

Centre Wellington Food & Social Connectivity Report

By Karen Armstrong, M.A., DPH

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Centre Wellington Social Justice Group

Food & Social Connectivity Report

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About Us

The Centre Wellington Social Justice Group started in February 2011. The first goal was to find out the facts about the existence and extent of poverty in Centre Wellington. As we considered our potential role in the township, we decided against activities that address people's emergency needs – agencies like the Food Bank and the Community Resource Centre do that well in our community. We also decided against action on a political or policy level, such as calling for changes in tax rules and so on. What we decided to try and make a difference in are the things in our community that create the circumstance in which poverty comes to be, or the things that make living in poverty worse.

Through a series of community discussions and events 3 topics have been identified:

1. Food and food security
2. Transportation
3. Housing.

The Centre Wellington Social Justice Group meets monthly at St. James Anglican Church in Fergus, the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

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Executive Summary

The Centre Wellington Social Justice Group (CWSJG) is developing a food & social connectivity strategy to reduce food insecurity and increase social cohesion in our community. The purpose of this strategy is increase the number of Centre Wellington residents who have physical and economic access to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe and culturally acceptable food in a socially just manner, and that people are able to make informed decisions about their food choices. In addition, we know that food is often associated with social gatherings and we have included social connectivity to understand how these two are working in the region and how we can build social connectivity while increasing food security.

This report presents results from a food and social connectivity community scan conducted by the Centre Wellington Social Justice Group. The community scan was designed to provide a listing of local food and social connectivity initiatives, as well as a review of the literature. Building on the local work and best practices, the report makes tangible recommendations on how to increase food security and connectivity for Centre Wellington residents.

The recommendations include the following:

- Host a meeting of agencies that expressed an interest in supporting the Women's Community Lunch
- Conduct a survey to determine food security rates in Centre Wellington as well as interest in food related programs, services and policies
- Expand the Garden Fresh Box Program into Belwood & Elora to increase access to fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables
- Explore the concept of providing fruit & vegetables that are "imperfects" at the Elora Market and other locations to offer more affordable options, as well as market vouchers for organizations who provide dollars to those in need
- Build upon Sharing Elora Facebook page for sharing food
- Consider expansion of the Centre Wellington Culture Map to include food related venues (e.g., Food Bank, Community Gardens)
- Investigate options for a fruit tree community garden, with bicycle & vehicle parking, water access & walkability
- Provide a scan of municipal policies on animal husbandry and make recommendations to Council
- Convene a meeting of all the community gardens to share information and lessons learned
- Build community capacity through skill development (e.g., facilitation training)
- Create and implement an evaluation plan
- Seek funding to support the initiatives
- Work with community members and organizations to determine where to provide cooking classes (including canning), as well as how to establish your own garden

Centre Wellington Township Overview

Centre Wellington Township is a mixed urban/rural township located in south-central Ontario with a population of 26,693. This number represents a 2.5% increase in population growth from 2006, compared to the national average growth of 5.9%.¹ Over the 10-year period between 2006 and 2016, Centre Wellington has the highest forecasted population growth in Wellington County at 22%.²

Centre Wellington covers 407.53 square kilometres and contains 9,945 private dwellings. 7,635 families live in Centre Wellington.³ The median commuting time for residents is 20 minutes.⁴

The average household income after tax is \$67,435.00 compared to the provincial median of \$70,400.00.⁵ 8.7% of Centre Wellington families are considered low-income after tax.⁶ In 2013, 130 Centre Wellington residents were on Ontario Works.⁷

The overall business climate in Centre Wellington is rated as very positive, with 80% of participating businesses rated the community as good or excellent as a place to do business. From 2011 - 2014, the attitudes of most businesses have remained the same (51%), while 23% have become more positive and 26% have become more negative. Reasons for positive changes in attitude include community and Council support, thriving downtowns and the quality of the business in Centre Wellington. Those who stated a more negative attitude cited such issues as regulations, hydro costs and development fees.⁸

Businesses indicated stability and growth in their workforce over the past 3 years with 46% remaining the same and 40% indicating growth. Currently, 29% of Centre Wellington businesses report having difficulty hiring due to a lack of skills as well as too few applicants for posted positions. Participants felt that these challenges were due to both industry factors (17%) as well community factors (11%).⁹

¹ <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-csd-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CSD&GC=3523025>, accessed March 26, 2015.

² County of Wellington, "Housing And Homelessness Plan for CMSM service area of Wellington County and the City of Guelph: Interim Summary of Findings and Conclusions of the Need and Demand Study for 2006 to 2011", October 2012.

³ Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, "Addressing Social Determinants of Health: A Public Health Perspective On Local Health, Policy & Program Needs", 2013, p. 115.

⁴ <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhsenm/2011/dppd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geol=CSD&Code1=3523025&Data=Count&SearchText=centre%20wellington&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>, accessed Monday, March 30, 2015.

⁵ <http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/.3ndic.lt.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=21>, obtained Friday, March 27, 2015.

⁶ Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, "Addressing Social Determinants of Health: A Public Health Perspective On Local Health, Policy & Program Needs", 2013, p. 115.

⁷ <http://www.wellington.ca/en/socialservices/resources/OWCaseloadProfile2013.pdf>, accessed March 27, 2015.

⁸ <http://www.centrewellington.ca/dobusiness/Documents/FINAL%20Centre%20Wellington%20BR+E%20Report.pdf>, accessed Monday, March 30, 2015.

