enjoying the food they helped prepare. More students are also trying traditional foods which offers the hope that they will become Knowledge-keepers themselves, maintaining their teachings and appreciation for the land and wildlife.

Q1-Q2 2024 data only

- 23,500 meals (breakfast, lunch or snack) were served to 190 students through schools and after-school centres
- 177 people (155 students) received training on nutrition, food utilization or cooking
- 50 families are supported by 1 community gardens
- 60 families are supported by 50 existing and 10 new home gardens
- 2 school gardens support 155 students
- 155 people received agricultural training
- 155 people participated in traditional practices &/or land-based education
- 197 people supported by community food programming
- 155 people participated in traditional practices &/or land-based education
- 197 people supported by community food programming

Cultivating Traditions and Teamwork at Atikameg

In the community of Atikameg, located in Treaty 8 territory in northern Alberta, a remarkable initiative that combines Indigenous knowledge with contemporary education is taking place. Land-based learning for school children in Grades 3 to 12 is an initiative spearheaded by Darell Fors, Atikameg's Land-Based Learning Lead, and is rooted in the principles of environmental stewardship, traditional practices, and community engagement.

Atikameg's students engage deeply with their natural surroundings through hands-on experiences in hunting and fishing. In the environmental stewardship class, students actively participate in maintaining traplines and harvesting rabbits, connecting with ancestral traditions while learning essential skills for sustainable living.

The community continues to trap and set fishing nets, though concerns about mercury levels in local fish underscore the importance of informed consumption practices. The community is exploring resources like the "Can I Eat This Fish Alberta" app to guide safe consumption.

Food preparation is a cornerstone of Atikameg's land-based education. From cooking outdoors to preserving food, students learn the art of preparing nourishing meals using ingredients sourced from their surroundings. Rabbits harvested from the Boreal forest not only provide sustenance but also serve as a platform for learning anatomy and traditional cooking methods.

The impact of land-based education resonates deeply with Atikameg's youth. Students enjoy planting and harvesting vegetables, engaging



in culinary experiments, and the teamwork and camaraderie that fishing and hunting trips provide. The integration of traditional foods into school meals and the distribution of produce to community elders reinforce the bonds between generations. Student involvement in community events, such as preparing stews with the meat they've hunted and butchered themselves, and participating in gardening initiatives, underscores their role as stewards of tradition and sustainability.

Monthly Elder visits provide opportunities for cultural exchange, where students showcase their learning through Cree songs and traditional

artwork. As students take on roles in food preparation and service, they gain a deeper appreciation for the wisdom and guidance of their Elders.

With the support of generous donors like you, the Atikameg community is more committed than ever to preserving Indigenous knowledge and fostering a resilient future. They see their traditional territory as not just the land they live on but a classroom and a way of life, where tradition, education, and sustainability inspire generations to come.





O-CHI-CHAK-KO-SIPI FIRST NATION

MAKING AN IMPACT

O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi reports that the school meal program has significantly improved children's health, learning, and well-being. *"The key lesson is that students feel safe here. The kids know they will not go hungry and their facial expressions when served fresh, healthy food say it all. We all know that some kids just don't like to eat when they first wake up and rather eat at school with their peers. I believe this sense of security is very important,"* reports O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi. They add that they are incorporating traditional meals, where students get to help prepare the food by skinning the deer or filleting the fish. *"Those are the days that feel special. Students get to enjoy meals that connect to our culture. [It's not] just about eating but also about learning. Seeing students excited to try traditional food and reminding them that it's more than just nutrition but also part of who we are" is a high point.*

- 25,480 snacks and meals were provided to 130 school children through schools and after-school centres
- 1 existing school garden continued to be supported, providing nutritious vegetables to the school meal program and learning opportunities to students
- 129 people participated in land-based education and/or traditional practices



THOMPSON BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

MAKING AN IMPACT

Thompson BGC reports that *"handing out food hampers was one of the best things we have done. Staff were so helpful and community members were so appreciative."* The hamper distribution program helped to connect the staff and bring people together for a common goal: *"We really felt like we were making a difference."* The food program has helped ensure that children, youth, and young adults receive proper nutrition on a consistent basis. (The Thompson BGC has expanded their program to youth ages 18-29 who are often not thought of as requiring the same assistance as younger children.) Children also benefitted from the gardening program, learning about pollination and food growing processes. *"When the kids notice something growing in the towers, they experience so much joy and like to participate and pick the produce. Kids are exposed to things they may not often or ever choose."*

