



the Table

community food centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



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community food centre



The Table's mission is to foster a healthier and more connected community. We do this by improving access to healthy food, improving food skills and food literacy, advocating for individual well-being, and educating, engaging and advocating for social policies to address food insecurity and poverty.

From the Board Chair and Executive Director....

Superlatives and new clichés abound to describe the year of April 2020 to March 2021. Suffice it to say, the COVID19 pandemic presented The Table with a variety of new challenges. Foremost was the challenge of ensuring the safety of participants, volunteers, and staff while continuing to offer our front-line services that build health and community. While some programs had to be suspended, we are very proud of the fact that we kept most of them running throughout the year. We even introduced several new programs, namely KidsKits and the Fresh Food Box. We made safety-related modifications to every program, and major adjustments were needed to respond to the increases in demand for our community meals through our modified take-out and delivery service.

In a variety of ways, the pandemic exacerbated and shone a light on issues that we have been working on for years. Increased difficulties with accessing decent, affordable housing is a pandemic side effect with serious consequences for our community. We are encouraged by the increase in discussion at the municipal level about the housing crisis but will keep pushing for concrete and lasting improvements in the situation.

As the pandemic wanes and we can enjoy the security of being vaccinated (way to go Leeds Grenville and Lanark for having one of the highest vaccination rates in the province), we look forward to re-introducing more of our suspended programs and re-focussing our attention on medium and longer-term goals in our strategic plan.

None of the successes summarized in this report would have been possible without the combined commitment, flexibility, and hard work of The Table's staff and volunteers. Our huge thanks to all of you for seeing us through the ups and downs of the pandemic. Of course, it also takes financial resources to run The Table's programs and meet the changing demands of the community. We are extremely grateful for the incredible generosity shown by the local community – donating in record amounts – and to our partner agencies and municipal and federal governments for providing a number of grants that sustained us through the year.

Yours in Good Food,



Brian Whitestone, Chair



Ramsey Hart, Executive Director

Thank You!

A sincere thank you to all of our financial supporters and in-kind donors who made the health and community-building work of The Table possible in 2020. Listed below are the organizations, businesses, and governments which contributed \$2,000 or more to our programming in the 2020/21 fiscal year. Though not a direct source of funding, significant resources came to The Table from the federal government's pandemic relief grants by way of Community Food Centres Canada, Food Banks Canada and Lanark County.



Caroline Ehrat
Medicine



Dr. Katherine
Stolee
Medicine



Jim Noble



OSSTF
District 26












Perth & District
Volleyball Club



Pandemic-related Program Modifications

Each of The Table's programs was impacted by the pandemic. Here is an outline of the changes we made to keep the community safe while continuing to operate.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| After School Program |  | Our new program, KidsKits , provided take-home meal kits and food literacy instruction. |
| Community Advocacy Office |  | Navigators supported people by phone and through email . We scheduled regular check-ins with isolated community members and met in person only when essential. |
| Community Garden |  | We were part of a provincial lobbying effort to keep community gardens open, and the gardeners shifted from drop-in sessions to scheduled sessions with smaller groups. |
| Community Kitchens |  | Unfortunately our community kitchen programs were suspended. We did provide some online offerings early in the pandemic. |
| Community Meals |  | We shifted to a take-out and delivery meal service. |
| Fresh Food Box |  | We introduced this new program to provide affordable access to fresh produce. |
| Good Food Bank |  | We provided curbside pickup and expanded delivery service. |
| Gentle Fit |  | We shifted to an outdoor walking group. |
| LCCAN Social Justice Club |  | Participants met online for regular bi-monthly meetings and special planning sessions. |

Program Statistics Summary

	2017	2018	2019	2020/21
Number of Program Sessions	895	933	894	671
Total Meals Served & Sent Home	14,814	16,747	17,235	27,718
Visits to the Good Food Bank	3737	4,236	4,586	4,043
Volunteer Hours	10,032	10,264	12,139	9,455
Total Food Harvested (pounds)	1,746	1,959	1930	1,947



Take out meals (photo left) were a very popular adaptation of our Community Meals program with an increase in more than 10,000 additional meals served by The Table in 2020/21.

Each year the Table receives thousands of dollars of donated produce from local farms like New Leaf Organic Farm (below). We also purchase significant amounts of local produce when in season, to support our local economy and food system.



Participant Feedback

88.9% of program participants surveyed in the fall of 2020 reported that The Table provided them with an important source of healthy food. When asked to describe what their food situation would look like if they could not access The Table here is what two participants said...

"I have a stove that doesn't work and I need their help. Getting meals is a great support."

"My food would not be healthy. No fresh veg. Mostly canned food."

Throughout the pandemic, The Table continued to be a social connector and source of support. The sense of community enjoyed by 86% of people we surveyed was largely attributed to the welcoming and friendly staff and volunteers.

"The people, volunteers, who talk to me make me feel good."

