

e4cenvoy

Spring 2021

75%

of students surveyed in the School Nutrition Program shared that they don't bring food from home to eat at school, or do so inconsistently.

"The healthy food served at school is important to me because it helps other kids get nutrition, and I really care about my friends' good health."

—
Student via e4c School Nutrition Survey 2021

Over
97,400

healthy meals and snacks were served in e4c's School Nutrition Program during the month of March.

Photo taken pre-pandemic.



Seeing people not poverty.

Say Hello to Erin

Erin, a NSW at Belvedere School is a wife and mother of 2 girls, aged 8 and 13. She has been working with e4c's School Nutrition program for a total of 2.5 years.

"I love being a Nutrition Support Worker. I know that I'm providing a meal to a student who might have gone without. I am providing relief to a parent who may be a few days away from payday. I've been there, and let's be honest, who doesn't want pizza for breakfast once in awhile!"

Erin shares that getting students to try new things has been a challenge. She's adopted new ways to engage them, particularly during the pandemic, where choice can be a challenge.

"I used to do a "Did You Know" section on the bulletin board every week. This year is different, and I wanted to still give them a choice. I stepped outside of the box and created an online ordering menu. The menu has almost eliminated unwanted foods because the kids are still choosing what they like. The kids who place an order with two or more items, get their lunch in a paper bag with their name on it. I make extras to put in the bins for students who didn't order. The system works great for me!"

55% of students surveyed in e4c's annual School Nutrition survey reported trying new foods at school that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to try.

"I just love my job, every day."



Nutrition

In March, e4c's School Nutrition Program celebrated Nutrition Month! Throughout the month, programs and services celebrated in style – from an online BINGO game encouraging healthy habits, to sweaty Zoom workouts thanks to a third-party fundraiser by young entrepreneurs at Give and Get Sweaty!

\$42,393

raised during Nutrition Month

Thank you, Edmonton!

Bananas can improve your mood.

A banana has approximately 30% of your daily recommended intake of Vitamin B6, which helps the brain produce serotonin, a mood stabilizer. Serotonin impacts your motor skills and emotions, as well as the chemical that helps you sleep and digest food. Eating a banana can help relieve depression and anxiety by stimulating the serotonin levels in your body.

A "Did You Know" fact from
Erin's bulletin board

Celebrating Month in March!

This total would not have been possible without a few new donors and partners who have recognized the importance of feeding students here in Edmonton, including:

Oodle Noodle, for donating \$1,500 and 200lbs of prepared noodles and sauces to e4c programs and services.

Boston Pizza, Terwilligar for choosing e4c as their Charity of Choice during their Valentine's day campaign! e4c will continue to be their Charity of Choice throughout 2021.

And over \$1,000 raised by Give and Get Sweaty, two Edmonton fitness friends who combined their passion for health and fitness with their desire to support local causes, enhancing the well-being of their participants through physical activity while supporting the community by giving to those in need.

Thank you to our donor partners.



Turning Dining Out into Helping Out

Mealshare is a national organization that was created by two Albertans – Andrew Hall & Jeremy Bryant. Their vision continues to be ending youth hunger in our lifetime. In February, Mealshare approached e4c with the request of a partnership – to work together to provide meals to Edmonton students.

"We are really excited to be working with e4c! Both Mealshare and A&W wanted to ensure a local charity was involved in each community. Whenever we're looking for a new charity partner in an area, we look for community hubs that have great impact, and a food component to their offering – e4c definitely offer that!" – Shree Govindarajan, Mealshare

Mealshare partners with local restaurants and recently, A&W's national chain, to donate proceeds of Mealshare branded items selected by partner restaurants, to e4c. "It's a great way to get your food fix, with a taste of philanthropy too!"

The next time you or your family considers curbside pickup or takeout, see if your restaurant is partnered with Mealshare by visiting:

www.mealshare.ca/en/find-a-restaurant/#/edmonton



To date, Mealshare has provided over

853

meals to Edmonton students

Food Security

At the Root of What We Do

Food security has long been an important pillar of e4c's services. COVID-19 has raised awareness of the vulnerability of our food distribution systems, and many people are now looking for ways to increase the capacity of local food resources. Growing our own food is a fast, effective, and inexpensive means to this end, and our Community Garden is at the cusp of opening, welcoming green-thumbed Edmontonians into a serene greenspace at Alex Taylor School, a haven amongst the urban inner-city landscape.

