

e4c envoy

WINTER/SPRING 2024

9,200

students access
e4c's School
Nutrition
Program each day



**"Carrot muffins are my favourite because
they help me think the best!"**

Angela* 7, Balwin School



The Need for Nutrition

When students have access to nutritious foods, they can focus their minds on learning in the classroom. Their bodies are fueled for the day, and it gives them the freedom to play, grow, and interact positively with their teachers and peers.

The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth shares that: **“Children and youth have different nutritional needs than adults. Proper nutrition is especially important during childhood and adolescence to support optimal physical, cognitive, and social growth and development... [and] develop healthy eating habits now and for the future.”**

The current costs of food have made nutritious food a luxury item for many. Previously affordable items like apples and milk are priced at levels that many families simply cannot afford.

According to Dalhousie University’s 2024 Canada’s Food Price Report, “Canadians are reducing their expenditures on groceries either by reducing their quantity or quality of food they are buying or by substituting less expensive alternatives. Canadians are facing additional pressures including higher costs for rent and utilities... all of which are possible contributors to reduced food expenditures.”

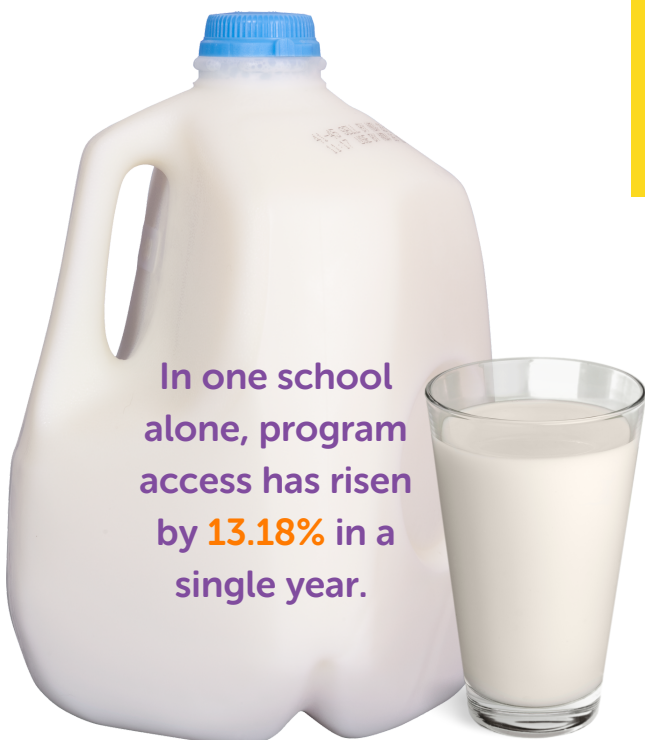
What does this reality look like for families? A family of 4 will experience a total grocery expenditure increase of \$701.79 in 2024.

Over the past three years, Canadians have experienced a 4.5% increase in overall grocery prices, with food inflation hitting a 40-year high in 2022.



These increases – felt by everyone – are directly impacting choices made at the grocery check-out counter, and thus, nutritional choices as well.

e4c’s School Nutrition Program fills the gaps between home and the classroom by supporting over nine thousand students in Edmonton schools each day. Currently, e4c’s School Nutrition program is the largest program in Alberta, and the numbers of children accessing nutritional supports have increased in relation to the pressures and grocery price increases that we are seeing in the community.



In one school alone, program access has risen by 13.18% in a single year.

74%

of students reported that it was easier to concentrate in the classroom after eating.

– 2022 e4c School Nutrition Program survey



The Breakfast Impact

As food prices increase, morning meals are more cost-effective to accommodate the rising demand experienced by the program, while maintaining high nutritional value in accordance to both Canada's Food Guide and the Alberta Nutritional Guidelines for Children and Youth. Additionally, through feedback and ongoing conversations with our partner schools, we heard that behaviors and attendance were challenging prior to the lunch meal offered by the program, indicating that food was directly correlated to some of these challenges.

Our program is shifting from providing lunches during the school day to a morning meal over the past three years for a variety of reasons.

“

I love making food plans, encouraging students to try new things, and sharing my knowledge. Without the program I never would have met all the nice students and staff. I will always love giving my time to the community.”

– Farida, Nutrition Support Worker

What's In A Meal?