⁹ <http://www.centrewellington.ca/dobusiness/Documents/FINAL%20Centre%20Wellington%20BR+E%20Report.pdf>, accessed Monday, March 30, 2015.

Quality of life received the highest scoring in Centre Wellington (out of the seven municipalities in Wellington County), at 94%. According to the Township of Centre Wellington Business Recruitment and Expansion Report, not one respondent reported quality of life in Centre Wellington as poor.¹⁰

Social Connectivity

Strong social connectivity has a positive impact on the overall well-being of the people who live, work and play in our communities. Social isolation is a deprivation of social connectedness. It is a crucial aspect that continues to be named by people as a core impediment for achieving well-being and as a relevant factor for understanding poverty.¹¹ In addition, the ability of community residents to work together to influence and create change is an important indicator of social connectedness.¹²

23% of seniors living in Centre Wellington live alone. We know that individual well-being is affected by levels of independence, financial security as well as meaningful interactions with others.¹³ If individuals are socially isolated it affects quality of life and health. Local service providers have identified isolation for seniors as an issue.¹⁴ This is important to note as the population ages. Within the Township of Centre Wellington, the most substantial population growth will occur for the adult population over 55 years of age.¹⁵ The median age in Centre Wellington will likely continue to increase as this large segment of the population ages. Statistics Canada predicts that the number of Canadians over 65 will outnumber those 14 years and younger for the first time in Canadian history somewhere between 2015 and 2021.¹⁶

Socially isolated seniors are less able to participate and contribute to their communities¹⁷. Yet seniors benefit from volunteering and participating in their communities due to a sense of satisfaction and efficacy, and communities benefit from the services and social capital seniors are providing. A decrease in contributions by seniors is a significant loss to organizations, communities and society at large.

Social isolation can result in reduced social skills. For example, seniors “who develop depression, social anxiety, loneliness, alcoholism, and schizophrenia tend to become socially isolated and uncomfortable around other people. This leads to an atrophy of social skills, partly

¹⁰ <http://www.centrewellington.ca/dobusiness/Documents/FINAL%20Centre%20Wellington%20BR+E%20Report.pdf>, accessed Monday, March 30, 2015.

¹¹ Zavaleta, Diego, Samuel et al., OPHI WORKING PAPER NO. 67, Social Isolation: A conceptual and Measurement Proposal, January 2014.

¹² https://www.bcbsmnfoundation.org/system/asset/resource/pdf_file/5/Social_Connectedness_and_Health.pdf, March 2012, accessed Friday, April 10, 2015.

¹³ Turcotte, M., “Canadian Social Trends: Seniors Access to Transportation”, 2006.

¹⁴ United Way Guelph & Wellington, “Seniors & Social Isolation in Guelph & Wellington County”, October 2008.

¹⁵ Monteith Brown & Associates, “Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan Final Report For Centre Wellington”, March 2009.

¹⁶ Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, “Growing Old Alone: The Rise of Social Isolation As Canada Ages”, April 23, 2014.

¹⁷ Federal, Provincial, Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors. Working Together for Seniors: A Toolkit to Promote Seniors' Social Integration in Community Services, Programs and Policies, November 2007.

because of disuse, and partly because of the way that psychological symptoms can disrupt social behavior.¹⁸

Furthermore, there is a substantial amount of evidence that describes the relationship between health and social isolation. A senior's social network can positively influence good health behaviours such as successful smoking cessation or remaining active. Conversely, socially isolated seniors are more at risk of negative health behaviours including drinking, smoking, being sedentary and not eating well; have a higher likelihood of falls; and, have a four-to-five times greater risk of hospitalization. Research also indicates that social isolation is a predictor of mortality from coronary heart disease and/or stroke.¹⁹

Little is known about isolation in youth or adults in Centre Wellington. What we do know is that many youth engage in activities that can reduce isolation. According to the 2011-2012 youth survey that grade 7 students participated in, they say that:

- Spiritual or religious values do not play a large part in their lives (77%)
- They attend the local library one or more times per month (42%)
- They actively play on a sports team one or more times per month (82%)
- They attend a religious service one or more times per month (41%); and
- Some participate in a youth program (e.g., drop in) one or more times per month (25%).²⁰

Studies in other countries have shown that the impact of isolation in adolescence has significant consequences, and isolation is often greater in rural areas. For example, physical isolation was identified by youth through a lack of services, education, training and employment opportunities, and knowledge about ways of accessing available services. Issues of transportation, distance, time, cost and resources encompassed all layers of the community at the individual, family and community level. Young people still at school focused on a lack of recreational and sporting options as compared to the unemployed group who spoke of isolation in terms of employment, training, housing and social opportunities. Future study or employment was linked with relocation, significant travel costs and required support in financial, social and emotional terms.²¹

Additionally, isolation is a risk factor for suicide²², bullying²³, violence²⁴ and early mortality.²⁵

¹⁸ http://www.seniorscouncil.gc.ca/eng/research_publications/social_isolation/page05.shtml, accessed Friday, April 3, 2015.

¹⁹ Nicholson, N.R., A Review of Social Isolation: An Important but Underassessed Condition in Older Adults. *Journal of Primary Prevention*. 33 (2-3), 2012, pp.137-152.

²⁰ Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Youth Survey 2011/12, data provided by A. Larose on Friday, April 24, 2015.