- 6,607 meals (breakfast, lunch or snack) provided to 86 students through Thompson BGC after-school centre
- 150 food hampers (450 meals) provided to 100 households
- 4 school gardens support 33 students
- 33 people received agricultural training
- 30 people were supported through community food programs or events



WAYWAYSEECAPPO FIRST NATION

MAKING AN IMPACT

Waywayseecappo First Nation ("Wayway")'s program manager reports that *"Watching my students gain valuable skills and attitudes towards the world around them is very gratifying. ...Getting their hands dirty in a garden, raising animals, or learning traditional food preparation methods makes learning more active and engaging. Students see direct connections between classroom learning (science, math, history) and real-life applications, making it more relevant and meaningful. Knowing their efforts contribute to a larger goal (food security, environmental sustainability) provides a strong sense of purpose and motivation."* Wayway's program manager adds that land-based education strengthens critical thinking skills and that *"understanding ecosystems, plant biology, and food production directly relates to scientific concepts that we have covered"* in the classroom.

- 1,560 snacks/meals provided to 30 children through schools
- 240 meals provided through food hampers
- 20 students were trained on nutrition, food use or cooking
- 1 school garden continues to be supported
- 30 people received agricultural / horticultural training
- 29 people participated in traditional practices/land-based education

School Nutrition Programs Take the Edge off High Costs for First Nations Families

Inflation has placed an extraordinary burden on Canadian families, but its impact on Indigenous communities has been particularly acute. For First Nations families on reserve, who already experience the highest rates of poverty among any group in Canada, the rising costs of food exacerbates an already challenging situation.

For members of O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation, a Saulteaux Ojibway First Nation located 225 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg in Treaty 2 territory, the school nutrition program has become a vital lifeline. ***“The program has helped us to keep raising the standards of education in the community by providing children the opportunity to learn without the barrier of coming to school hungry,”*** says principal Andrew Spence. ***“Students are eager to come to school knowing they will get a proper and healthy lunch.”***

O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi, like other schools, has observed measurable benefits from its school nutrition program, including improved student behaviour, focus, and attendance. ***“You can see***

the changes in attitude of the kids. They seem to be less disruptive and stay focused on their work,” Andrew says.

School nutrition programs do more than just alleviate hunger – they offer families economic relief. ***“With the price of everything going sky high, there are families that struggle with food, especially those with more than two children,”*** Andrew adds. He believes that O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi’s school nutrition program ***“is a way of helping out families in the community who struggle in providing support to their family.”***

While food inflation is stabilizing across the country, the cost of food remains a significant challenge not just for families in these communities, but for those responsible for running school nutrition programs. Funding shortfalls and capacity issues are common among Kinvia’s Indigenous partners and these result in school staff needing to make difficult choices to maintain the quality, quantity and diversity of food provided to students. O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi shared that they are constantly innovating to ensure that they can





serve food that is not only nutritious but also something their students will eat and enjoy.

School nutrition programs represent a piece of the larger puzzle of food security and food sovereignty. Almost every school that receives Kinvia support has a garden that provides food for the school as well as a learning environment for the students. Increasingly, remote and northern communities, like O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi, are using indoor growing towers and greenhouses to ensure year-round availability of fresh fruits and vegetables, which are otherwise priced out of reach for many families.

“We want our students, staff, and community members to connect back to the earth and to tap into their ancestral knowledge and develop their gifts in this area,” says Terri Ann Larry, principal at Natoageneg in New Brunswick, which faces many of the same challenges as O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi. ***“Every time I see a student developing a love for growing, I feel that it helps to undo the harms of this knowledge being taken from us by residential schools and colonization.”***

“Seeing photos of children's faces light up as they pick fresh peas for the first time, or

families utilizing produce grown right in their own community, is an incredibly rewarding experience,” says Rodney Contois, who works with the Meechim Farm project at Garden Hill First Nation, an Oji-Cree fly-in community located 475 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg in Treaty 5. He adds, ***“These snapshots capture the tangible impact of the project and reaffirm the importance of providing access to healthy food options. They also illustrate the project's role in fostering a sense of community pride and self-sufficiency.”***

School nutrition programs that include these types of traditional food practices and land-based educational opportunities, led by the communities themselves, not only help alleviate child hunger and provide financial relief to parents, but can also contribute to longer-term, self-defined social and economic goals that rely on local food systems transformation.

