



Board Report

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PROGRAM REPORT FEBRUARY 2020

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Working with the Grey Bruce communities to protect and promote health

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Grey Bruce Good Food Box Evaluation

The Grey Bruce Good Food Box (GFB) is a volunteer run program that supports access to more affordable fresh fruits and vegetables through 19 sites across the region. Over 1200 boxes of high quality fresh fruits and vegetables are sold through this program each month. Boxes are distributed with the support of over 150 volunteers and a wide range of community partners. The Grey Bruce Health Unit contributes to this community driven program through in-kind support by public health dietitians. During 2019, an evaluation was conducted using key informant interviews, facilitated focus groups and electronic and paper surveys to explore program sustainability and contributions to community development. In total 377 individuals across all 19 Good Food Box sites participated in this evaluation.

The evaluation results demonstrate the GFB's current contributions to food literacy and community capacity building. Respondents strongly voiced the value of the GFB to themselves and their community. Participants felt that the GFB created an opportunity to enjoy more fresh produce and to learn new ways of preparing them. Coordinators and volunteers clearly described social benefits to their work with the GFB and felt that the relationships and networks developed through the program have significant value. The GFB is engaged in multi-sectoral partnerships with faith-based, community-based and Indigenous organizations as well as schools, municipalities, businesses and the health sector. These relationships contribute to the success of the GFB and are integral to its reach and impact in the community.

The report identifies the vulnerability of the independently operating sites due to limited financial accountability, shifting partnerships and fluctuating levels of volunteers' engagement. Recommendations to address these challenges include greater site support through the recruitment of coordinator teams rather than individual site leadership; changes to acknowledge the need for box generated revenue and centralized fundraising and accounting. Current subsidy structures are financially unsustainable, limited in reach and present administrative and privacy concerns. It is recommended the program shift to the promotion of sponsored boxes. Efforts to cut operational costs, such

as the reduction in plastic bag use, will also be encouraged to maintain core program features like volunteer engagement and appreciation activities.

These recommendations represent significant changes to the program and will require collaboration across various stakeholders. The Grey Bruce Health Unit will continue to support the work of the advisory committee to implement the recommendations through a 4 phase process spanning 2 years. Early phases address immediate concerns for volunteer liability and financial sustainability. The final report is available online at: <https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Your-Health/Eating-Well/Community-Food-Programs#Evaluation>

20-Hour Breastfeeding Course

The Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) recognizes the role that health services play in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is the optimal source of nutrition to support healthy growth and cognitive development of infants (Healthy Growth and Development Guideline, 2018). Grey Bruce Health Services (GBHS) was the first hospital in our region to receive official Baby-Friendly Designation. In order to achieve this designation, and to maintain it, the hospital must comply with the World Health Organization's "[Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding](#)" and the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. To uphold these standards, the hospital must ensure staff are provided with regular education, including at least 20 hours of education for any staff supporting families with breastfeeding.

This past fall, our health unit staff were able to partner with GBHS to provide the 20 Hour BFI Course to participants for free. We provided education for 47 front-line staff from Grey and Bruce. The vast majority of those who attended were nurses from GBHS. This partnership helped to ensure our local hospital is successful in maintaining their BFI designation. Delivering this course offered an opportunity to build relationships with the hospital team we count on to refer to our Healthy Babies Healthy Children program and allowed organizations to share information about our programs and the work of community partners to support families in Grey and Bruce.

Not only did this work to support our strong partnerships and support our ministry guidance, it was extremely well received. Over 95% of the participants felt the course was worthwhile and reported learning material was very useful in their practice. When asked the most useful things they learned in the course, participants commented; "The incredible importance of breastfeeding", "Effective communication, I need to listen and inform new mothers", "How we can improve skin-to-skin in the OR", "The importance of giving families the tools to make informed feeding decisions", "All the great resources available locally!" and "I am very glad I attended." Upon completion of the course, participants were issued a certificate for 16 hours of class work with the expectation that they demonstrate 4 hours of hands on practice, to achieve their full 20-hour certification. We look forward to continuing to support families in our community to initiate and sustain breastfeeding through the planning of comprehensive, upstream approaches like this based on local needs.

