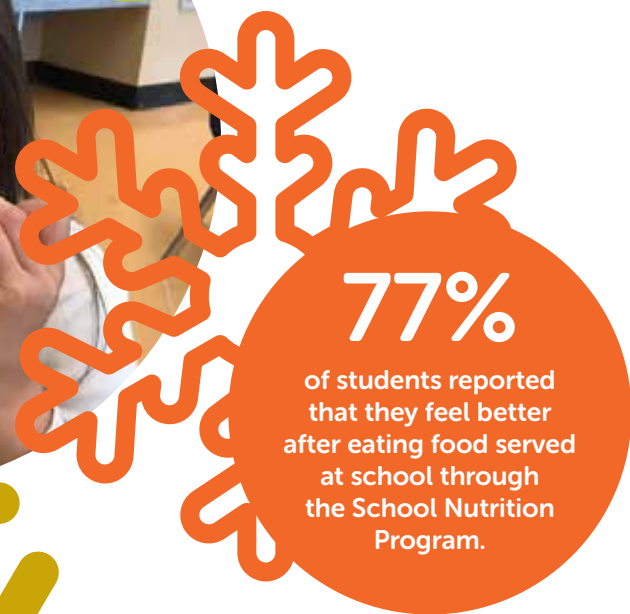
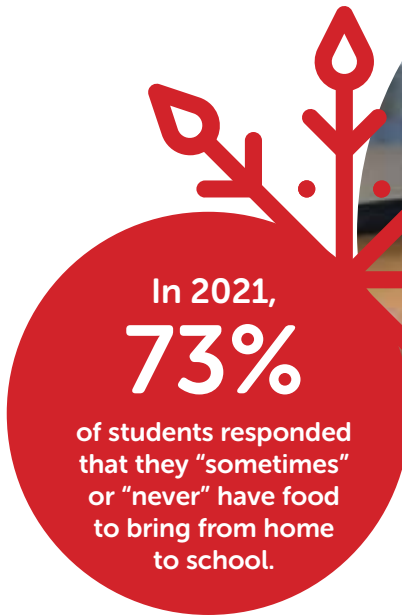
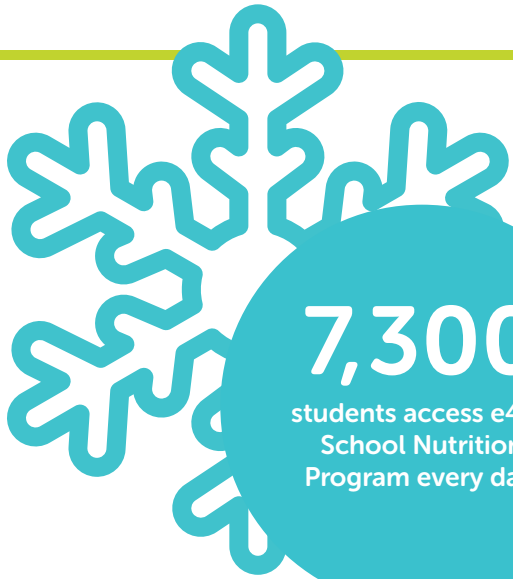


e4c envoy

Winter 2021/2022



Seeing people not poverty.



Season's Greetings

2021 has been quite a year. At this time last year most of us had renewed hope that this year would be different than 2020, instead 2021 in some ways has felt even harder than 2020. COVID-19 is still a daily reality, mental health is a struggle for more and more people, and at times it can feel like we are more divided than ever before. These things you know, you face them each day, so instead of telling you more about the many challenges students in Edmonton face each day I want to share something else. I want to give you good news, hope and optimism as a small holiday gift:

In spite of all of the challenges we have faced this school year the **School Nutrition Program** has still been available to over 7,300 kids each day in 39 schools.

We have updated our menu. This school year it is more multicultural, has increased the options for allergies and restrictions (e.g. gluten free and Halal), and features common foodbank items (e.g. black beans) to help students learn new ways of using shelf stable items.

In 2021, the program has made strides to implement the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We have launched a partnership with Tee Pee Treats, a local indigenous owned business, to provide whole wheat baked bannock to our students each week. The School Program Coordinators have taken Indigenous Canada at the University of Alberta, and our training days start with meaningful exercises and reflections in truth and reconciliation, moving beyond treaty or land acknowledgements as a "check box exercise".

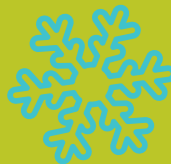
We continue to focus on hiring from within the community wherever possible allowing us to broaden the reach of our poverty reduction strategies. Training for Nutrition Support Workers (NSWs) provides micro credentials, work experience, digital literacy, and other resume building skills and experience. This year we have expanded our NSW training to also include financial empowerment; expanding our anti-poverty work to our employees working on the front line of food insecurity. This training empowers them to use this information in their work, family, and community.