Thanks to generous donors like you, communities like O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi are working towards sustainable food security and food sovereignty for their children, youth, families, and Elders.



ELSIPOGTOG FIRST NATION

MAKING AN IMPACT

The daily breakfast and lunch program offered is essential to address the high rate of food insecurity in the community. One student says, *"Having a program like Kinvia is helpful for kids who can't buy food every day. I depend on this program like many other kids at my school."*

The school's occupational therapist and speech language pathologist often work with students who are identified as picky eaters, encouraging them to try new foods. The menu items offer a wide variety of foods, allowing these children to practice the teachings learned and promoted with their specialist.

The team shares that *"because of the frequency of our program (daily meals) we have the ability to positively impact those who participate and provide a consistent routine that some students rely heavily on."*

- 96,000 meals (breakfast, lunch or snack) were served to 300 students through schools and after-school programs

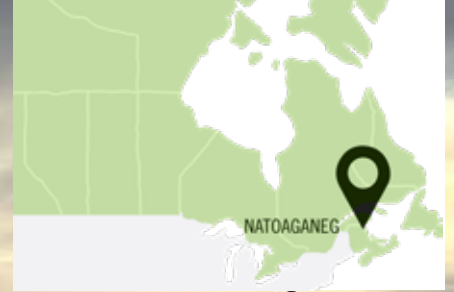


ESGENOÛPETITJ FIRST NATION

MAKING AN IMPACT

Esgenoôpetitj students are increasingly willing to try new foods and learn new skills through the school-based nutrition and land-based education programs. They are gaining life skills such as cooking, fishing, and gardening through hands-on learning opportunities. Not as many fishing and hunting trips were able to be offered this past year as a result of one of the land-based learning leads being away on medical leave, however the middle school teachers have stepped up to teach the students gardening and fishing techniques. The project coordinator at Esgenoôpetitj reports that students are feeling proud of their accomplishments and that they are learning "to work together. The passing of knowledge is a great skill our youth should have: they can use it in their adult life."

- 150 households received food hampers, which provided 1,008 snacks/meals to 600 people
- 1,010 people were supported through community food programs
- 1 new school garden, supporting 145 students, was established
- 145 people received home garden supplies
- 66 people participated in traditional practices & land-based education
- 67 students received training on nutrition



NATOAGANEG (EEL GROUND FIRST NATION)

MAKING AN IMPACT

Terri Ann Larry, principal at Natoageneg School, shares that *"It's empowering to see people make personal changes and for students to talk about healthier choices and to actually see some change their eating habits over several school years. I never could have imagined that many years ago starting out with a school garden could we have grown to what we have now. We want our students, staff, and community members to connect back to the earth and to tap into their ancestral knowledge organically and develop their gifts in this area. Every time I see a student developing a love for growing I feel that it helps to undo the harms of this knowledge being taken from us through residential schools and colonization."*

- 65,447 snacks/meals were provided to 85 children through schools and after-school centres
- Two new and one existing garden now support students and the school food program
- 31 students received training on nutrition, food utilization or cooking
- 85 people received gardening/agricultural training
- 350 people were supported by community food programs
- 209 people participated in traditional practices/land-based education



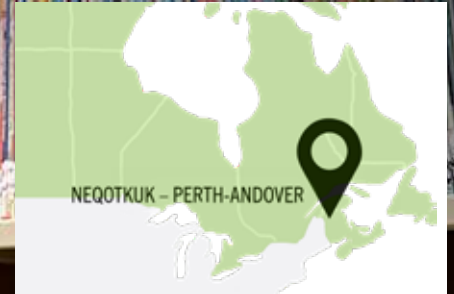
NEQOTKUK – MAH SOS (TOBIQUE FIRST NATION)

MAKING AN IMPACT

Mah-Sos School reports that they have families with multiple children attending the school who "rely on our program to feed their children breakfast, lunch and a snack. The peace of mind they get from knowing their children are supported this way has been a weight lifted off of their shoulders as food security is a huge issue in our community."