²¹ http://ruralhealth.org.au/9thNRHC/9thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/program/docs/papers/lukaitis_D2.pdf, accessed Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

²² <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/riskprotectivefactors.html>, accessed Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

²³ <http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/factors/>, accessed Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

²⁴ http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/youthandthelaw/roots/volume1/chapter04_rootsrisk.aspx, accessed Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

²⁵ <http://pps.sagepub.com/content/10/2/227.abstract>, accessed Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

Reducing social isolation will improve the well-being of the community and create greater opportunities for community and civic engagement.²⁶ The CWSJG is eager to improve social connectivity to enhance the health and well-being of residents.

Food Security

Food security is defined as when all people, at all times, have physical & economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences²⁷, which are produced in an environmentally sustainable and socially just manner, and that people are able to make informed decisions about their food choices.²⁸ Community food security includes recognition of the injustice of hunger and food insecurity in affluent countries such as Canada, as well as the link between food insecurity and poor health.

Dietary deficiencies – more common among food insecure households – are associated with increased likelihood of chronic disease and difficulties in managing these diseases. Heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and food allergies are more common in food insecure households even when factors such as age, sex, income, and education are taken in account. Additionally, food insecurity produces stress and feelings of uncertainty that have health-threatening effects.²⁹

Furthermore, there is growing evidence that families who cannot afford to buy adequate amounts of nutritious food consume more energy-dense, nutrient-poor food products and this is contributing to the rising incidence of obesity.³⁰ Moreover, once chronic diseases are established, their management is also compromised in the context of food insecurity.³¹

Canadian findings are consistent with U.S. research that has shown “food insecurity to be associated with inadequate intake of key nutrients; poor physical and mental health in adults and depression in women; overweight and weight gain especially among women from marginal and low food security households; behavioural problems in pre-school aged children; lower educational achievement in kindergarten and depressive disorder and suicidal symptoms in adolescents.”³²

²⁶ Mador, R., Jayatilaka, D., “Promoting Healthy Eating And Sustainable Local Food in B.C.”, 2011, p. 8.

²⁷ Dietitians of Canada, “Dietitians of Canada Backgrounder Paper for Position Statement: Individual and Household Food Insecurity in Canada”, June 2014.

²⁸ <http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/What-is-food-security.htm>, Accessed Thursday, April 2, 2015.

²⁹ http://www.thecanadianfacts.org/the_canadian_facts.pdf, March 26, 2015.

³⁰ Kerstetter, S., Goldber, M., “A Review of Policy Options For Increasing Food Security & Income Security in British Columbia: A Discussion Paper”, 2007.

³¹ Tarasuck, V., Mitchel, A. & Dachner, N., “Household Food Insecurity in Canada,” 2012, p. 5.

³² American Dietetic Association, Position of the American Dietetic Association: Food Insecurity in the United States, 11, 2010, pp. 1368 – 1377.

No Centre Wellington data is available on the number of households that are considered food insecure. In Ontario, 11.6% of households report being food insecure.³³ Some groups of people are disproportionately affected by food insecurity including Aboriginal people, the homeless, those with chronic disease and women.³⁴

Recent national research shows that the majority of food insecure households (62.2%) were reliant on wages or salaries from employment. The remaining households had income from: employment insurance or worker’s compensation (3%), social assistance (16.1%), senior’s income, including dividends and interest (12.3%) or other (6.4%).³⁵ It is estimated that less than one-quarter of food insecure Canadians use food banks.³⁶

Surveys completed by the member agencies of the Ontario Food Bank Association showed that in the month of March from 2005 to 2012 there was a 13.5% increase in the number of individuals served in Wellington County.³⁷ In 2014, the Centre Wellington Food Bank assisted over 700 individuals, some regularly through the year and others on an interim or less frequent basis.³⁸

Accessing healthy, affordable food is important to the health of residents and the community and the Centre Wellington Social Justice Group would like to ascertain how to improve access in a large geographic area, to meet the needs of the community.

Food Security Research

Many food security strategies have not been rigorously evaluated as the complexity in assessing whether interventions have a community-wide impact is often beyond the scope of community projects. In addition, the merits of activities are thought to have as much to do with the community context and associated infrastructures as with the merits of the activity itself.³⁹ Although there are not clear evidence-based strategies available, a number of key factors that contributes to the success of food projects have been identified and are as follows:

Table 1

Supporting Success Factors	Factors That Hinder Success
Reconciling different agendas Funding	Opposing agendas Instability of funding

³³ Tarasuck, V., Mitchel, A. & Dachner, N., “Household Food Insecurity in Canada,” 2012, p. 9.

³⁴ Dietitians of Canada, “Dietitians of Canada Backgrounder Paper for Position Statement: Individual and Household Food Insecurity in Canada”, June 2014.

³⁵ Tarasuck, V., Mitchel, A. & Dachner, N., “Household Food Insecurity in Canada,” 2012, p. 3.

³⁶ Loopstra-Masters & Tarasuk, Canadian Public Policy, 2012; McIntyre et al, Canadian Journal of Public Health, 2012.

³⁷ <http://www.wdgppublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/wdgpfiles/BH%2001%20OCT0114%20R19%20-%20Ontario%20Nutritious%20Food%20Basket%20with%20Appendices.pdf>. Note: (excluding Palmerston and Clifford because data was not available for comparison).

³⁸ www.centrewellingtonfoodbank.org, accessed Friday, March 27, 2015.

³⁹ “CORE Public Health Functions for B.C., Evidence Review: Food Security”, B.C. Ministry of Health, 2014.

