



# **TOOLKIT:** **Serving Up Local** **For Long-Term Care** **Mealtime Engagement**

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Golden Horseshoe  
Food and Farming  
Alliance



Possibility grows here.



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This toolkit is a summary of resources tested during the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance project, *Serving Up Local* Training. The project was made possible with financial support from the Government of Ontario, in partnership with the Greenbelt Fund, in acknowledgment of the exciting potential Ontario's public institutions have in helping to sustain agriculture in Ontario and the integral role frontline mealtime staff play to engage consumers in local foods.

The *Serving Up Local* Training project is a partnership between Halton Region and the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) that focuses on the core of local food purchasing in long-term care – the residents and their lived experiences. The project provides learning opportunities for staff that work directly with residents at mealtime about new local food options in the homes and ways to communicate these options to residents. The project builds on the *Serving Up Local* initiative that increased local food procurement in municipally-run long-term care homes in three Golden Horseshoe municipalities by a combined 23% in 2017. For more information on *Serving Up Local*, see: [www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/](http://www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/)

The GHFFA is a partnership between the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, the Friends of the Greenbelt, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Niagara and Durham Colleges, the Vineland Innovation Centre, the Holland Marsh Growers and the Regional Municipalities and Federations of Agriculture in Niagara, Peel, Halton, York, and Durham, and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto. The collaboration works for an integrated and coordinated approach to food and farming viability in the area to ensure that the Golden Horseshoe retains, enhances and expands its role as a leading food and farming cluster.

The wisdom offered by Halton Region long-term care staff and residents was invaluable to this work. We are grateful to the following individuals for contributing their expertise and time to the project and to this manual:

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# INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is a collection of resources resulting from the *Serving Up Local* Training pilot project that took place primarily at Allendale long-term care home in Halton Region from December 2017 to May 2018. The project tested learning opportunities for staff that work directly with residents at mealtime about new local food options in the homes and effective ways to communicate these options to residents. To enhance the training, local food tools were developed for use by life enrichment programs outside of mealtimes to reinforce the positive messages of local and familiar foods.

This toolkit is designed to provide resources and activities that can be put into practice once a long-term care home's nutrition and food service team has made a commitment to increase Ontario foods on resident menus. The tools address residents' interest in local foods, make learning about local foods on the menu more accessible and provide an opportunity to increase staff-resident interactions at mealtime.

Adding an element of change in any workplace can be challenging. A perceived increased workload can create a barrier to change. Luckily, familiar foods are a topic that offers widespread comfort and appeal, whether to long-term care staff or to residents. Increasing resident-staff connection through conversation on familiar foods is a win-win. And it makes the professional development lots of fun! These training tools are intended to help elevate personal histories and enjoyment around food.

It is important to note that these tools were tested at long-term care homes in suburban Ontario where the majority of residents were of European descent and many of the foods that were familiar to residents from their past are also grown in Ontario. The frontline mealtime staff, who are integral to improving mealtimes for residents, represented greater cultural diversity, thus space was made during the training to reflect on personal food experiences from around the world.



# WHY LOCAL FOOD AS AN ENGAGEMENT TOOL IN LONG-TERM CARE?

## Impact on resident health and well-being

Worldwide, malnutrition affects 30-60% of older adults living in long-term care (LTC) homes, and greatly impacts health, well-being and quality of life. Canadian research by the Schlegel-University of Waterloo Research Institute for Aging (RIA) and the Agri-food for Healthy Aging (A-HA) program demonstrates that poor food intake is considered the primary cause of LTC malnutrition, yet it is preventable.<sup>i</sup> Through their Making the Most of Mealtimes (M3) research, key determinants that could contribute to increased food intake were identified, a primary factor being the residents' perception of the "quality" of their meals.

In 2017, the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) administered a survey to 103 residents and their family members at six long-term care homes in southern Ontario to determine if a "local/Ontario" label increased their interest in, and improved their perception

of, food served. **79% were interested to know if food was sourced locally and 71% felt better about the food served when they knew it was sourced locally/from Ontario.**<sup>ii</sup>

If long-term care staff communicating local food options to LTC residents results in greater interest in food, then local food may be a tool to help address malnutrition and dehydration rates in long-term care homes.

M3 results also showed that residents who ate more calories and protein were more likely to have received person-centered care at mealtimes (i.e. their preferences, needs and values were respected).<sup>iii</sup> Many residents in long-term care have direct experience or positive associations with farming, or food growing. Residents and their family members showed great interest in supporting local farmers, making local food a valuable topic to increase meaningful engagement at mealtimes.