"I'd feel a bit lost without The Table."

"As a newcomer, helping me to meet people and to get to know the town as a community. The staff makes you feel welcome."

The Table's gardens (photo right) provided a great way for people to safely connect with and participate in The Table throughout the pandemic.

Our gardeners produced 1,947 pounds of food in 2020. The produce is shared between the Table's programs and the gardeners.

Photo Credit

Thanks to David Zimmerly for the cover photos and photos on pages 4, 5 and 8.



COVID Community Check-In

As much as we love food at The Table, our work is really about the people and we have really missed having program participants in the building through the pandemic. After the first 6 months of not seeing very many community members, we were wondering how everyone was fairing. So, we asked people. Using a detailed online survey developed with North Lanark Community Health Centre and the Lanark County Situation Table, the COVID Community Check-In provided us with a snap shot of the challenges and successes of getting through the first months of the pandemic. We were thrilled to have almost 800 people from across Lanark County and Smiths Falls respond to the survey. Not surprisingly, the results clearly showed that those living on lower incomes were facing greater challenges in maintaining mental health, and accessing food and housing. The survey pointed to the need for ways to reduce isolation safely and we were pleased to be able to increase our efforts in the Advocacy Office to reach out to folks and do regular check-ins. Not withstanding the many challenges people noted, there was also a strong sense of collective effort to address the challenges and gratitude for all that was done by so many people. Please visit the “Resources” section of our website to read our full report.

Partner Spotlight



At The Table we believe in the power of collaboration and the pandemic has shown this approach to have great advantages. When trying to ensure continued access to the Good Food Bank we wanted to increase our delivery service but weren't sure we could find enough volunteer drivers. We checked in with our friends at Lanark Transportation who have been helping get people to The Table for a number of years. Because of a decrease in demand for their services during the initial part of the pandemic, they had vehicles and drivers that were available and offered us a very affordable rate for delivery across the food bank's catchment. Fortunately, despite an increase in demand for their services, Lanark Transportation agreed to continue doing our grocery deliveries at the same affordable rates. Thanks to drivers and administrative staff at Lanark Transportation for working with us to ensure access to good food for everyone in our community.

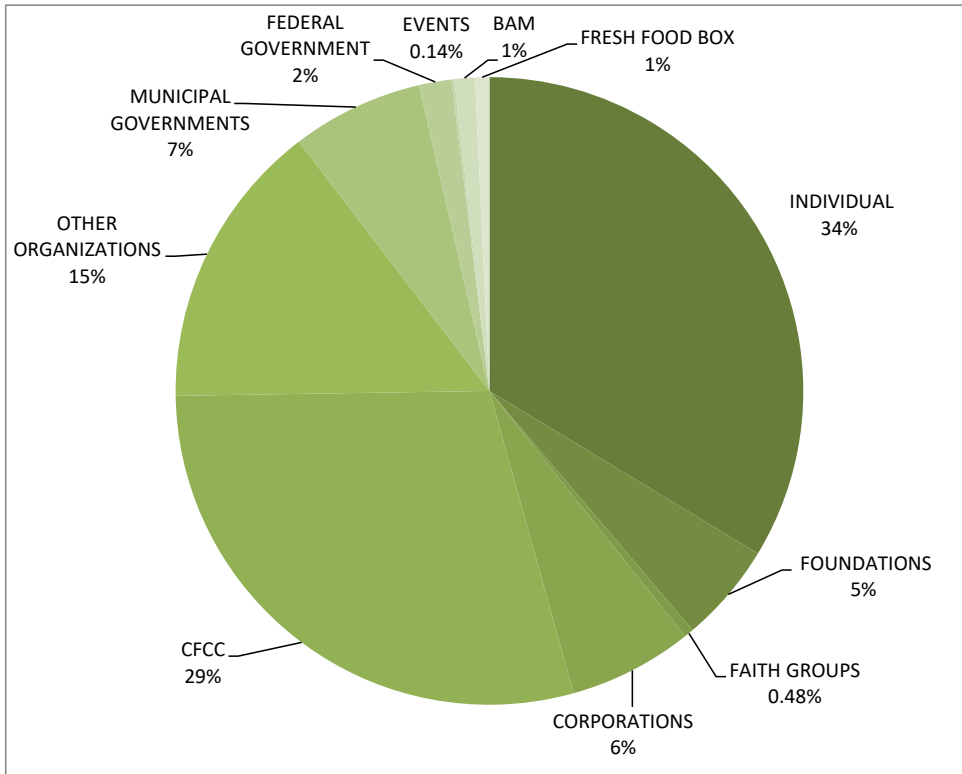


Two of our KidsKits participants getting down to business making chicken parmesan. Their mom told us that...

“The boys LOVED the chicken parmesan and were both very proud of their accomplishment. They really did a significant amount of the work.”