As 2021 draws to a close, on behalf of all of us in the e4c School Nutrition Program, I want to thank you sincerely for your support. It mattered, it made a difference, and I hope knowing that brings you renewed strength and optimism for the New Year ahead of us.

—

Kelly Bickford

Manager, Community and School Based Programs



The Impact of Rising Food Costs on Children & Families



Lately, we have all experienced the rising costs of living – from filling up our cars with gasoline, buying our groceries, or purchasing a bus pass.

These costs are felt tenfold by the children and families we support. We already know that healthy, nutritious food is expensive, and less accessible to those on a fixed income. Food insecurity is expected to intensify as we head into 2022, and the costs of food and living will continue to rise.

Canada's Food Price Report indicated that a family of four will see an increase in food costs by about \$900 in comparison to 2021 costs. Social assistance benefits and wages have not kept up with the rising cost of living, which creates less purchasing power and greater instances of food insecurity, including an over-reliance on food banks.

Food insecurity continues to be at the forefront of our work, and the 4.4% increase in food inflation has impacted our per-student pricing, rising to \$3.25 per student, per day, up from \$2.50 – a cost that has been consistent since 2016.

Couple the rising food costs with increasing rental

costs, the rising costs of utilities, and the lack of affordable housing within Edmonton, and we are witnessing a perfect storm when it comes to mounting pressures on low-income families trying to make their budgets stretch. The 2021 Hunger Count released by Food Banks Canada indicate that Albertans' food bank use rose by 30% in 2021, making Alberta one of the highest food bank users in Canada. The main reason? "Much of the increase can be attributed to a greater number of people requiring more frequent visits to the food bank because of the combined impacts of low-income and the rising costs of living."

These external pressures have been witnessed within our programs. The School Nutrition program has seen an increase in use towards the end of the month, a trend that indicates that parents need a little extra support before their end of month pay period. The universal accessibility of the School Nutrition program both destigmatizes accessing a school food program, as well as continues to offer support when parents need it the most.



In 2022, food insecurity will be a big issue as Canadians grapple with rising prices. Food programs may face increased demand along with higher costs for food, and food retailers may see increased rates of theft."

—
Canada's 2022 Food Price Report



The Shift to Morning Meal

Many of us don't think twice about grabbing a cup of coffee, a piece of fruit, and a slice of toast before starting our workday. Since we were children, we have heard breakfast being dubbed "the most important meal of the day," and there are facts behind those offhanded comments made by parents to encourage us to drink our orange juice, or finish our oatmeal.

If we stop to think about it, the term breakfast means breaking the overnight fast. By the time we wake up in the mornings, we have gone at least 7 hours without eating. Our bodies need the nutritional supports from a morning meal to replenish our energy reserves, and to begin to energize our minds and bodies for the day ahead.

Breakfast foods are rich in key nutrients like calcium, iron, B vitamins, and fiber, according to the Canada Food Guide. Breakfast provides a large portion of your day's total nutritional intake. According to Alberta Health Services' *Nutrition Activities for Classrooms*, children who eat breakfast are more likely to meet their recommended daily intakes of vitamins and minerals than those who don't.

e4c has worked closely with our 39 school partners to identify which schools and classrooms are best suited to transition to a morning meal program, which helps children successfully prepare for the day ahead. In a survey to teachers and principals in Spring 2021, 97% of respondents reported that their students have improved attention and concentration after consuming a meal. We know that when you're hungry, it's harder to think straight, which can result in an increase in behaviors, acting out, or other challenges that exist simply because a student is hungry. In fact, 91% of teachers reported that students have improved behavior after eating a meal provided by e4c.

It just makes sense to provide a meal at the beginning of the school day, in order to meet the nutritional needs of students, setting them up for success to learn and feel their best.



As many of the students struggle with being fed breakfast in the morning, they come to school with that in mind. They know they will fill their belly as soon as they come to school. Two students in my class in particular depend on breakfast here every day. They would be so hungry if it was not available. A morning meal promotes regular attendance and happy children!"

—
Teacher, St. Theresa of Calcutta



Collaboration With the Hallway Café

With the transition of many of our schools to a morning meal program, over the summer months we worked hard to review, and enhance our morning meal menu options. In collaboration with the Hallway Café, we created and trialed a number of new offerings, which were rolled out to great success in September, including now-staples like:



The Hallway Café was critical in helping us design, trial, and create these offerings, as well as produce a universal recipe book with portion sizes, photos, and information to be shared with our Nutrition Support Workers across all 39 schools. Many of the beautiful food photos you see throughout these pages are photos included in this recipe book.