## Freshness and Nutrition

The perception that local food was "fresher" and that most local foods appeared on their plates in the form of fruits and vegetables, were predominant responses when long-term care residents were asked about their interest in local food. In reality, a focus on local food can result in increased fruit and vegetable consumption and greater freshness. **The nine long-term care homes that took part in the *Serving Up Local* project collectively increased the purchase of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables by 124% over the course of the project.**<sup>iv</sup>

Additionally, nutritional values of certain fruits and vegetables decrease after harvest. The longer food travels from farm to plate the more nutritional value decreases. Produce grown far from its final destination is often picked early to prevent rotting and therefore, further decreases nutritional values.<sup>v</sup> Many local food substitutions made during the *Serving Up Local* project were in the frozen vegetables category. Frozen products lose fewer nutrients initially than stored fresh produce because of the short heating time in blanching, but may lose nutrients the longer they are stored<sup>vi</sup>, making frozen local produce preferable over imported fresh and frozen items. Some studies also indicate that farmers who grow produce for local markets select more nutritious varieties while export producers select varieties with characteristics favourable for travel.<sup>vii</sup>





Photos from the family farms of residents at Allendale long-term care home

## FROM THE FIELD: Long-Term Care Resident Recollections

The following memories surfaced when residents were asked about their recollections of local food and farming as part of the *Serving Up Local* Training project:

"I like squash, turnips – makes me think about food with my sister and mother in Alliston."

"I had my own garden in Holland – we had fresh food, get to pick it and grow it yourself and don't have to buy it."

"Strawberry plants in our backyard, we gave fruits to our neighbours, strawberry pies, lots of food on the farm, it felt good to give it away. My father was a thrasher – he worked on other farms and we had farms too in Ontario."

"My parents were florists and very busy. Dad got ducks for Christmas dinner from the local store. They were delicious!"

"My Grandparents had geese on an Ontario farm in Orangeville. We ate fresh geese."

"The food I like best now grew in my mother's garden – tomatoes, potatoes, spinach. And I also like bananas!"

## INCREASING LOCAL FOODS OFFERED TO RESIDENTS

While local food is becoming easier to access across the province, Ontario foods still make up the minority of food purchases in the long-term care sector. For the nine long-term care homes taking part in the *Serving Up Local* project, this was their first time measuring local food purchases. They set a goal of a 5% increase in local food purchases and collectively increased purchases by 23% over the 20 months of the project. The project used the Foodland Ontario definition of local food: "Food must be grown/raised and processed in Ontario." The following flow chart shows the steps taken by the *Serving Up Local* homes.

For detailed steps on how to increase local food in long-term care, see *Serving Up Local: Manual for Increasing Local Foods in Long-Term Care* at [www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/](http://www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/)

# LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

## in LONG-TERM CARE HOMES

### Step 1: ASSEMBLE YOUR INTERNAL TEAM

Bring together food directors, purchasing staff, representatives from cooking and serving staff and select residents.



*Define Local*

Ontario definitions of local are widely accepted. Consider both food origin and processing location.



### Step 2: ASSEMBLE YOUR EXTERNAL TEAM

BRING TOGETHER COUNTERPARTS IN YOUR GROUP PURCHASING ORGANIZATION (GPO)

(a) Review current buying practices

**REQUEST VELOCITY REPORTS**  
from GPOs and/or distributors to see the % of local food you purchase

(b) Ask your distributor to recommend local substitutions and new products.

Many have Ontario lists.

(c) Decide on new Ontario products to try



### Step 3: EVALUATE THE PRODUCT



Invite local vendors to food shows



Get samples to test in your cooking system



Review nutritional specifications



Compare cost of local substitutions



Seek feedback from long-term care residents

### Step 4: MAKE THE SWITCH

Respect your Contract when Ordering

80% is contracted services, but 20% is discretionary. This is where many new local products can be purchased.

Communicate Your New Menu Options

Identify local food on menus and request that staff identify local when presenting meals with local ingredients

Use your buying power to boost volumes as a group and get your chosen local product listed!

### Step 5: SUSTAIN THE CHANGE



**Identify Your Champions** - Engage these food staff, administrators, distributors, funders, or political representatives in your food system who are passionate about local foods to ensure local purchasing will continue.