Financial Summary

2020/21 Cash Revenue \$1,064,464



In the 2020/21 fiscal year, The Table had higher than budgeted cash revenue of **\$1,064,464** and **\$565,316** of in-kind donations (primarily food), for a total revenue of **\$1,629,780**.

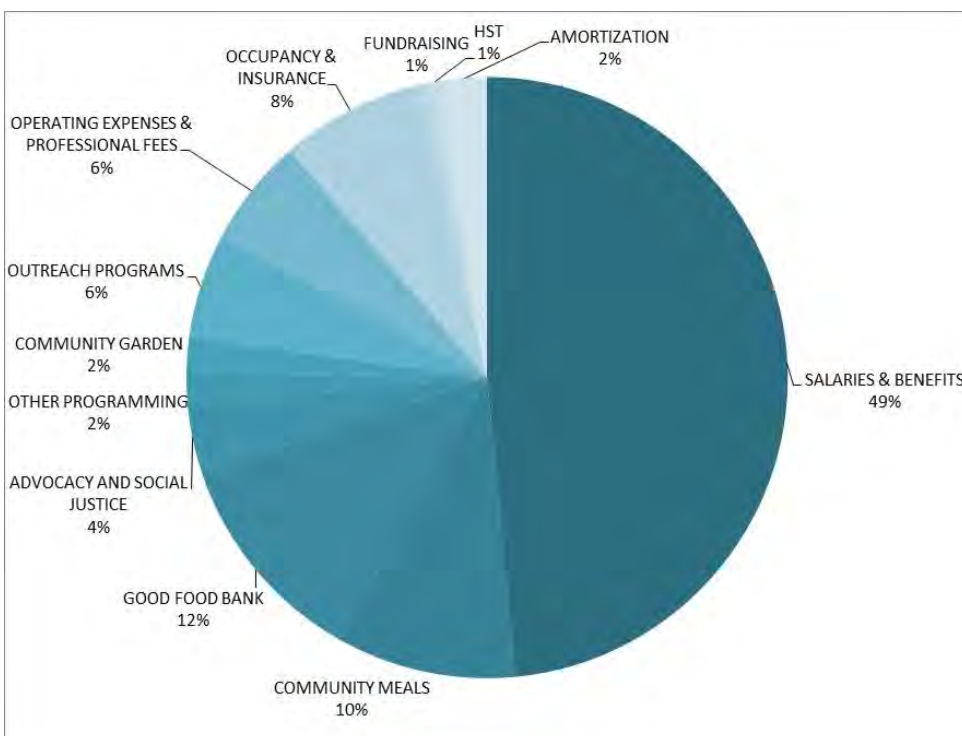
The increased revenues were due to unanticipated COVID-related grants and higher than anticipated individual and business donations. This allowed us to increase expenses in our own programs and support other local efforts to provide food access during the pandemic. Our total operating expenses for the year were **\$928,023**, resulting in a surplus of **\$136,441**.

As expenses have continued to be higher than normal in 2021/22, and as there is much less grant funding available, we will use some of this surplus to continue our pandemic-related programming. We will also direct some of the surplus to operational and capital reserve funds to ensure our financial sustainability and program continuity in the future.

In 2016, The Table established an endowment fund with the Perth and District Community Foundation. At the end of March 2021 the fund had a balance of **\$134,574**.

Please see our audited financial statements for more details about our financial situation in 2020/21.

2020/21 Expenses \$928,023



Staff Team

Judy Dempsey/Joanne Edwards/Jason Ride, Community Chefs

Ramsey Hart, Executive Director

Joanna Kowalczyk, Community Garden Coordinator

Wendy Quarrington, Good Food Bank Coordinator

Youssef Sawan, Social Justice and Advocacy Coordinator

Coral Sproule, Youth Food Skills Coordinator

Meredith Toivanen, Kitchen Assistant

Aisha Toor, Community Kitchen & Volunteer Coordinator

Katrina Toth, Communications and Development Assistant

Theresa Welch, Book Keeper / Administrator

Community Navigators: Emmet Cameron, David Collins,
Tracey Parker, Sue Van Slooten

Summer Students: Meg Carty, Fiona Dobson, Esther Hardy

Board of Directors

Brian Whitestone, Chair

Jim Noble, Vice Chair

Deborah Duffy, Secretary

Nev Jande, Treasurer

Kandace Brown

Krystyna Chelminska

Rev. Ken Davis

Craig Halpenny

Robyn Mulcahy-Reid

Claire Smith



Happy “Retirement” Judy

The Table’s Community Chef, Judy Dempsey, retired in December after nearly 10 years working to build and sustain The Table’s Community Meals, food skills programs, and various fundraising events.

Thank you Judy for all your creativity, hard work and dedication to ensure there is good food for all in our community.

Not one to be idle or too long out of a kitchen, Judy is now catering and serving meals at Perth’s Weatherhead Brewery.

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