

e4c envoy

Summer 2018



**e4c School
Nutrition helps make
fresh, healthy food
a daily part of
students' lives.**

Shannon and daughter Maren

Strong supporters of the e4c School Nutrition program



Seeing people not poverty.

Food security is a term used to describe having reliable access to a sufficient amount of healthy, affordable nutritious food. It's also something that is out of reach for many Edmontonians who experience hunger on a regular basis.



e4c works to improve food security in Edmonton by helping people learn to shop for, cook and eat healthy foods, and by offering nourishing meals in our women's emergency accommodation centre, youth housing and supportive housing locations. Our e4c School Nutrition program also plays an important part in increasing food security for school-aged children who might otherwise go hungry.

"We know hunger makes everything harder for kids," explains Jasmine Monaghan, e4c's Director of Community Services. "If children have access to healthy, nutritious food they're better able to listen and focus in the classroom and to just be kids."

The switch to a fresh food model

Each school day, close to 7,000 children and youth receive a healthy breakfast, lunch or snack at one of our 26 partner schools as part of the school nutrition program. This past year saw the program complete its transition from catered menus to a fresh food model, which now sees all food prepared at the schools. It's a change that has not only allowed for healthier, more nutritious food choices, but has also made it easier for schools to customize options to meet the unique needs of their students.

"The offerings in each school are really reflective of the individual school community," explains Jasmine. "This allows us to make sure we're giving students at each school what they need and want." In some schools, this has meant eliminating certain foods from the menu or making food readily available throughout the school day, with fruit bowls in classrooms so kids can help themselves and school fridges stocked with snacks. "It helps to normalize food, and empowers kids to decide what and how much they want. And for kids whose lives might be otherwise chaotic, the ability to make choices – even if it's just about what they eat – is so impactful."

Making food more universally available also helps destigmatize the process of accepting food for students who need it. Because any child can participate in the school nutrition program, regardless of income levels or need, children and youth from families with modest incomes are indistinguishable from their peers at a different economic level. It's an approach that levels the playing field, so that children aren't singled out because of what they bring or don't bring for food from home.

Each school day, close to
7,000 children and youth
receive a healthy breakfast, lunch or snack.

Beyond the classroom

In addition to school-based nutrition programs, e4c provides a summer nutrition program that supports community-based summer camps and schools. In 2018, e4c also added additional garden plots in the Community Garden. These plots are growing vegetables for e4c Young Chefs, which brings elementary school children together once a week after school to learn how to make healthy snacks and meals.

We rely on our donors and community support to ensure

kids get the healthy, nutritious food

they need and might not otherwise get.

Sharing what we know

e4c continues to work with local school boards on the delivery of Alberta Education's School Nutrition Program, which was initially launched in 2016-17 as a pilot project in 14 school authorities across Alberta. For 2018-19, the province has announced that \$15.5 million will be allocated to the program, with Edmonton Catholic Schools receiving \$513,000 and Edmonton Public Schools receiving \$1.2 million. Edmonton Public Schools has invited e4c to work with them to determine how to best utilize these funds to increase the reach and number of schools the e4c School Nutrition program is in.

"We have an amazing relationship with Edmonton Public Schools," says Jasmine, "and being invited to work with them on this is a great opportunity to share what we've learned over the past 25 years of running our own school nutrition program. We're excited to be able to reach more kids in a sustainable, effective way and help improve their food security."

The need for community support

Although the increase in government funding for school nutrition is a positive step, Jasmine stresses that it doesn't mean that all of the needs will be met.

"It demonstrates that the province recognizes the importance of nutrition and its impact on learning, which is so heartening. But it costs about \$2.50 for each child, each day, to serve lunch and a snack, and we serve almost 7,000 kids a day for a total of over one million meals each year. We rely on our donors and community support to ensure kids get the healthy, nutritious food they need and might not otherwise get," explains Jasmine. Without that support, the e4c School Nutrition program wouldn't exist and kids would be hungry."

Nourishing the whole community.

The e4c School Nutrition program's switch to a fresh food model means that food for each individual school is now prepared on-site, a change that required the program to hire more staff at each school. As part of e4c's commitment to strengthening communities, Jasmine Monaghan explains that the program made the deliberate decision to employ parents and caregivers from the school community as nutrition staff.

