

NEWSLETTER

FOOD INSECURITY



Food insecurity is when an individual or household cannot afford balanced meals, goes hungry by skipping meals or eating less, or does not have access to the variety or quantity of food needed due to financial constraint *(Ottawa Public Health)*

Christie Lake Kids Working to Help Kids Break Cycle of Food Insecurity

Ours may be a first world country, but Canada is not immune to issues of poverty and hunger. In fact, about 13% of Canadians live in a state of food insecurity, which means they do not have reliable access to adequate amounts of safe, good-quality, nutritious food.

One in eight households – representing over 4.5 million Canadians including at least 1.2 million children – lack the financial resources to purchase sufficient healthy food and this number is growing every year. For those affected, food insecurity can have significant and lasting negative effects on physical, mental and social health. Depression, hyperactivity, inattentiveness, asthma and more can all be caused or aggravated by hunger.



While food prices rise steadily each year, the biggest conundrum in the food security world is a common misperception that fresh and whole foods are always more expensive than mass-produced, packaged goods. This causes many people on fixed or low incomes to rely heavily on processed foods, which may provide temporary respite from hunger but also contribute to a host of health issues. Aside from being lower in nutrients and fibre, processed foods are typically high in sugar, salt and fat, leading causes of both obesity and heart disease. The truth is, a diet consisting primarily of home-prepared foods can be significantly less expensive than one based on processed or pre-prepared foods. A recent study indicates that the average daily cost for a pre-teen or adult to consume a healthy, home-cooked diet of about 1800 calories per day is about \$7.50 whereas a diet based on less-healthy, convenience foods costs over \$15.00 per day and consists of a whopping 2700 calories.

Learning to cook is key to breaking the cycle of food insecurity and that's where CLK is trying to help Ottawa's young people.



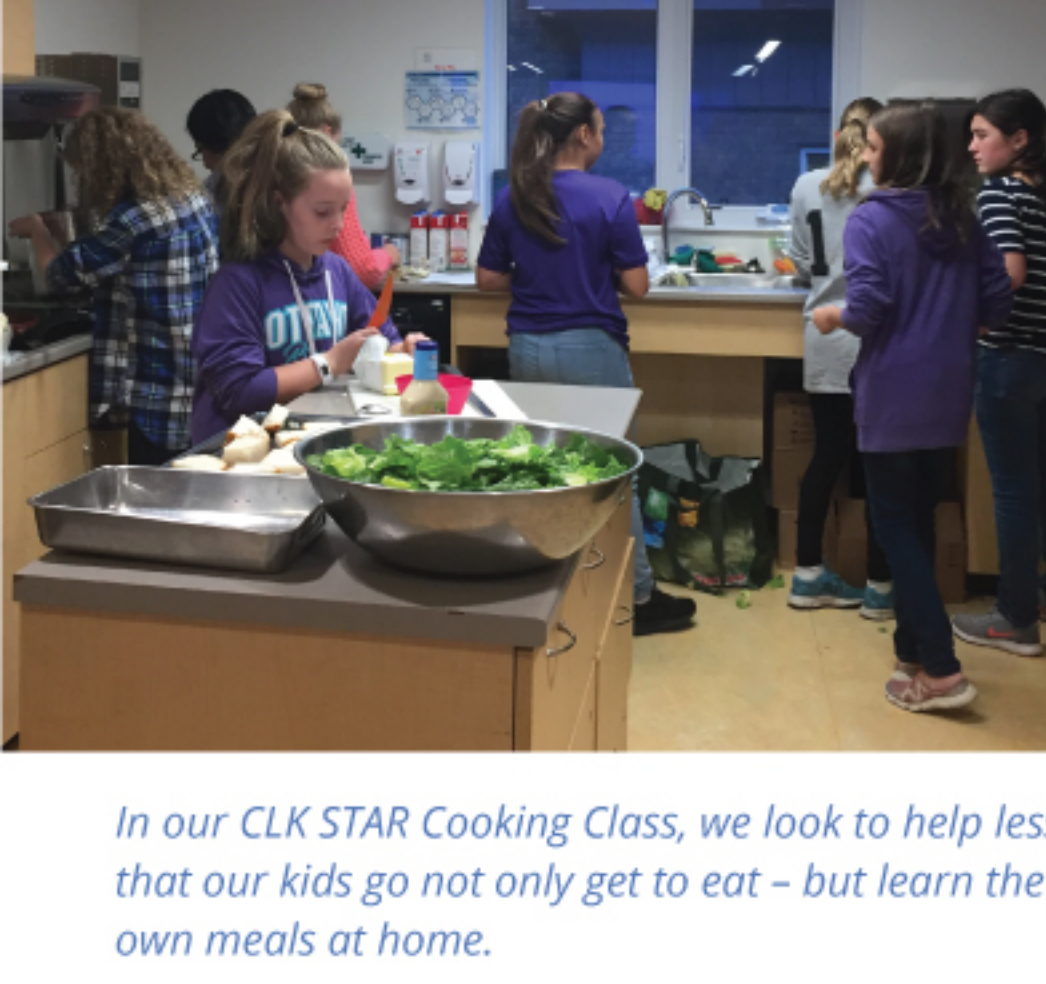
Our Camp garden gives our kids the ability to learn how to plant, cultivate and harvest with our community garden at camp. These important skills will help give them a safe guard from future food insecurity as well as giving them a sense of accomplishment. This summer, Christie Lake Camp's garden will double in size thanks to work done in the fall by Ashbury College's Grade 10 students.

Cooking programs are among the most popular of Christie Lake Kids' STAR programs, offered year round at various inner-city locations. A junior program for kids ages 6 – 12 is led by a dedicated group of volunteers who develop easy-to-follow recipes and then work in the kitchen with the children, teaching them basic cooking techniques while offering nutritional guidance and positive reinforcement. Not only does this CLK program provide healthy modeling to show kids how to prepare and enjoy wholesome food, cooking together also allows kids to reap the benefits of positive communication while learning new skills. The goal is to build confidence, expose the kids to new ingredients, and ensure they learn how to cook safely, including delicious salads and comfort food. CLK has learned that many children in this age group are already helping to care for younger siblings, so bolstering their food knowledge is especially important.



Meanwhile the senior cooking program for youth ages 13 – 17 extends the learning, particularly when it comes to putting together menus, understanding the cost of food and appreciating the simple joy of cooking and eating together while learning about new ingredients and various cuisines. Participants experiment with new recipes and bring in their favourites from home, with the goal of creating their own customized recipe book by the end of the program. Below is an example of an easy, economical, nutritious and delicious recipe that would be ideally suited to teens eager to work with healthy, hearty ingredients.

Cooking together allows kids to reap the benefits of positive communication while learning new skills.



In our CLK STAR Cooking Class, we look to help lessen these instances of food-insecurity by ensuring that our kids go not only get to eat – but learn the fundamental skills to help plan and prepare their own meals at home.

Paula Roy's Lentil-Barley Stew

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup vegetable or olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/3 cup pot or pearl barley
- 1/2 cup dried red lentils, picked over for stones and rinsed well
- 1 can (28 oz) diced
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground rosemary
- 1/2 cup grated carrot
- 1 small zucchini, thinly sliced

Method

- In a large, heavy saucepan, add oil and onion; cooking, stirring often, for 3 minutes.
- Add celery and cook 5 minutes longer, stirring occasionally.
- Add lentils, barley, diced tomatoes, tomato paste, seasonings and water. Stir to blend well.
- Bring to a boil, cover pot and simmer gently for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Add carrots and zucchini just before serving and cook 5 minutes longer.

Serves 4-6



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