They also report that they've started a community garden and "all our students participate in helping it grow. They have cleaned out the previous plants and overgrown items, planted vegetables, and provide daily maintenance." They've hosted a school cook-out and have been able to send food home with their students so they could have cook-outs with their families. "It is a way to ensure our students are eating but also building family time with an activity that they can do and bond over. We have gotten a lot of positive feedback from parents and caregivers by doing this."

- 70,200 snacks/meals were provided to 120 students through schools and after-school centres
- 1 new school garden is supporting 120 students



NEQOTKUK – PERTH-ANDOVER (TOBIQUE FIRST NATION)

MAKING AN IMPACT

Neqotkuk-Perth Andover's food program, which ensures that students have at least one nutritious meal per day, is helping to alleviate hunger so students can be more attentive in class. They have seen an increase in attendance at school, which they believe is linked to students knowing they can eat at school.

The school meal program faced similar inflated food prices as community members did, however they were able to negotiate with their suppliers to manage the costs. They also report that they were able to fill backpacks for students/families in need, to be sent home weekly. Changing the process for distributing meal tickets made the program more inclusive. Finally, Perth-Andover purchased a freezer so they are now able to buy sale items in bulk and freeze

- 6,695 meals/snacks were provided to 199 children through the school nutrition program
- 1 existing school garden is supporting 187 students

Nurturing Future Leaders in Esgenoôpetitj

Esgenoôpetitj, a Mik'maq Nation located in northern New Brunswick, is taking a holistic approach to preserving cultural heritage and fostering self-sufficiency, particularly among its youth. Through an array of programs spanning traditional knowledge transfer, land-based education, gardening, and nutrition literacy, the community is reclaiming ancestral practices and championing food sovereignty. These efforts not only address immediate food security concerns but also empower youth to become stewards of their heritage, equipped with the skills and knowledge needed for healing, growth, and a prosperous future.

Building on their successes from last year, Esgenoôpetitj continues to make progress in passing on traditional knowledge and skills to the next generation. Bobby, a Mik'maq Elder and youth group leader, leads fishing and hunting excursions designed to strengthen connections among youth while bolstering their self-esteem. Bobby's programs also teach vital traditional practices and life skills which allow youth to reclaim heritage lost through generations of Residential Institutions (Schools).

This past year, the land-based learning program's students were able to harvest a moose and hand out meat to community members in need thanks to the confidence and skills they learned from the program.

While the community is grateful to be able to rely on Knowledge-keepers like Bobby, they recognize the need to develop and empower more community role models to preserve these cultural and traditional teachings.

Helen Joe, a band councillor and coordinator of Esgenoôpetitj's Brighter Futures program, says that teaching youth traditional skills and practices such as smudging, sweat lodges, and ribbon skirt making is ***“gold to us. Teaching them how to hunt, fish, and do traps. My grandpa used to do that but it's very rare I see people doing it all now. We need to bring that back before we lose people to teach it.”***

Helen also works to sustain the community's food sources through local gardening initiatives. She was pleasantly surprised to find that there was quite an appetite among community members to grow their own produce in home gardens.



“When we first started giving out the community garden beds, I was expecting about 50 people to want them. Within the first hour of posting on Facebook, we had over 75 requests. With some extra material from the original order of supplies, the carpenter made an extra 25 garden. In total, we gave away 100 garden beds (with soil) to our community members,” Helen says.

Complementing this initiative, students at school are engaged in planting their own seedlings in the classroom, which they later transfer to either the school garden or their home gardens. This hands-on experience is not only teaching valuable gardening skills but also fostering a deeper connection with the land,

enabling children to be able to identify and harvest the foods they grow.

In Esgenoôpetitj, the journey towards Indigenous food sovereignty is intertwined with fostering youth leadership and land stewardship. Through the preservation of traditional knowledge, blooming home gardens, expanded nutrition literacy, and new educational curricula, youth are not only nourishing their bodies but also nurturing their minds and spirits.