Supporting Success Factors	Factors That Hinder Success
Community involvement Professional support Credibility Shared ownership Dynamic worker Responsiveness. ⁴⁰	Meeting limited needs Lack of support Changing agendas Exclusively owned

A requirement for success in reducing food insecurity is community-capacity building. Community capacity building refers to the identification, strengthening and linking of your community's tangible resources, such as local service groups, and intangible resources like community spirit. The community's definition of capacity will change as the community grows but it is basically the infrastructure of individual skills and knowledge networks, organizations, businesses that a healthy community is built upon. Community capacity will allow you to get done what needs to get done.

In order to meet the food needs of residents there are key steps to building community-capacity based on the key factors in Table 1 above. These include:

- Cross-sectoral partnerships to address food insecurity
- Building a broad understanding of food issues
- Engaging a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., food providers, those who are food insecure) in planning and building political support
- Training on facilitation, negotiation and conflict resolution skills for community members
- Raising consciousness about the concept of food insecurity.⁴¹

It has been concluded that these key steps have been identified as “beyond doubt’ in effectiveness. By identifying action steps within these factors and supporting the provision of capacity-building strategies, the CWSJG will increase the likelihood of success in food security for all.

In addition the Dietitians of Canada have outlined the stages designed to build community food security and they are:

Stage 1 Initial Food Systems Change - Strategies that create small but significant changes to existing food systems and provide immediate and temporary relief to hunger and food issues (e.g., food banks, soup kitchens).

⁴⁰ <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/DownloadAsset?assetId=F074A96E3B5A47E28842BE5F6B3B9CDE&filename=food-security-evidence-review.pdf>, accessed Friday, April 3, 2015.

⁴¹ B.C. Ministry of Health, “Core Public Health Functions for B.C.: Evidence Review Food Security”, 2014, p. 28.

Stage 2 Food Systems in Transition – Strategies that build capacity through greater involvement from those experience food insecurity and by strengthening the current food systems through partnerships and networks (e.g., community gardens, community kitchens, food-buying clubs).

Stage 3 Food Systems Re-Designed For Sustainability – Broad strategies that require long-term commitment from the entire food system (e.g., reducing socio-economic disparities, adequate food budgets for institutions).⁴²

There is some evidence that community-based food programs like community kitchens, community gardens, the Good Food Box, farmer's markets, gleaning and other community supported agriculture tend to provide healthier, better quality and fresher food.⁴³

Local Food Trends

Survey respondents were asked their opinion of food trends in Centre Wellington. Below is a list of what trends were noted:

- Absence of cooking skills (x6)
- An increase in the desire to eat with others
- Dietary restrictions is a barrier in accessing food at the Food Bank
- Different opinions on role of Food Bank (should it be food distribution or more of a food hub or a food centre?)
- Discomfort with food made from scratch vs. convenience foods – this is a cultural & lifestyle issue
- Disconnect between what users of the Food Bank report and the Food Bank regarding healthy food options. Users of the Food Bank report a lack of healthy food options but the Food Bank reports users of the services do not want healthy food options
- Food classes at CWDHS have full enrolment. This speaks to an interest in developing food skills. Parent feedback is that the students love the classes
- Greater awareness of the need in our community
- Growing number of youth who do not pack lunches
- Identified a gap between excess produce from the farm and those in need. Need to find a way to put this produce in the hands of those that need it
- Lack of data on food security in Centre Wellington which makes it difficult to advocate for needs
- Math literacy is a barrier to understanding cost per unit (understanding that a product on sale may be more expensive than one that isn't depending on the cost per unit)

⁴² Dietitians of Canada, "Community Food Security: Position of Dietitians of Canada", 2007, pp. 6 – 7.

⁴³ Dietitians of Canada, "Dietitians of Canada Backgrounder Paper for Position Statement: Individual and Household Food Insecurity in Canada", June 2014, p. 18.

- Movement towards green infrastructure (e.g., creating spaces to grow food)
- People are bringing healthier food options to events (x2)
- Resurgence in interest in gardening but people don't know how to start or maintain a garden
- Limited skills in canning produce
- Seeing a trend of no family engagement in food preparation (pre-packaged, pre-made food used)
- Stigma associated with using the food bank (x2)
- Those new to town face barriers to meeting people & gaining healthier food options, especially if on Ontario Works.

Women's Community Lunch

Women's Community Lunch, formerly known as the Ladies Who Lunch, is a weekly social gathering of women over lunch every Wednesday, at St. James Anglican Church in Fergus. The purpose of the lunch is to provide a venue for women to gather to reduce increase connectivity and support each other.

The program has been going for approximately one year, with transportation and childcare provided at no cost. Lunch is served at noon and there are often discussions following the meal, guest speakers or crafts. Between 20 to 35 women attend and the program is open to all women in the area. There is no charge for the lunch. A donation basket is available for those who wish to give.

Program organizers were interested in determining awareness for the program. Interview respondents were asked if they were aware of the Women's Community Lunch. 26/33 (79%) are aware of the program; 6/33 (18%) are not and 1/33 (3%) did not answer the question.

Most organizations questioned are interested in exploring how to sustain the program. Many of the organizations require further discussion to ascertain how they can support the program (e.g., funds, location, meals, volunteers) and require Board or Session approval.

Moreover, there was some interest in discussing an option for men – something with a social component and food.