Since its inception, the Community Garden has been a place of serenity, community, and an opportunity for gardeners to nurture fresh produce for themselves and their community. Additional garden space that isn't used for personal growing, is planted with potatoes and other vegetables for the Edmonton Food Banks' "Grow A Row" program, where the produce is harvested and donated in the fall.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, health authorities and government have stressed the importance of community and positive mental health. The Garden allows for members to gather at a safe social distance, and reconnect with the earth and one another.

We look forward to welcoming members of the community back to our garden space in the coming weeks.

To book a plot, email
krambow@e4calberta.org.

"It's such a grassy paradise amidst a concrete jungle."

—
Harmony, e4c Community
Garden Member



"My life is much better by participating in the e4c Community Garden. It allows me to keep active and relax by gardening and the opportunity to eat healthy organic foods. The garden gives me a connection to others in the community and friends, as we can talk and discuss gardening. I have had the ability to give fresh vegetables to neighbours in need which also helps me feel more connected to my community."

—
Karen, e4c Community
Garden Member

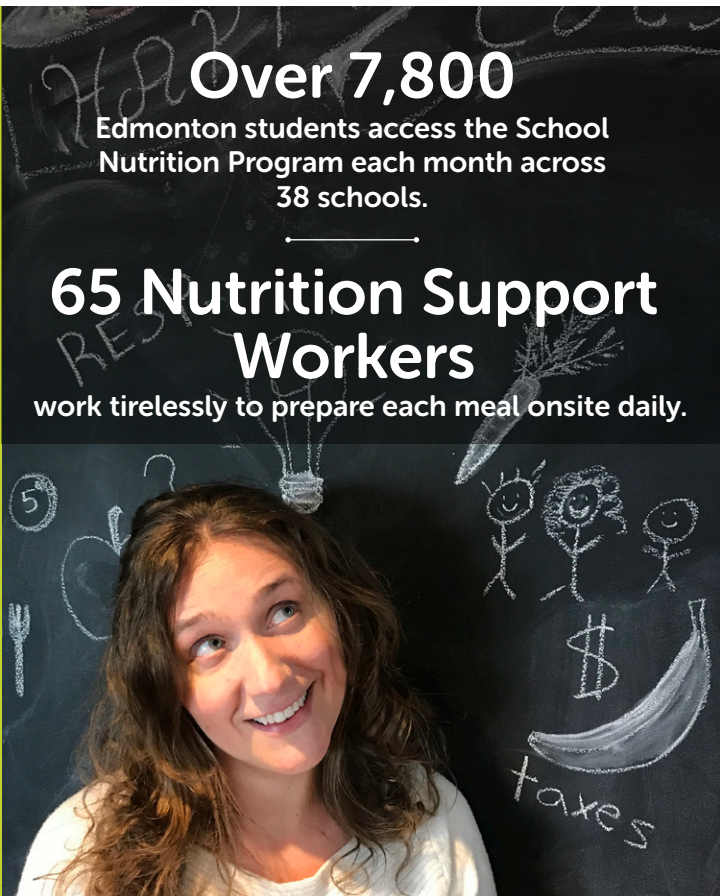
Welcoming Kelly Bickford

Community Services Manager

There's no doubt - Kelly is a go-getter, a mover, and a shaker. In her 8+ months with e4c, Kelly has grabbed the bull by the horns and launched Community Services into another dimension. Joining the e4c team in the middle of a pandemic is no easy feat. Kelly on-boarded in August, just in time to tackle pivoting the School Nutrition Program for a COVID-safe school season.

Safety was paramount in considering how the program would launch. "We looked at every challenge as an opportunity. We know that children rely on the program and nutrition to support their ability to concentrate in school, and to self-regulate. We knew we had to be adaptable, agile, precise and thoughtful when looking at everything from delivery to team support during these challenging times." Kelly has demonstrated the value of trust-based relationships within her programs, creating an open dialogue and inviting the Nutrition Support Workers to share their insight, and expertise.

