

WEST BROADWAY, WINNIPEG, MBWWW.WESTBROADWAY.MB.CA

The Good Food Club

There is a program operating in the heart of Winnipeg with a mandate to help make healthy, nutritious, and affordable food available for West Broadway residents – The Good Food Club (GFC).

With over 300 members, GFC offer five areas of programming in the community: community cafes; community potlucks; fresh food boxes in the winter months; trips to a local farms in the summer, during which members have the opportunity to earn sweat equity points to be used towards the food boxes or cafe; and a vegetable community market, operated once a week in the summer months. These programs were strategically developed to meet the needs identified by the community.

The GFC began in 2002, when community members recognized the void of affordable healthy food in the West Broadway community. After learning that other communities in Canada had successfully filled this gap with Food Box programs, community members approached the West Broadway Development Corporation to help create an affordable bulk food buying program. After many “gathering circle conversations,” it became clear that the com-

munity needed more than just food boxes; the West Broadway neighbourhood required programming rooted in a long-term development approach.

A partnership was created with the local Weins Farm, which was followed by the creation of a new Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) model. The CSA was designed to educate community members about the food production process, and provided them an opportunity to visit and work at the Weins farm. Currently, GFC collectively puts in over 1500 hours of work on the farm each year. They also invest five thousand dollars each year by purchasing shares at the farm, which means that GFC partakes in →



→ the benefits and risks of farming each season. These vegetables are then sold at a reduced rate or for sweat equity points at a weekly vegetable community market in West Broadway.

Unfortunately, things have not always been so fruitful for GFC. Due to a funding lapse in 2007, they were forced to shut down the program for one year. However, with strong demand and support from the community, and new interest from funders, things are up and running stronger than ever. Nevertheless, the program continues to face the inevitable challenges of maintaining financial sustainability and securing long-term funding opportunities.

The GFC provides the community with more than just access to nutritional food. It also creates new relationships amongst community members, as they work side by side at the cafes,

The GFC provides the community with more than just access to nutritional food. It also creates new relationships amongst community members, as they work side by side at the cafes, at the farm or waiting in line to get their veggies at the market.

at the farm or waiting in line to get their veggies at the market. Participants also receive educational

benefits through GFC's programs, and by growing their own vegetables. There are also economic implications resulting from low-income community members accessing healthy food through sweat equity rather than cash, freeing up their limited resources for other important necessities.

Any way you look at it, The Good Food Club is a delicious and environmentally sustainable way to promote healthy living, bring the community together, and spark economic opportunities in the West Broadway neighbourhood.