Participants enjoying the Women's Community Lunch

Social Connectivity Trends

Very little information was provided about isolation in Centre Wellington. The comments outlined below were provided and affirmed by others interviewed. They include:

- There is a lack of parental guidance for children & youth after school and the period of time is viewed as increasing. Anecdotally, organizations are seeing this time as a “high risk” behavior time where inappropriate decisions are being made. “High risk” behaviours include petty crime, alcohol and drug use, sexual interactions
- The population of Centre Wellington is forecasted to increase and a large number of parents are working out of town. What options are being considered for children and youth as the number increases and the length of time they are left alone increases?



“We are becoming a catch-all for other small communities as we have high speed internet and equip youth with appropriate workplace and other skills. After that the youth often head to larger urban centres.”

- Young men are often isolated (mentioned twice) and have difficulty finding connectivity. Young women seem to find places quickly
- Need place for youth to “hang out” and play cards, have some food, with limited expectations for conversation and teaching.

Recommendations

In order to make recommendations that best meet the needs of Centre Wellington residents, three questions were used and if the answer was yes to all three, then the recommendation would make the report. The three questions used were:

1. Will the idea increase access to healthier foods to those who cannot physically or economically access food?
2. Is the impact positive for the community?
3. Does the idea promote dignity?

Using this filter to synthesize the interview information and the literature review, the following recommendations are made:

Short-Term Recommendations

The recommendations that are deemed priority, whether a “quick win” or having a community-wide impact, are highlighted in yellow.

- Conduct a survey and/or host conversations with local residents to determine the rate of food security and options that residents are interested in (e.g., men’s meal, cooking classes)
- Arrange a trip to the Stratford Local Food Community Centre and talk to the Executive Director to discuss how and why they created a community food centre; as well as identify lessons learned (invite municipal staff &/or Council, residents, partner organizations, etc.)
- Bring together the hosts of the community gardens to share “best practice” information, what is happening, lessons learned, shared problem-solving, joint promotion, etc. It is also recommended to invite Andrew Seagram to attend and share the information from the program in Guelph
- Explore partnering with the Guelph-Wellington Food Roundtable to host a food summit in Centre Wellington in the Fall 2015. Consider incorporating Bungalow 55’s workshop planned for the Fall on cold framing
- Explore the use of “Market Bucks” to support the purchase of local, healthy foods at the Elora Farmer’s Market and share with organizations that provide food vouchers or food to those in need, where transportation to the market is not a barrier
- Investigate options for selling seconds at local farmer’s markets, to reduce food waste and increase healthy, affordable options for residents
- Discuss expansion of the Garden Fresh Box Program to include a depot in Belwood (possibly St. John’s United Church and/or Maple Leaf Acres) and one in Elora (possibly Bungalow 55)
- Convene a meeting with the organizations that expressed an interest in supporting the Women’s Community Lunch
- Work with the Wellington County Learning Centre to consider options for sharing between Circles and the Women’s Community Lunch (e.g., lessons learned, joint funding opportunities)
- Develop an evaluation plan to enable funding and actionable results
- Explore the concept of ‘community hubs’ within neighbourhoods to provide a convenient venue for community activities. For example, link together initiatives on social networking, community cohesion, employability⁴⁴ and food (like Bungalow 55)
- Continue to promote the Community Gardens available
- Find ways to connect those with excess produce to food bank (can accept after hours: need process communicated)

⁴⁴ http://www.bristol.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/health_and_adult_care/health/Social%20isolation%20recommendations%20report_0.pdf, accessed Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

- Explore potential funding opportunities (funding was often mentioned as a barrier to providing additional services).

Long-Term Recommendations

- Investigate options for a fruit tree community garden, with bicycle & vehicle parking options
- Benchmark other municipal policies/guidelines for animal husbandry and urban agriculture options. Make recommendations for Centre Wellington Township staff & Council to review and approve
- Examine options for cooking classes as night classes. There are some available through continuing education through the Upper Grand District School Board & could be built upon
- Understand and utilize the communication options available to bridge the gap between local farms, the Food Banks (when they are not open) to collect excess produce and share with those who need it
- Host a community conversation about youth and male isolation and potential solutions
- Explore how and where community cooking & canning classes could be offered and funding sources
- Determine opportunities to provide capacity-building workshop(s) to build the capacity of residents to grow and process their own food
- Work with community partner(s) to offer training on conflict resolution, facilitation, etc.
- Build upon the Sharing Elora concept of space to post “excess” food for those in need
- Explore potential funding opportunities.

Conclusion

Food security initiatives generally provide options for vulnerable individuals and households. It is important to recognize that food insecurity impacts a large number of people. This is due primarily to poverty and insufficient funds for adequate healthy foods. In addition, it can be exacerbated by or due to limited food skills, limited access to and availability of healthy foods, lack of knowledge, physical limitations, transportation barriers, isolation, etc.

It is imperative to provide policies, programs and services that are universal and eliminate barriers to access that affect populations with the highest needs. The evidence is pointing to community food centres. We do know that community food centres:

- Increases access to healthy food among low-income community members
- Increases skills and knowledge and encourages behaviour change around healthy food
- Reduces social isolation and increases connections to a variety of supports

- Increases knowledge of poverty and food systems issues and create new opportunities for effective action on systemic issues, while providing universal services and eliminating stigma.⁴⁵

In addition, such programs tend to have other benefits like increased social support and social interaction, improved mental health, neighbourhood attachment, community involvement, life satisfaction, increased consumption of fresher food and food & nutrition education.⁴⁶

Given the geography of Centre Wellington, a single site for food services (like a community food centre) currently does not serve the needs of all residents as transportation has been identified as a barrier. In addition, the Township of Centre Wellington appears to be in a phase of **system transition**. There has been some movement to institute strategies that build capacity by strengthening the current food systems through partnerships and networks.