A self-proclaimed 'farm kid,' Kelly values hard work and contributing to the community she is a part of. "My grandma was transformative in my life and really helped shape me for a life of service. From a young age, she carted me to and from charity events and work she did in the community. From there, I went on to volunteer in my community, in health care, politics, and other avenues where I could shape the community." These opportunities drove her education, leading her to major in sociology and go on to obtain an MBA to contribute to organizations at a higher level. "I've discovered that my business acumen has really allowed me to develop and enhance programs. As a certified change management consultant, I know that people can get anxious when they are faced with uncertainty and change."



"I've always been connected to non-profit work. I want to wake up, and be passionate. It's something very rewarding to me," shares Kelly. "I saw the posting, and it spoke to me – combining two of my passions, Financial Empowerment and Food Security." In just eight months, Kelly has raised the profile of the need for financial empowerment programming in the Edmonton community. "So many people pass over Financial Empowerment because it's not a sexy program – no one wants to talk about things like taxes, RESPs, savings accounts. But Financial Empowerment works. Women face many systemic barriers that prevent them from achieving financial freedom; they're one of the main barriers holding women in poverty. We know that financial freedom can have a high transformative impact on women and their families. I'd like to be a part of that." Kelly has a unique perspective in understanding the value of financial empowerment work. As a single mother from a young age, she attributes her drive to succeed to wanting to provide a better life for her daughter.

"You'll never find a stronger woman than one that is clawing her way out of poverty for herself and her kids."



Tax Time is Ticking



In 2021, we have issued \$4.3 million in credits and refunds back into the community in the first 60 days of the Make Tax Time Pay program.

e4c's Make Tax Time Pay clinics continue to offer phone-based tax filing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, Make Tax Time Pay is offering supports in over 28 languages, with support from over 85 volunteers across Alberta. Thanks to virtual filing, we were able to expand our volunteer recruitment province-wide, with filers supporting Edmontonians from as far away as Calgary and Lethbridge.

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) is presenting challenges for many Albertans, particularly during tax filing season. Make Tax Time Pay continues to file taxes past the April 30 tax deadline, and has launched a CERB hotline for community members to call in with no obligation, and ask any question they may have regarding CERB and the impact that not filing their taxes may have on credits and benefits.



Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tagalog, Nepali, French, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Thai, Chinese, African (Igbo), Dutch, Vietnamese, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian, Russian, Portuguese, Korean, Amharic, Tigrigna, Yoruba, German, Urdu, Marathi, Telugu, and English

Why File Taxes



Tax filing directly impacts the financial situations of all Edmontonians. Make Tax Time Pay supports individuals to access and apply for credits and benefits that can help them build a financial safety net, including:

- Canadian Child Benefit
- Carbon Tax Credit
- GST Return
- Applications navigation for community supports like the Leisure Access Pass

As well, not filing taxes may directly impact a client's ability to receive social supports like Alberta Works and AISH. Many organizations require a current Notice of Assessment in order to avoid potential interruption in benefits.

Tax Clinics across Canada report seeing a 65% decrease in clients accessing tax services. Pandemic-related economic stressors, CERB concerns, and fears around owing money are deterring many people from filing taxes this year.



At time of publication, over 2004 tax returns have been filed by MTTP.

Vanessa's Story

MTTP

"I came to Canada and didn't know what was required to do taxes in Canada. Once I connected to MTTP, I felt a sense of peace."

Vanessa and her husband arrived in Canada in 2016 from Colombia, for her husband to pursue his PhD. At the time, Vanessa was pregnant and searching for new beginnings in Canada. An accountant with an MBA in Finance, Vanessa was no stranger to taxes and numbers. "But coming to Canada, it was tough. We were really looking for a better quality of life for our family. I had to rely on the community for support on how to navigate services and supports."

Vanessa connected with the Make Tax Time Pay program, who supported her in filing their taxes for the first time. "I was really comfortable, it was a really professional experience. The supports and navigations

I got from the Make Tax Time Pay program as well as the Bissell Centre helped me cover my baby's expenses, and basic living costs. We were able to make ends meet. Because I was 8 months pregnant then, although I wanted to work, I couldn't. The tax filing and access to benefits really helped improve our quality of life."