With the unwavering support of Kinvia’s donors Esgenoôpetitj is sowing the seeds of a prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come.



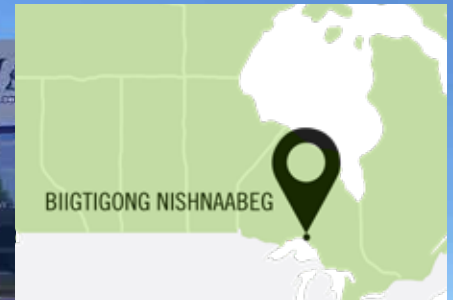


HAMLET OF TULITA

MAKING AN IMPACT

The Tulita community has completed the installation of interior plant beds in their two new greenhouses, which increases the available growing area by 80% in each greenhouse. They report that the garden beds were designed to make gardening more accessible, with lower walls and narrower widths so that children and Elders can reach the entire planting area. The walls of the plant beds are also low enough to provide seating for community members that attend the greenhouses for training and education. The community is particularly pleased that they were able to recycle lumber and supplies, leaving them with funds to upgrade the greenhouses' irrigation systems.

- 3,315 snacks/meals provided to 45 children through the school food program
- 53 adults and 39 students trained on nutrition, food use or cooking
- 93 families are supported by 5 community gardens; 24 families and 45 students supported by 24 home and 1 school garden
- 28 people received gardening inputs like seeds, tools, plants
- 61 people received horticulture or agricultural training
- 273 people participated in traditional practices/land-based education
- 291 people took part in community food programs such as soup kitchens, food pantries, community meals



BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG

MAKING AN IMPACT

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg ran another successful summer camp for 40 students in 2023. One focus was on cooking skills for healthy meals; another taught older students basic survival skills with some traditional outdoor cooking. The community maintained three gardens – an Elders’ garden, a greenhouse, and a natural bush garden for traditional medicines. Elders and youth continue to cook together with a renewed focus on healthy alternatives and on traditional food. Biigtigong Nishnaabeg held two outdoor trips for Elders and youth, however an unseasonably warm fall and winter meant moose was scarce and the delayed freezing of the ice made land-based education unsafe.

- 180 snacks/meals provided to 15 children through school food programs
- 32 people trained on nutrition, food use or cooking
- 3 community gardens and 50 home gardens are supporting a total of 150 families
- 200 people received horticultural/agricultural supplies (e.g., seeds, plants, tools)
- 74 people participated in traditional practices/land-based education
- 175 people supported by community food programs such as soup kitchens, food pantries or community meals
- 49 households received harvested food



NEYAASHIINIGMIING (CHIPPEWAS OF NAWASH UNCEDED FIRST NATION)

MAKING AN IMPACT

The thriving community garden continues to be the heart of the Neyaashiinigmiing community. People look forward to working together in a good way as new life springs up around them. Inflation and the high cost of living has made it difficult for many households to make ends meet, so Neyaashiinigmiing continues to support youth, families and the community by making a variety of fresh produce and healthy foods available. There is a growing appreciation of the value and richness the garden offers. It is making an impact on many who may struggle economically or personally who find working in the garden healing, as well as a way to access needed food and give back to others.

Q1-Q2 2024 data only

- 19,500 snacks/meals provided to 85 children through school food programs
- 600 food hampers provided to 40 households
- 153 adults and 44 students trained on nutrition, food use or cooking
- 1 community garden supports 24 families
- 2 school gardens supports 85 students
- 40 families maintain home gardens and received inputs such as seeds, tools, plants
- 30 people received agricultural inputs (like seeds, plants, tools) and 24 people received horticultural/agricultural training

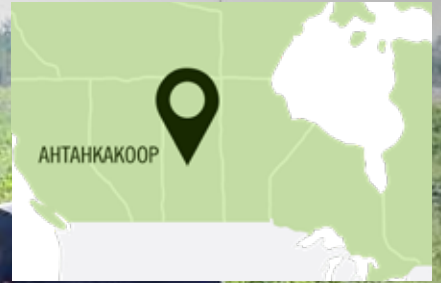


RED ROCK INDIAN BAND

MAKING AN IMPACT

With food costs rising and limited transportation to larger grocery stores, Red Rock Indian Band continues to provide monthly fresh produce boxes to community members. A major milestone this year was the development of the Education Centre, which offers land-based learning, daily access to food, and new cooking classes.