More work needs to be done to strengthen the food system by understanding who is affected by food insecurity, how many residents and ways to engage those residents (as well as others) in developing strategies that best meet the needs the community. The recommendations proposed provide programs and services in a variety of locations across Centre Wellington Township to meet the needs of as many residents as possible, to reduce the need for transportation and to build step-by-step answers to complex problems – food insecurity and a lack of social connectivity.

A community food centre is an appropriate strategy but requires a number of actions to be taken before embarking on this type of model, with an important first step of gathering community input on the need, as well as feedback on what would work best in Centre Wellington.

⁴⁵ http://cfccanada.ca/what_is_a_community_food_centre, accessed Friday, April 10, 2015.

⁴⁶ Dietitians of Canada, "Dietitians of Canada Backgrounder Paper for Position Statement: Individual and Household Food Insecurity in Canada", June 2014, p. 18.

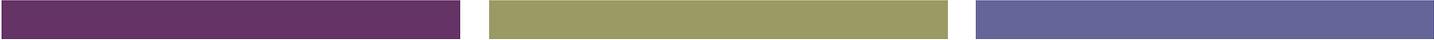
Appendix A

List of Interviews

Organization	Date of Interview
Bethany United Church, Elora	March 20
Bethel Baptist Church, Fergus	March 20
Bethel Mennonite Church	April 1
Bungalow 55, Elora	April 1
Central Pentecostal Church, Elora	March 30
Centre Wellington District High School	March 24 & April 9
Centre Wellington Food Bank	April 13
Community Resource Centre	March 30
Elora Community Garden	March 26
Elora United Church	March 20
Elora-Fergus St. Vincent de Paul Society	April 9
Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fergus	March 30
Grace Christian Fellowship, Elora	April 9
Grand River Community Church, Elora	March 23
Guelph-Wellington Food Roundtable	March 25
Guelph-Wellington Task Force For Poverty Elimination	March 30
Kitchen In The Park Project (KIPP)	Could not be reached
Knox Presbyterian Church, Elora	March 25
Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church, Fergus	No answering machine
Melville United Church	April 1
New Apostolic Church, Fergus	Required to be sent to national office. No response
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs	April 16
Rural Ontario Institute	March 17
Sharing Elora	March 31
Spirit Life Christian Centre, Fergus	Not accessible by phone
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Fergus	March 17
St. James Anglican Church, Fergus	April 9
St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Elora	April 2
St. John's United Church, Belwood	April 2
St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Fergus	March 24
St. Mary Immaculate Church, Elora	April 2
Highlands Youth For Christ, The Door Youth Centre, Fergus	March 26
The Wellington County Learning Centre, Arthur	March 22

Centre Wellington Social Justice Group

Food & Social Connectivity Report



Organization	Date of Interview
Upper Grand Family Health Team	April 2
Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (Dietitian)	March 20

Appendix B

Interview Questions

The Centre Wellington Social Justice Group (CWSJG) is conducting a survey to gather information on food & social isolation activities to identify next steps in addressing food issues in Centre Wellington. Social isolation refers to a complete or near-complete lack of contact with people.

In addition, the CWSJG wishes to discuss the sustainability of *Women's Community Lunch (WCL)*, formerly known as Ladies Who Lunch. Women's Community Lunch is a successful program that offers women of all economic backgrounds a chance to meet other women to reduce social isolation and provides a lunch, along with guest speakers (as identified by the participants).

Questions:

1. Can you tell me about any activities that you offer in the community around food? (E.g., coffee hour, community gardens, meals, food vouchers, etc.)
2. Can you tell me about any activities that you offer in the community to reduce isolation? (E.g., family movie nights)
3. How does your organization identify local needs (i.e., food, social isolation)?
4. Are there factors in the current environment that are having an impact on your ability to address food and/or social isolation issues? Please explain.
5. Are there any local food trends that you are seeing? (E.g., increase in the ask for food)
6. Do you have plans to add any additional food activities? (Expand to include when, for whom, location, etc.)
7. Before today's interview, were you aware of the Women's Community Lunch (formerly known as LWL)? Yes _____ No _____
8. The Centre Wellington Social Justice Group is looking to partner with other community groups to sustain the Women's Community Lunch or initiating a men's meal program. Would you be interested in exploring how your organization could work with the CWSJG to sustain the WCL? (E.g., space, meals, volunteers for set-up, dishes, financial contribution, etc.)
9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

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Food & Social Connectivity Report

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On behalf of the Centre Wellington Social Justice Group I want to thank you for taking the time to provide your organizational information. The next step is to compile a report with the findings from the local interviews and a review of the literature. Recommendations will be drafted and shared with the community.