Vanessa shared strategies that she used to navigate her new home included reaching out to as many resources and opportunities available. "You really have to take a minute and look – what are you going to buy? How much? How often. We used the Food Bank for the first time, which was new to us. We did a lot of price comparing in those early days. It helps to set a financial goal – you will think about it and work within those parameters. But it's tough."

Four years later, Vanessa is giving back to the community as a volunteer tax filer with the same organization that helped her when she arrived. "My daughter, she's a toddler now. She's able to access Early Learning programming, daycare, and the swimming pool thanks to the Leisure Access Pass. Giving back – it's a cycle. Someone helps you, and you help someone else in need. Together, we can make a difference."

Watch Vanessa's Story Here.



Profiling the Faces of MTTP

Biniam is a new volunteer at MTTP in 2021. As an accountant, he's no stranger to taxes. "I've been doing taxes for 3 years in Canada," he shares. "I've done taxes for businesses, and when I worked at the bank, I did their taxes too." He loves volunteering, and shared that getting to know the people is the best part. "I love doing taxes for so many different people!"

Bukola is also a new volunteer to the program, and shares that the pandemic has created many different opportunities for her. "[During COVID], I've been doing a lot of cooking, native dishes from Nigeria that otherwise I wouldn't have tried." MTTP has been a rewarding experience, sharing that her biggest success as a new filer was supporting a woman to navigate her tax situation. "She wasn't sure if she should file as a dependent. I calculated her separately, and then did it all over again with a dependent, and she was so happy to learn the difference!"



2004 Tax Returns filed by April 30 Tax Filing deadline

A big thank you to all volunteers who continue to work behind the scenes during such challenging times. MTTP would not be the success it has been without their efforts!

Over 4.5 million dollars
in credits and benefits returned to the community

84 volunteers
from across Alberta

\$2,273.91
average return per client

Spring into Summer with...

THE HALLWAY
CAFÉ + TAKEAWAY



16 youth

active in the
Hallway Café program

86 youth

registered in
Fresh Start School

Do you follow the Hallway Café on social media?
Check them out @thehallwaycafe on Instagram,
Facebook, Twitter and TikTok for Take & Bake meal
options (Father's Day is around the corner!), menu
launches, updates from our youth, and more!



The Hallway Café has a patio! Despite COVID-19 restrictions, our café continues to offer fresh, local fare prepared by youth. Visit the café and enjoy a scrumptious summer salad, or an iced coffee and a scone in the sunshine! Or take your treats to go and check out the multiple art installations located throughout Edmonton's downtown, when it's safe to do so again.

Your support through curbside pickup, Skip the Dishes, or visiting us on our patio helps support youth in Edmonton work through the Hallway Café program, an experiential learning opportunity in a teaching kitchen.

All dishes (and coffees!) ordered in the Hallway Café are prepared by youth in our program.



Hallway Café on



Collaboration is Key Working together can make a bigger impact in our community!

Together, with your help and key partners like Mealshare, we are providing morning meals, snacks and lunches to thousands of students in 38 of Edmonton area schools, supporting their immediate educational and social development milestones and enhancing students' long term health and social outcomes.

Supporting our community through tax preparation ensures thousands of Edmontonians have access to benefits such as GST, and the Canadian Child Benefit, giving them the opportunity to meet their shelter, food and other basic needs.

You can help:

\$25 feeds a student for 10 days

\$50 provides a student with a month
of nutritional supports

\$100 purchases a nutritional snack
for a classroom for a month

**Become
a monthly
donor** Your gift of \$25 per month becomes
\$300 in a year! That could purchase
120 days of meals for a student!

Thank you for walking alongside us on this journey.

We understand that these are challenging days for all of us, and sometimes a financial gift is not possible. Please consider sharing this Envoy with a family or friend, to learn more about the work being done in their community. While donors, stakeholders, and community supporters have many options available to them in terms of agencies and organizations to support, we are thankful for those that continue to choose to walk alongside us on this journey. Thank you!

Together, we are changing lives and growing communities.

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.

e4calberta.org

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Seeing people not poverty.