Building Community Through Collaboration

e4c's mission is to change lives and grow communities. In light of the national refocusing on Truth and Reconciliation, the 94 Calls to Action, and in support of the cultural integration and choices of our menu options for the School Nutrition Program, we began to search for an Indigenous restauranteur that could support bringing Indigenous foods into schools supported by the School Nutrition Program.

As if by chance, Indigenous restaurant and catering business, Tee Pee Treats operates out of St. Luke's Anglican Church, just down the road from e4c's Elizabeth House. Since September, Tee Pee Treats has been providing bannock once per week to schools connected to our School Nutrition Program. Like e4c, Tee Pee Treats believes in using food as a way to create community.

Curtis Cardinal, the owner of Tee Pee Treats, knows the importance of nutritional programming and programs like School Nutrition. As a young boy with a difficult upbringing and significant loss, he experienced a path of addiction and homelessness. From a young age, Curtis has found connection in the kitchen – from memories of being a young child learning to cook from his mother, and by using food as a gateway to finding forgiveness and serving others in the inner city. He began serving bannock out of a backpack at powwows in 2010, before launching Tee Pee Treats a few years later.



I think it's so important to connect to kids in schools. We offer a whole wheat bannock, it's a healthier option for children. It's really important that kids in schools see Indigenous foods out there, made by Indigenous cooks. It's important for our foods to get out into community, to help build representation. For so many of these kids, their journey is just beginning. It's important to have adequate nutrition so that you can focus on yourself, and who you can become."

Curtis knows firsthand the impacts of rising food costs and the ability to provide healthy and nutritious food options. He shares that food in general is expensive, let alone nutritious foods. As a business owner, it's hard to balance the costs of our products and remain competitive while offering high quality food. The uncertainty of the pandemic has doubled these challenges. As a result, Tee Pee Treats, has had to reduce their hours of operation, and revert to a curbside preorder and pickup model, that can make business challenging. Because of this new partnership with e4c's School Nutrition Program, Curtis and his team have kept their doors open.



You're paying our utility bills. It's a huge thing for me. We're still going because of you guys. I can't say enough good things about this program and the impact that it has."



Since 2017, Alberta Milk has donated \$142,000 to e4c's School Nutrition Programs, designated for the purchase of milk and dairy products; and donated \$17,000 for the 2021-2022 school year. Alberta Milk shares e4c's sentiments that children with full tummies continue to learn better.

Alberta Milk is a nonprofit organization that represents Alberta's dairy farmers. While many farmers have questioned why they make donations to urban organizations like e4c and Brown Bagging For Calgary's Kids, Jaime, Marketing Manager for Alberta Milk says the answer is simple. "It's about being able to have the largest impact on the kids who need it most."

This year, milk products purchased include yogurt tubes, sour cream, and individually packaged milk. We hope to host a volunteer group in the future once COVID restrictions are lifted.

Alberta Milk produced the following video (scan the QR code to watch) to help raise awareness around the importance of nutrition in children.

**We couldn't do what we do without the support of the community.
Thank you!**



Lisa's Story



I have truly enjoyed being able to provide food security! I have been able to get students excited about food and teach them healthier food choices. With the Morning Nutrition Program, my creative options have exploded!"

Lisa has worked with the School Nutrition Program since 2017. This is her story of her journey, in her words, as a Nutrition Support Worker at Homesteader School in northeast Edmonton.

For the last 3 years of working for E4C, I have truly enjoyed being able to provide food security! I have been able to get students excited about food and teach them healthier food choices. With the morning nutrition program, my creative options have exploded!

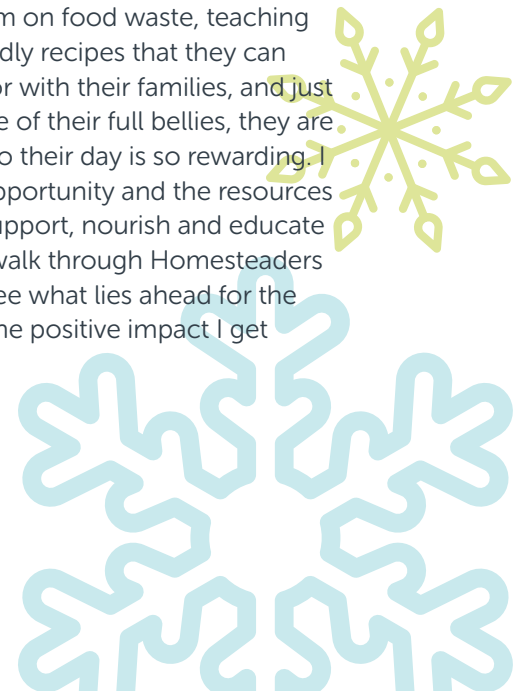
I am now able to serve many different kinds of foods from all food groups that some students had never seen or heard of. We have tried mangos, pineapple, watermelon, kiwi, grapes, melons, grapefruit, all of the different kinds of fruit that many families consider a luxury. I ask the kids to tell me what they want to try and I offer to make them on 'Try Day Friday!' I got many different recommendations!