When the report is completed, would you like to receive an electronic copy? E-mail address:

Appendix C

Current/Planned Food Activities in Centre Wellington		
Organization & Location	Description	Other Details
Chicken Coops		
Chicken Coop Map	Self-guided tour	Map available at Elora Farmer's Market.
Community Gardens		
Bethel Baptist Church 675 Victoria Terrace, Fergus 519-843-2890	Open to public for care & access to vegetables	
Bungalow 55 55 Geddes St., Elora 519-827-2091	Weekly worker bees & gather produce at the end	
Elora Community Garden Located at Elora Public School 288 Mill St. E., Elora 519-846-8662	Have raised beds which are accessible	Participants are asked to be members of the Horticultural Association \$10.00 p.p. & covers insurance costs. Children can participate for \$2.00 p.p.
Melville United Church Garden 300 St. Andrew St. W., Fergus 519-843-1781	Have gathered harvest for the Food Bank	Currently discussing how the gardens will work in 2015
Portage Garden	1/3 of produce will be given to the Food Bank; 1/3 to Portage and 1/3 sold at the Elora Farmer's Market (sold by youth)	Partnership with local farmer, CW Rotary Club & Portage. Youth at Portage will do the work.
St. James Anglican Church 171 Queen St. E., Fergus 519-843-2141	Plant, maintain & harvest your own vegetables or fruit	Contact Tammy Rutherford to adopt a plot at 519-820-2532 or trutherford111574@hotmail.com
Community Meals		
Bungalow 55	Community soup nights ad hoc	Exploring a monthly schedule for soup night
Centre Wellington District High School	Provide students breakfast at no cost	Meal cards available (12 hot meals for \$10.00). For those who require it, the

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Current/Planned Food Activities in Centre Wellington

Organization & Location	Description	Other Details
905 Scotland St., Fergus 519-843-2500	Also provide hot lunches for \$1.00	meal cards are available at no charge.
Elora Supper Club	Extra meals prepared & offered to those who can use them	https://www.facebook.com/groups/1538217203096916/
Knox Presbyterian Church 55 Church St., Elora 519-846-0680	Start June 2015 the first Friday of the month	Held monthly (except for summer months). Contact the Church for more information
Knox Presbyterian Church Elora 51 Church St., Elora 519-846-0680	Monthly seniors dinner by donation. 3 rd Monday of each month (except summer)	Appreciate RSVP's
Melville United Church 300 St. Andrew St., W., Fergus 519-843-1781	Christmas Ministerial Dinner. Date varies each year (advertised event)	Open to community
Melville United Church 300 St. Andrew St. W., Fergus 519-843-1781	Pancake Supper with freewill offering	Held according to Lent (February/March)
Sharing Elora Potluck Meals	Held around holidays	https://www.facebook.com/groups/sharingelora/
St. James Anglican Church 171 Queen St. E., Fergus 518-843-2141		Held monthly
Cooking Classes		
Bethel Baptist Church 675 Victoria Terrace, Fergus 519-843-2890	Ad hoc classes	E.g., learn how to make bread class
Centre Wellington Food Bank	Pilot project Spring 2015; twice per week	Prepare & take home nutritious lunches for children
Grand River Community Church 7438 Wellington Cty Road 18, Elora	In planning stages of a no cost course on how to prepare healthy, nutritious	Have a kitchen on-site. Prepare food and take the meals home. Also builds in social network development.

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Current/Planned Food Activities in Centre Wellington

Organization & Location	Description	Other Details
519-846-6683	meals at low-cost	
Highlands Youth For Christ, The Door Youth Centre	Cooking & nutrition taught through interactions	Only microwave available
Upper Grand Family Health Team 753 Tower St. S., Fergus 519-843-3947	“Let’s Get Cooking” classes on the 4 th Tuesday (except in winter months). Limited to 12 participants	Program designed for those with a health condition (e.g., diabetes, heart disease). Provides skill development & knowledge, with monthly themes
Food Bank		
Centre Wellington Food Bank 170 St. Andrew St. E., Fergus 519-787-1401		Open Tuesday 1 – 4 p.m.; Wednesday 6 – 8 p.m. & Thursday 1 – 4 p.m. Can drop in Tuesday – Friday 3 – 4 p.m. for additional fresh bread and/or vegetables (call ahead to check on availability)
Kitchen Facilities For Rent		
Bungalow 55 55 Geddes St., Elora 519-827-2091	Low-rent certified kitchen to incubate food-based business	Open to community. Contact for more info
Centre Wellington Food Bank 170 St. Andrew St. E., Fergus 519-787-1401		Open to community. Contact for more info
Produce Availability		
Elora Community Share	Facebook Page	Announces who has extra food, produce, etc. & individuals pick it up. Can also post needs

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Appendix D

Current/Planned Social Activities in Centre Wellington		
Initiative	Description	Location
Backyard Community Hub	Building a shelter, greenhouse, fire pit & possibly outdoor theatre to empower regular gatherings for the community.	Bungalow 55 55 Geddes St., Elora 519-827-2091
Children's Day Camp	Held for 2 weeks in July & August.	Central Pentecostal Church 7674 Colborne St., Elora 519-846-0272
DIY Workshops	Variety of topics (e.g., make your own soap, sauerkraut, etc.). Advertised on Facebook	Sharing Elora 202-8 Mill St. W., Elora 226-343-9119
Family Day Events	Games, outside activities, family movies. Includes meal. No cost.	Grand River Community Church 7438 Wellington Cty Rd 18 Elora 519-846-6683
Family Fun Nights	Pre-set evenings advertised in local media (newspaper & radio)	Melville United Church 300 St. Andrew St. W., Fergus 519-843-1781
Interactive Community Composter	Start with one at Bungalow 55 & then add one near Station Square & Wellington Terrace. Becomes a learning opportunity & creates a community gathering space.	Bungalow 55 55 Geddes St., Elora 519-827-2091
Let's Get Real	Employment for youth 7-week course. Provide first aid training, CPR, Smart Serve. Participants paid \$200.00 if have 100% attendance. Participants come out with employment plan. Lunch is served. Includes employer tours.	Youth aged 16 – 25 years. Twice per week.
Movie Night	Held Friday evenings ad hoc with discussion following at community venue (e.g., Wreckless Eric's)	Bethany United/Elora United 75 Geddes St., Elora 519-846-0122
Movie Night	Includes popcorn & pop. Ad hoc	Bethel Baptist Church 675 Victoria Terrace, Fergus 519-843-2890
Prayer Garden	In initial stages of being developed. Will be open to the community	Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church 290 Belsyde Ave. E., Fergus