"It just made sense to us that we give parents and caregivers a chance to fill those roles," notes Jasmine.

Not only does this increase the financial security for people living in the community, but it also helps reinforce the importance of healthy food choices with the nutrition staff, who can then incorporate that information into the decisions they make at home.

"Right now, I think about half of our nutrition support staff are parents or caregivers of children and youth who are participating in the program. As part of our strategic plan, we're hoping to get that number up to two-thirds of our nutrition staff."



"We participate in the e4c School Nutrition program for reasons beyond Maren needing lunch at school – it's about supporting a program for kids who may experience barriers to learning from hunger. I think it's important to contribute and to participate so the program stays in the school for kids who need it... it's good for the whole school."

—
Shannon

Strong supporter of the e4c School Nutrition program



THE HALLWAY
CAFÉ + TAKEAWAY

The right ingredients
for success.



Through late 2017, visitors to Edmonton City Hall may have noticed a flurry of activity in the area that housed the Kids in the Hall Bistro, as workers put the finishing touches on an updated, revitalized space.

The \$1-million project, which involved a complete renovation of the entire restaurant and teaching kitchen, was completed in early 2018 and a grand opening was held this past April for The Hallway Café and Takeaway.

"It turned out exactly as we hoped it would," notes Holly O'Brien, the Transitional Case Manager with e4c's newly renamed Hallway Café. "It was really a natural evolution from who we were to who we are today. The new space incorporates a lot of the things previous students have told us they wanted to see, such as more light and greenery."

Transforming the space

The transformation began with an expert panel made up of volunteers – many with expertise in the hospitality industry – assessing the existing location and making recommendations about how it could be transformed. A generous \$400,000 donation from Inter Pipeline got the ball rolling and support from other donors and government made it possible to take the expert panel's recommendations from concept to reality.

The new state-of-the-art teaching kitchen in The Hallway Café can accommodate 12 to 14 employment readiness youth during each 17 week session, and creates the ideal space to introduce youth to essential culinary skills and practical life skills. The open-concept design gives restaurant patrons a clear view of the kitchen, and helps create a more welcoming and inviting space.

Transforming lives

The revitalized Hallway Café is an important part of strengthening the social enterprise component of the e4c Kids in the Hall program, which focuses on helping at-risk youth earn high school credits and developing work and life skills. Social enterprise involves organizations using a commercial approach to create social impact. With The Hallway Café, the goal is to attract diners based on the quality of the food and the service, so that it can be both competitive and profitable while continuing to help youth transition into independence and adulthood.

"We've had a lot of good feedback," notes Brian McBride, Culinary Director at The Hallway Café. "As a chef, first and foremost I wanted the food to take centre stage, which is why we spend so much time teaching students to understand what it means to prepare food right." Under Brian's guidance, students learn everything from basic knife skills and choosing quality ingredients through to more advanced skills such as baking bread and curing meats. They also learn important life skills like time management, listening to instructions, working as part of a team and planning and organization. "What they learn here will serve them well no matter where they go next," stresses Brian.

Over the past 22 years, more than **4,000 youth** have graduated from the program.

Over the past 22 years, more than 4,000 youth have graduated from the program, with many going on to pursue further education or finding meaningful employment. For youth like Kris and Tanesha – two students from the most recent class who were featured in e4c's spring 2018 awareness campaign – the program represents a chance to plan for the future. You can find their stories on the e4c website at e4calberta.org/our-stories/.



Government of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada



"Everyone here is willing to talk and help out – even the customers are so friendly and kind."

—
Kris
Kids in the Hall youth



"I've gained a lot of cooking skills and social skills, made new friends and have done some teaching too."

—
Tanesha
Kids in the Hall youth



Getting an early start on success.



"She's become more social through the program. When we first came here, she hardly spoke to anyone, but now she's talking more and becoming more outgoing."