A morning meal may consist of an egg patty & cheese on an English muffin, with fruit like navel oranges, bananas, or cantaloupe, and dairy products like milk or yogurt. Menus are created to reflect the cultural needs of the school community, which has a twofold impact. Firstly, the students get to try new foods that may not be familiar to them – like a falafel wrap, or naan breads, hummus, and vegetables. For newcomer students, westernized foods may be unfamiliar to them, and despite the program being universally accessible, they may not engage due to the unfamiliarity of the offerings. By providing offerings that are reflective of different cultures and global foods, the program promotes nutritional awareness, healthy choices, and inclusion.

As a result, teachers have reported an increase in attendance, and a reduction in behaviours stemming from hunger. In providing nutritionally balanced morning meals, we are providing the energy, vitamins, and food supports to set a student up for the entirety of the school day.





Want to make a School Nutrition-inspired falafel wrap at home?

This delicious recipe was put together by Dan Brasilerio, Head Chef at the Hallway Cafe, and is the perfect addition to your morning meal, lunch box, or dinner rotation.

Feelin' Falafael

The Grocery List:

Falafel

- 15 oz can Chickpeas (washed & drained)
- 2 Tbsp Parsley, chopped
- 2 Tbsp Cilantro, chopped
- ½ White Onion, chopped
- 2 Tsp Cumin, ground
- 2 Tbsp Lemon, juice
- 3 Tbsp Chickpea Flour
- Salt and Pepper to Taste

Tzatziki

- ½ cup Cucumber, grated
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 Tbsp Lemon Juice
- ½ Tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 Tbsp Dill
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Wrap

- Chopped onion, lettuce, tomato
- Whole wheat wrap or pita

The How-To:

Falafel

- Add the chickpeas to a food processor and pulse until chunky.
- Add in the parsley, cilantro, garlic, onion, cumin, lemon juice, chickpea flour, salt, and red pepper flakes, and pulse until all the ingredients are minced, but not pureed smooth.
- Season with salt to taste. Place mixture in fridge.
- Heat the oil or your air fryer to 375 F.
- Remove the falafel mixture from the fridge and roll them into balls the size of a ping-pong ball
- Add to the hot oil, but be careful not to crowd them.
- Cook until golden brown, about 3 minutes.

Tzatziki

- Place the grated cucumber on a towel and gently squeeze out excess water.
- In a medium bowl, combine the cucumber, yogurt, lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, salt, dill, and mint, if using.
- Chill until ready to use.

Assemble all ingredients into a wrap or pita pocket with toppings of your choosing. Serve warm or chilled.

Not a chef?

Pop by The Hallway at 1 Sir Winston Churchill Square to order a Falafel Wrap to-go, or see how your variation measures up!

The Unique Ingredient

63 Youth

began Employment Readiness

12 Youth

graduated from High School

Imagine an environment where you have the opportunity to collaborate with your peers; a workplace where your creativity is sparked by a new idea every day. An educational space where the skills you're learning sets you up for an exciting journey.

These are all ingredients that make The Hallway Cafe unique.

Youth in the program expand their knowledge by transitioning between specific kitchen specialties (visible from every table in the cafe) that range from the service line, to bread and baking. They learn from subject matter experts in the industry while also bringing their own experiences and preferences to the table, and the menu.

“

The youth impact our menu choices. They choose things that they want to create, and get excited about; things that they want to try, and what they want to learn how to make. It also makes it easier to promote the product to our guests, because they can relate to it.”

– Daniel, Head Chef & Instructor, The Hallway Cafe

Recently, the youth have crafted everything from a Raspberry Mocha, to handcrafted chocolates, with flavours like Espresso and Salted Caramel Truffle.

While the youth are building skills in the kitchen and hospitality sector, part of their success is due to the high-quality instruction and supports they receive from Daniel and the rest of the Hallway team.. Hired in the spring of last year, Dan has already made a big impact.

No stranger to the kitchen, he's spent the last 20 years of his culinary career exploring his passion for creativity, trying new things, and learning as much as he can, working in creative arenas from fine dining, elite golf courses, and instructing at NAIT in the culinary program.

Doing things differently, seeing things click for people, and the lightbulb moments when people understand the 'why' is what brings him to work each day.

“

They're all willing to learn. I want to show them options for what they can do with their future and skills that they can take away from the program. There are so many life skills that transfer over from working in a kitchen. From knowing how to break down a [whole] chicken to how to bake bread, they're learning life skills to build resiliency, which is especially important in today's environment.”