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Current/Planned Social Activities in Centre Wellington

Initiative	Description	Location
		519-843-5030
Prayer Garden	Located on Tower St. side of Church. Open to the community.	St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church 325 St. George St. W., Fergus 519-843-3565
Senior's Exercise Program	Hosted by VON on Tuesday & Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.	Melville United Church 300 St. Andrew St. W., Fergus 519-843-1781
Senior's Program	Held 3 rd Wednesday of every month, except summer months. Held from 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Either potluck or by donation. Includes guest speakers, videos, trips, etc.	Bethel Baptist Church 675 Victoria Terrace, Fergus 519-843-2890
Onside Soccer	May – July (roughly 8 weeks). Cost is \$80 & subsidies available upon request. Contact the Church for more info. Available for children 4 – 10 years at Elora Public School.	Grand River Community Church 7438 Wellington Cty Rd 18, Elora 519-846-6683
Sports Equipment	Soccer field, tetherball, full-size gymnasium – exploring how to engage youth in sports activities on site	Central Pentecostal Church 7674 Colborne St., Elora 519-846-0272
Teen Music Jams	Weekly on Sundays from 1 – 5 p.m. Bring your own instrument. Ages 13 – 18.	Bungalow 55 55 Geddes St., Elora 519-827-2091
Transition Through Stories	A younger person is paired with an older adult and the individual's work together on documenting the seniors' life story. The two meet for 9 weeks & the program is run a few times per year	Upper Grand Family Health Team 753 Tower St. S., Fergus 519-843-3947
Young & Parenting Classes	Parents in program & includes transportation (held in Mt. Forest), meal & childcare. Held on Wednesday's at the Early Years Centre, Mt. Forest for parents aged 24 & younger, 2 times per month.	Community Resource Centre Fergus 519-843-7000
Youth Drop In Program	Open Friday & Saturday evenings for youth drop-in. Open 2 – 3 days/week as well	The Door Youth Centre 212 St. Andrew St., W., Fergus 519-787-0925

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Current/Planned Social Activities in Centre Wellington

Initiative	Description	Location
Youth Program	Weekly on Thursday from 6 – 9 p.m. with arts & crafts. No age limit but general participation from 15 – 24 year olds.	Bungalow 55 55 Geddes St., Elora 519-827-2091

Appendix E Centre Wellington Food Security & Social Connectivity Program Logic Model

Capacity Building	Community Engagement	Food Access	Skill Development & Training	Data Collection & Analysis
Co-apply for United Way for WCL & Circles	Conduct food security & services survey	Enhance use of Market Bucks in Elora & produce seconds available	Coordinate community garden meeting	Conduct & administer food security survey
Prepare media release on community survey results	Convene meeting for sustaining WCL	Expand Garden Fresh Box Program in Elora & Belwood	Examine options for cooking classes	Develop evaluation plan
Provide annual infographic on food security in CW	Host conversation about youth & male isolation	Investigate fruit tree community garden	Promote available cooking classes	Utilize evaluation results in infographic & Council presentations
Partner to provide skills for community members (facilitation, negotiation or conflict resolution skills)	Actively build partnerships to address food security	Benchmark municipal policies on animal husbandry	Investigate options for canning classes for connectivity & skill development	
Provide annual presentations to CW Council	Co-host Food Summit	Promote how to connect with Food Bank after hours to ensure food excess food is stored on-site	Utilize math & food literacy course from Wellington County Learning Centre	
Consider "community hub" options for CW	Continue to provide WCL	Build upon Sharing Elora Facebook page for posting of excess food	Work with community partner(s) to host "how to garden" sessions	
Investigate funding opportunities	Explore options for men's group with meal	Connect with Gerrie's in Elora to explore transportation to site for produce		
Arrange a tour of the Stratford local food centre		See "seconds" at Elora Farmer's Market? Could Portage also do this?		

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Short-Term Outcomes 1 – 5 years

Increased community capacity to support initiatives	Increased individual & community support for & participation in food security interventions	Increased access to & consumption of healthy foods	Increased tools & skills in food preparation	Baseline data gathered
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Long-Term Outcomes 6+ years

Enhanced agency & community capacity to address local food security issues	Successful interventions integrated into organizational programs & policies	Improved nutrition & food security	Enhanced awareness & uptake of programs & services	Food security status monitored & reported regularly
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Ultimate Outcome

To increase the number of Centre Wellington residents who have physical & economic access to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate foods in a socially just manner, and that people are able to make informed decisions about their food choices.

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Questions about this report can be directed to any member of the Centre Wellington Social Justice Group Board. The members are:

Brad Henderson (Treasurer)
Dean Dunbar
Deb Taylor
Don Cassidy
Janice Ferri
Karen Armstrong (Recorder)
Paul Holyoke (Chair).

The Centre Wellington Social Justice Group e-mail address is: justice@cwsocialjustice.ca

April 27, 2015