Muthiah and Nithya and daughter Priya
Participants in e4c Early Learning

Research tells us that the earlier children receive necessary supports and interventions, the better they do in school.

e4c Early Learning offers three distinct streams – Early Head Start, Early Education, and Head Start – for children from 0 to 5 years, with a goal of helping families access the kinds of early interventions that can help kids succeed in school and in life.

The Early Head Start stream serves children 3 years and under and involves a once-a-week parent group led by family support workers that focuses on a wide range of topics, including everything from parenting skills, and child development to financial literacy. "While the parents are in the support group, the children are in a play group, which helps them develop social skills and learn to share and be away from their parents for short periods of time," explains Zöe Beaulieu, Operations Manager with e4c Early Learning.

The Early Education stream serves children ages 2½ to 3½ years of age, and runs four half-days per week – Tuesday to Friday – throughout the school year. "We offer free transportation, so they come on the school bus and are in class with a certified teacher and two to three educational assistants," explains Zöe. Each family also has a family support worker, and depending on the needs of the child, a home educator who works with families to assist with achieving learning goals at home. Children also have access to a speech pathologist and occupational therapist if needed. "This really allows us to provide students with whatever supports they need to maximize the impact of early interventions."

The Head Start stream serves children 3½ to 5 years of age, offering the same supports and interventions as the Early Education stream, but with a focus on kindergarten readiness. Both the Early Education and the Head Start streams also include weekly parent support groups. All three streams are based on a learning-through-play philosophy and offer a nutritious snack to teach children and families about healthy food choices.

"We know that early interventions can have a dramatic impact on children and their families," says Zöe. "And these program streams help educate families on how to access those interventions, which is important because most families don't have that understanding especially if they are new to Canada."

One of the things that motivated Muthiah and Nithya to move to Canada, was being able to give their daughter Priya more educational opportunities. The chance to have her learn through play in a classroom setting was especially appealing and Priya has thrived in the e4c Early Learning environment. They also welcomed the chance to have her assessed by a speech pathologist and the reassurance that came with the assessment. Since Priya began the program, both parents have been impressed by the parent group offerings and the way the program works to holistically help and support the entire family.

Participation is partially based on income levels. Families that are interested in learning more about e4c Early Learning, including which program stream might be right for their child, can call 780.426.3666.



Supporting the journey.

Have you noticed transit or social media ads featuring e4c's awareness campaign? If not, go to e4calberta.org to see the stories of inspiring individuals.



The current awareness campaign, launched in May, features real people who have been involved in e4c programs. The campaign theme *I'm on my way.* speaks to each person's individual journey and the anticipation and optimism people feel as they move toward realizing their goals. The campaign's intention is to highlight the journey while setting the stage for what will happen next.

Three of the individuals featured in the campaign are either current participants or graduates of the e4c Kids in the Hall program, who have all experienced how the program can change lives and help with planning for the future. Future flights of the campaign will feature other Edmontonians, including a family involved in e4c Early Learning. e4c's goal with awareness campaigns is always to highlight the strength and resiliency of the people we walk alongside and to celebrate their successes.

e4c's goal with awareness campaigns is always to **highlight the strength and resiliency** of the people we walk alongside.



For close to 50 years, e4c has been helping Edmontonians get what they need to tackle life's challenges. e4c believes that people deserve to be listened to and respected, no matter what their circumstances or challenges. We see people and welcome them without judgment or bias.

e4c's vision is to limit, alleviate and ultimately eliminate poverty.



Seeing people not poverty.

e4calberta.org

  Follow Us

780.424.7543

9321 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5H 3T7

Yes

I/we want to support the work of e4c and make an impact on ending poverty in the community!

My/our gift supports the area of greatest need. Please direct my gift to _____

\$50 **\$100** **\$250** **\$500** Other \$ _____

To find out more about e4c's focus areas check out the website at e4calberta.org

Cheque (payable to e4c) Credit Card: Visa Mastercard

Name on Card: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____ CSV: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this completed form with your gift to: e4c, 9321 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton AB T5H 3T7

Name: _____
First Initial Last

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ P/C: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Gifts can also be made securely online through Canada Helps, by calling e4c Fund Development at 780.424.7543, or in person at e4c, 9321 Jasper Avenue.

Thank you for your support!

Charity Registration # 131558140RR0001