



B.C. First Nations Head Start Helping Families to Eat Healthy

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SYAYKW HEAD START IN SEHELDT, B.C. HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH THEIR NUTRITIONIST TO START A GOOD FOOD BOX PROGRAM FOR THEIR COMMUNITY.

The Good Food Box helps families improve health and wellness by providing easy access to fresh and nutritious fruits and vegetables at the lowest possible cost.

How does it work? Once a month, participating families pay between \$12 and \$25 for their Good Food Box. The money is pooled, and used to buy quality fruits and vegetables in bulk from a local produce supplier. All the money goes directly to purchasing food – volunteers box the food and arrange for deliveries to families who don't have a vehicle.

Sechelt's program began with a meeting to identify whether the project was worthwhile and what produce would work best for most families. By June the Good Food Box was offered on a non-profit, unsubsidized basis within the band. Nutritionist Jan Stephens advertised the program in the newsletter and got 14 families involved. Distribution boxes were purchased, and local vendors were asked to quote on a basic selection of produce.

The program has expanded from once a month to twice a month, and over Christmas there were 38 families participating. Volunteers are easy to find – they have fun and quickly process the food. There is excitement in the air at the family centre when the vegetables and fruit arrive, seeing all the boxes lined up waiting to be filled.

“After the first delivery, everyone knew the program was going to be successful. Participants said it was like receiving a gift at the door. There were comments like, “My husband likes having fresh vegetables and fruit so much we are starting to shop for the things we receive in the Good Food Box and I think I am losing weight because I'm eating more vegetables and fruits.”

There are Good Food Box programs in communities all across Canada! See the resources section on p. 6 for contact info and resources to help you start a Good Food Box in your community.