No matter how small, life skills make a huge difference in the lives of those we serve. At The Hallway, youth are encouraged to build up these skills, but also to explore their creative side, too.

Cre(atering) Opportunities

“

We're proud of what we can create here. Anyone can heat up something out of a bag, you know. Like what you see in other restaurants. But it takes skills to do what we're doing. Creating things from scratch, we're really doing everything here.”

- Chris*, Age 20, The Hallway Cafe



When you first meet Crystal*, a quiet youth, she seems shy and overwhelmed. Meeting for the first time, it can be challenging to get more than a few words out at a time. But that's something she's working on, she shares, and it's something that she's challenging herself on when she's working the till or taking customer orders. But it's really the catering side of the business that she loves the most.

“

I'm really good at multitasking,” she shares with a laugh. “I've been working on catering orders a lot, and I'm pretty good at making tons of sandwiches! But it's more that you're busy, you know. It's something to focus on and you want to give them that experience.”

While Crystal isn't sure what she'd like to do after she graduates from the program, she shares that she's learning a lot and that she's open to trying anything. “I've really enjoyed working at the different stations and building my skills, especially in catering side.”

The Hallway Cafe has expanded their catering business since 2023, increasing their menu options and hosting a variety of events within the space to coach youth on different methods of service, and sharing the potential for the space itself.

306 Youth

supported through Hallway outreach in 2023.

THE HALLWAY
CAFÉ + TAKEAWAY



Catering, Please!

Interested in booking The Hallway Cafe and Takeaway for your next event? Maybe you'd just like to see a menu? We'd love to hear from you!

Contact us at:
catering@hallway.cafe

A Place To Call Home



In 2023, WEAC supported and diverted over 1,133 women in Edmonton through shelter and diversion services to more appropriate resources.

Of these, 92 women were successfully housed in the community.

Since 2018, the team at WEAC has been working towards a transformed space that breaks the cycles of chronic and acute homelessness in women within Edmonton by engaging in housing-focused conversations, and offering wraparound supports.

“Our team focuses on recognizing the small successes. Once you capitalize on those - even taking the first step to come to the shelter in the first place - you can help to support people to get to a place where they’re ready to take those big steps,” shares Annie Brandt, WEAC Program Manager.



Supporting the women to recognize that they have done some incredible things with their lives, despite everything that has been thrown at them and they’re still here. That is worth something.”

The ability to articulate these successes and milestones comes in the form of visualized goal setting based on the woman’s unique goals, needs, and desires known as the Home Star™.

The Home Star™ focuses on placing importance on the woman’s perspective and priorities, mirroring the person-centered approach e4c takes in our work, and focuses on a strengths-based approach: things that are going well, and those that are more challenging.

The tool measures personal changes across ten areas of life, including money management, living situations, personal understanding of health, trust, emotions and relationships, among others.

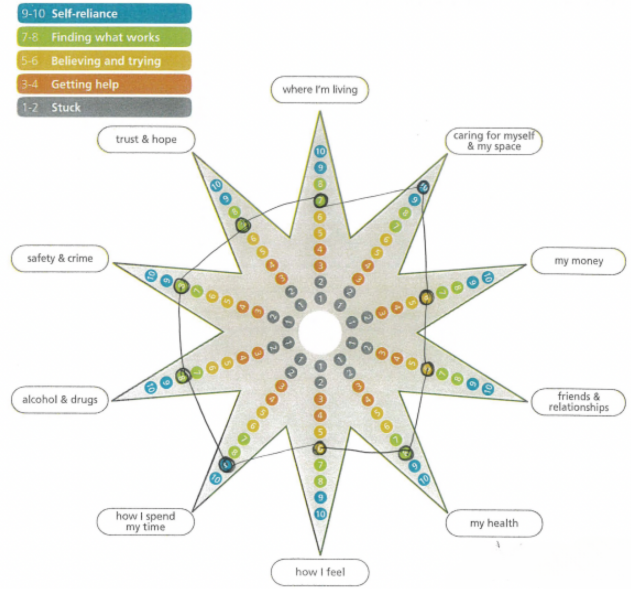
Home Star™ helps to break down big and overwhelming goals into tangible and achievable, personalized steps that build upon gradual successes, and celebrate those during times of struggle.

“Something as small as picking up the phone and calling an income support worker is huge progress for some of our women,” shares Annie. “This helps to recognize and celebrate those milestones.”