- 19,595 snacks/meals provided to 113 children through school food programs
- 1 community garden supports 95 families
- 383 people supported by community food programs

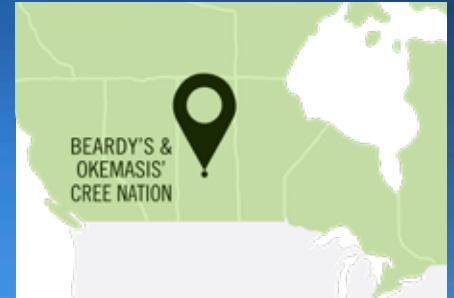


AHTAHKAKOOP CREE NATION

MAKING AN IMPACT

In 2024, Ahtahkakoop's community garden thrived, with about 40 home gardens producing a strong harvest that was sold or shared within the community. Exciting upgrades like a new kitchen, protective fencing, and a power line for future irrigation set the stage for even bigger growth. One Arctic Acre dome is nearly finished, and a second is on the way for 2025 to boost seedling production. Despite limited funding, rising costs, and a few challenges (including gophers), the community's resilience and creativity have paved the way for an even stronger season ahead.

- 7,030 lbs of fresh produce grown in school and community gardens
- 150 families supported by community gardens
- 40 home gardens supported including 15 new home gardens established
- 100 people received agricultural inputs (ie. seeds, tools, plants, etc.)
- 39 people participated in traditional practices/land-based education
- 14 people received training on nutrition, food use and cooking

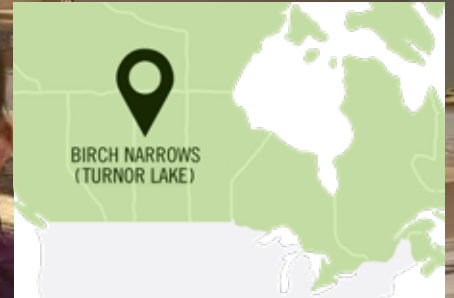


BEARDY'S & OKEMASIS' CREE NATION

MAKING AN IMPACT

"Seeing our program start to make change within our community for our youth and families is the greatest highlight that we could ask for," Beardy's reports. Community members are seeing the potential of a healthier future, with a planned greenhouse, and the community garden and food forest thriving. Program leaders say there is now a greater understanding of what food sovereignty is, as community members start to see links between the food security programs and other programs, such as the Building Blocks to Success program, which works with neurodiverse individuals. Beardy's shares that they are also looking forward to expanding their work in food security by hiring a new staff member, which "will cement our place in the community so that we are capable to take on any challenge we are faced with."

- 209 community members including 147 students were trained on nutrition, food use or cooking
- 25 families are supported by 1 community garden
- 3 new home gardens and 24 existing home gardens supported 27 families
- 211 people received agricultural /horticultural training
- 181 people participated in traditional practices/ land-based education
- 1 food forest is thriving and community members are engaged
- 70 households received harvested food



BIRCH NARROWS DENE NATION (TURNOR LAKE)

MAKING AN IMPACT

The community centre in Birch Narrows-Turnor Lake is seeing a substantial increase in youth attendance. They report that "these young visitors tend to come and go freely, often dropping in for short periods to engage in various activities. Many of these youths simply want to cook a meal, play a quick game, or socialize with their peers. It's clear that our centre is becoming an increasingly popular hub for young people in the community." Program leaders also note that cultural programs that involve Elders are growing, "not only helping to preserve our cultural heritage but also fostering intergenerational connections and a sense of community pride. ...Overall, these changes reflect a positive shift in our centre's dynamics, and we're excited to see how they will continue to evolve and benefit our community."