Since launching this initiative, I have made hash browns, eggs, French toast, quiche, pizza bagels, turkey sausage, turkey bacon, egg and cheese wraps, fruit pizzas, tuna pita bites, and the list goes on and on. One student even gave me his own fruit smoothie recipe! Just random things he thought would taste good all blended together. He even chose to put spinach in it, and no one knew the wiser. All the students were shocked learning we snuck a vegetable in it! We made it and it became known as the 'Sam smoothie. The morning nutrition program started to become like a family!

Students who normally wouldn't sit with other students were now sitting with someone new every day, just getting to know them. We play music and have the fireplace crackling on the smart board in the winter, and a Caribbean beach theme every now and then, to pretend we're all on vacation.

In pre-pandemic times, students are also responsible for rinsing their dishes, and placing their dishes in the appropriate bin. This gives students a sense of helpfulness and responsibility. I even had one parent say to me that their child had started helping out with the dishes at home because, 'that's what we do at breakfast club.'

Since working with e4c, I have truly enjoyed sharing my knowledge of different foods. To be able to give students an experience trying new foods, educating them on food waste, teaching them easy child-friendly recipes that they can create on their own or with their families, and just knowing that because of their full bellies, they are having a better start to their day is so rewarding. I am grateful for the opportunity and the resources provided by e4c to support, nourish and educate all the students that walk through Homesteaders door. I can't wait to see what lies ahead for the program, and I love the positive impact I get to support.



The Impact of School Nutrition

57%

of students who access the School Nutrition Program do not have healthy food to bring from home.

97%

of students report an improved mood after enjoying food from the School Nutrition Program.

\$3.25

The price of nutritional supports for one student in the School Nutrition Program.

A youth experiencing homelessness attending a school supported through the *All In For Youth initiative*, is not only on track to graduate this year, but is looking for opportunities to mentor kids in their community as a way to give back.

**Over
\$320,075**

was raised by generous donors in the community, with over 75 new donors supporting our program.

Since we began our partnership with Mealshare Canada in June 2021, over \$8,907 has been raised through the "Buy a Meal, Give a Meal" program at partner restaurants throughout Edmonton.

**Over
932,000**

meals were served in schools during the 2020-2021 School Year, despite multiple shutdowns due to COVID-19.



Winter is Here



While WEAC is a safe haven and a shelter from the cold for 46+ womxn, we know that there are still many individuals experiencing homelessness who continue to sleep rough in community. With another Edmonton winter upon us, we are encouraging everyone to stay vigilant when they are out and about in their neighbourhoods and communities. If you see a person in need of supports, dial 211 + 3 to be connected to an outreach team. This team operates 24/7 and can support individuals to get to a safe shelter. If a person is in medical distress, please dial 911.

The winter season is accompanied by dropping temperatures and an increasing need for winter supplies like mittens, winter jackets, and thicker pants like leggings and sweatpants. To simplify the support process, we have created a [wishlist on Amazon](#) which will allow you to provide warm, winter gear and essential items to a womxn in need in our community, from the comfort of your home.

We are once again accepting In-Kind donations on a limited as-needed basis, provided that items are freshly laundered and in very good condition. To inquire as to whether or not we are able to accept your items, please email Marissa Halvorson, Development Coordinator at mhalvorson@e4calberta.org or by phone at 780.424.7543 ext. 114.



Amazon Wish List

This Giving Season, Consider Giving a Gift to e4c



Together, we can continue to build a stronger community – one where we can be here to provide education and support to a mom, so that she is empowered to make the best financial decisions for herself and her family; to give a womxn a chance to rest and regroup at WEAC, and to provide nutritional supports to students across 39 Edmonton area schools.

This is just a small slice of the impact that you are creating in our communities.

Your gift of:

\$25 Purchases a warm pair of loungewear for a womxn at WEAC.

\$50 Purchases warm winter clothing.

\$100 Provides 30 days of nutritious lunches or morning meals for an Edmonton student.

\$300 Purchases bannock for an Edmonton school from Tee Pee Treats.



Make your donation before December 31st to be eligible to receive a tax receipt for the 2021 tax year. For example, making a donation of \$250.00 could have an impact worth \$250.00 while only spending \$175.00 (after receiving a \$75.00 tax credit).

We understand that this year is challenging 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 building a stronger community.

Wishing you and your family a healthy and happy holiday season, and best wishes for the New Year!

For over 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

  Follow Us

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Seeing people not poverty.