Each woman entering WEAC co-completes a Star with their care worker, which helps to empower them as seeing themselves as an active agent and valuable source of knowledge in their own lives. And it’s demonstrating results.

“

It's a tool used to prompt conversations around recognizing how successful you have been and where you're really stuck. Are you stuck, or are you just tired? Because both are fair. ”



A sample Home Star from WEAC. Names and personal identifiers redacted

The Home Star™ tool works well within WEAC’s model, because it encourages those life skills and shows growth in real time. The tool recognizes the specific barriers that women face to staying housed long-term, makes it easier to support their needs as they work towards their journeys. This support is rooted based in continuous and regular follow-up assessments; with each participant having their own copy of the goal plan with a star graph so they can track their progress and see the positive results as they go.

Connections are a huge part of that support, not only with staff, but with the addition of wrap-around professionals, including Registered Social Workers, Licensed Practical Nurses, and an on-site Nurse Practitioner to help women navigate their personal health care.

“It’s been a game changer.”

The cost of medication is typically a common barrier to people dealing with their mental health, and the teams have come up with really creative ways to meet women’s needs based on what they can afford, which has made an insurmountable difference.

Social workers and housing workers are other integral members of the team that help women navigate more complex cases. No two situations are the same, and the supports required for each and every individual can vary depending on the barriers they face and their goals.

WEAC seeks to set women up with all the tools they need to embrace their potential, to make decisions for themselves that they’re proud of, and to tap into the confidence that they’ve always had inside.

“I see amazing staff, and women in an environment where the culture empowers them at every single turn. Whether it's recognizing ‘Hey- I know that was really hard to do, but you had the courage to try’, to building them up to see that they can achieve their goals. I’m really proud of all of them.”





The Overlap

Gemma's Story

Gemma* is a thirty-year woman from Kenya, a refugee who arrived in Canada in hopes of a better life for herself and her children. What she didn't anticipate, however, was entering WEAC and the shelter system.

"I was honestly pretty scared," shares Gemma. "I didn't know many people here and I wasn't sure what to do or where to go."

She worked hard with her support team to move out of WEAC within a few months, finding a basement suite with members of her community in the northern part of the city.

But getting housed wasn't her only goal - Gemma wanted to get into the social work field and begin working in Canada.

"Being in the shelter, it changed my life. I know I'm strong, that I can do anything. I want everyone to see the very best version of themselves, because that's what they deserve. Everyone is going through something that you know nothing about."

With social work in mind, each day, Gemma would take the bus downtown to Stanley Milner library to work on the computers and improve her resume by taking online courses and credentials.

"I was applying for jobs, taking courses, and expanding my resume and experiences. But it's hard when you don't have Canadian work experience."

Gemma expressed her frustration with being unable to receive a response from her numerous applications for work. Embedded in e4c's approach to work is a wraparound support meeting people with the right resources, at the right time.

The School Nutrition Program was hiring, and Gemma was encouraged to apply for a position to build up her resume.

"That's exactly the reason behind our hiring model," shares Kelly Bickford, Manager of Community and School Based Programs. "We hire from the community to build work experience, language, and micro-credentials to help facilitate long-term employment."

Gemma was hired as a Nutrition Support Worker. It turns out, employment experience was the only thing she needed.

Recently, Gemma resigned from the School Nutrition Program as she accepted a full-time job in the healthcare field, working towards her dream of becoming a social worker.

Together, We can change lives and grow communities.

Whether you're passionate about feeding kids in schools across Edmonton through our School Nutrition Program, supporting youth to gain valuable skills in the Hallway Cafe, or supporting women to finally find a place to call their own, we can't do this work without you.

You've read about the increasing needs facing our community, and the incredible work happening between our programs and partners. Together, we can continue to empower students across 42 Edmonton area schools by providing a healthy meal to set them up for success during their school day. These nutritional supports impact students' immediate educational needs, positively affect students' long-term health, and help with achieve student's social outcomes.

Through the provision of a meal, we are providing peace of mind to thousands of Edmontonian students and their families. There is no doubt that it takes a community – let us continue to change lives and our grow communities, one meal at a time.

You can help:

\$25 feeds a student for 6 days

\$58 purchases a crate of 100 oranges for students.

\$100 feeds 26 students for one school day.

Become a monthly donor

Your gift of \$25 per month becomes \$300 in a year. This purchases 80 days of meals for an Edmonton student.

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 their circumstances or challenges. We see people and welcome them without judgement or bias.

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



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