- 80 students and 20 adults were trained on nutrition, food use or cooking
- 30 home gardens support 30 families
- 70 people received gardening inputs like seeds, tools, plants and 15 people received agricultural / horticultural training
- 560 people participated in traditional practices/ land-based education
- 450 people were supported through community food programs and 112 households received harvested food



MUSKEG LAKE CREE NATION

MAKING AN IMPACT

MLCN was excited to share that two of their seasonal staff have become so passionate about their work in food security that they decided to pursue formal post-secondary education in fields related to agriculture. They also highlighted the success of their Fall Harvest Festival, which included stations where community members could learn more about different aspects and careers in food production. The meal served at the Fall Harvest Festival prioritized foods like squash and quinoa, which are indigenous to Turtle Island and have historically been cultivated by Indigenous People. "Many of the participants had never previously eaten foods [such as these] and were not aware that they originated through agricultural practices from our southern kin," the program manager shared. This has inspired plans for the 2025 growing season to focus primarily on indigenous crops and traditional methods for growing them, such as the Three Sisters method.

- 36 children fed through school food program
- 2 community gardens supporting 30 families and one food forest are established
- 51 people received agricultural inputs (e.g. plants, seeds, tools)
- 220 people participated in traditional practices &/or land-based education
- 159 people supported by community food programs such as soup kitchens, food pantries, community meals

The Healing Power of Nature at Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation

Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation, located on Treaty 6 territory in central Saskatchewan, integrates land-based education and food security programming. Their summer youth employment program provides skills and support to help youth heal.

Jennifer Cameron, food security coordinator at Beardy's and the driving force behind the community's food forest, shares that when she first agreed to offer the students employment, she was not aware that they were considered "difficult." She says that the students were wary at first when they were shown the roles and rules of the garden and food forest. *"They were a group of misunderstood youth that have problems with authority and have lived lives that had minimal parental involvement,"* she says, *and there was some pushback at first "as they thought we were just going to order them around without being involved."*

It took just one day for things to start to turn around. By the end of their first day, students had

planted, mulched, and watered over 100 trees, and within two weeks – the length of the summer work program – they had planted over 500 trees, helped maintain the garden, and built two outdoor washrooms.

Jennifer reports that one student expressed her deep appreciation for the work that the food security program does in the community: *"I didn't even want to do summer work but when I heard we were working with you, I said 'okay' Now I know how to use a drill and plant trees. I want to make my kookum's yard beautiful. I started to build garden boxes for her."*

Many of the students from the first group that Jennifer coached were at high risk for dropping out of school but have now completed Grade 12. *"Their mindset has changed. They now show a different type of respect for their parents as well as for community projects,"* she says.

The healing power of Mother Earth is evident from the responses of the students. One young man said, *"thank you for being there for me. You*



Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation

didn't say anything phony to try make me feel better; you said 'look at the walking trails, go take a walk, put your bare feet on the ground and relax. This is a safe space built for you.' I come and walk around here in the evenings because this place makes me feel safe and I like picking the fresh peas."

Youth in the community take great pride in the hard work they did planting the food forest and continue to keep watch over the garden so that everyone can enjoy it. *"We get calls from students asking how the trees they planted are doing!"* Jennifer shares.

She adds that *"Seeing our program start to make change within our community for our youth and families is the greatest highlight. Community members are excited about the food forest, the community garden, and a planned greenhouse. They are getting a deeper understanding of what food sovereignty is. They see it has the potential to provide a healthier future for everyone."*

Beardy's and Okemasis' food forest and community garden are thriving, thanks to Jennifer's leadership, the community's hard work, and support from people like you who walk alongside them. Thank you!



CATALYZING COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE SINCE 1986

Kinvia, previously known as Canadian Feed The Children, works in solidarity with communities as they build local, self-determined, sustainable systems to provide food for their children, youth, and families across generations.

Our core belief is that food and nourishment is a human right. Together with our donors, we are committed to community-driven solutions that address the unique needs of children, youth, and their communities by:

- advancing food security and working towards food sovereignty
- focusing on school nutrition and quality education
- embedding climate action and gender equality

We now reach close to 270,000 people in 133 communities in five countries.

We remain steadfastly committed to financial transparency, accountability, cost efficiency, and social impact, and have been recognized as a Top 100 Rated Charity by Charity Intelligence for nearly a decade, most recently in 2024.

Thank you for joining us as we work together toward our vision of a world in which children, youth, and their communities thrive, realizing their full potential.