**Make "Local" a Criteria** - when your GPO contract is up for renewal make sure your definition of local is an evaluative criteria



**Share menu ideas** among GPO members that incorporate local ingredients, or tried and tested local products.

Research conducted by Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) with financial support from the Government of Ontario, in partnership with the Greenbelt Fund.



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For more information:  
<http://www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/>



# KNOWING WHAT'S LOCAL

In order to communicate local food choices to residents, local food options must be clearly identified for staff. The *Serving Up Local* homes have achieved this by identifying meals with Ontario ingredients on the weekly and daily menus.

Week 1 - Day 1 - MONDAY

## Lunch

Turkey Rice Casserole  
Florentine Garden Vegetables

OR

Monterey-Jack Cheese and Tomato Sandwich  
on Honey-Oat Bread  
Ontario-grown Cucumber Salad

Angel Food Cake & Chocolate Sauce or  
Tropical Fruit

## Dinner

Cream of Chicken Soup

Ribbette with Hickory Sauce  
Baked Potato with Sour Cream  
Succotash with Ontario Corn & Lima Beans

OR

Vegetable Alfredo  
Garlic Bread  
Tossed Salad & French Dressing

Apricot Halves  
Ontario-made Butterscotch Ice Cream



"We are proud to show our support for local Ontario grown ingredient suppliers"

The "Today's Local Food Feature" poster on the following page can be used to highlight the meals you would like staff to feature to residents that day.

## Make it Your Own!

Print the "Today's Local Food Feature" poster and write in your own daily feature or enter your own text in the PDF in 4 easy steps:

1. Download Adobe Acrobat for free
2. Select "Edit PDF"
3. Draw a text box on the plate
4. Write in your new text box

# Today's Local Food Feature



The Serving Up Local project was facilitated by the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) with financial support from the Government of Ontario, in partnership with the Greenbelt Fund.



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For more information:  
[www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/](http://www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/)



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# ENGAGING RESIDENTS AT MEALTIME

The tools in this section are intended to aid long-term care staff to:

- Reflect on their own positive associations with local or familiar foods
- Increase awareness of local foods offered on the menu
- Make a meaningful connection with residents at mealtimes using the topic of local food

## ACTIVITY 1: Familiar Foods Self-Reflection

### Overview

This activity is best delivered face-to-face and can be a focusing activity at the beginning of a staff meeting or offered as part of a food service training. The intention is for staff to recall their own positive associations with local or familiar foods, instilling a greater interest in the food they are serving and further developing the ability to empathize with residents.

### Themes

- Fostering a staff culture of empathy
- Connecting through meaningful conversations
- Knowing residents as unique individuals through personal histories

### Preparation

Materials needed:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Quiet room with chairs

### Planning & Delivery

- Staff leader reviews facilitator guide below
- Room is arranged so participants can sit back-to-back
- Chart paper displayed so the whole group can see results

### Follow-Up Actions

- Recall the common themes revealed through this activity when presenting local food options to residents.
- Utilize the topics that brought up positive feelings through this activity when engaging residents in mealtime conversation.



## Facilitator Guide:

1. Invite participants to sit back-to-back with a partner, close their eyes and focus on their breath
2. Ask the group: “Local Food” or “Home-Cooked Food” – where does this phrase take you?

*Don't get hung up on geography. “Home” may not be Ontario, the phrase may take you further back during a time you lived somewhere else*

*If prompt is needed: You may be visiting your own kitchen, your parents' kitchen, your grandmother's kitchen? A food garden or farm? If it is a positive feeling, follow it.*

*Go back to that place. Smell it, taste it, what emotion do you feel? Really FEEL that emotion.*

3. After five minutes, invite participants to take a moment to think about the words or sensations from their experience, then share these with their partner for another five minutes.
4. As a whole group, review some of the words, sensations or experiences that surfaced for participants.
5. Make a list of the common themes together on chart paper.

### FROM THE FIELD: Frontline Mealtime Staff Reflections on Local Food

These are recollections from frontline mealtime staff during the *Serving Up Local* Training in response to the question: What are some of the words or sensations from your experience of “local food” or “home-cooked food”?

“Apples I picked from the orchard, strawberries from the field. They smell fresh, juicy, sweet, taste great.”

“Fresh fruits and vegetables growing in the garden and picking orange and grapefruit from the garden then sitting under the tree and eating it.”

“My tummy begins to crave more fresh veggies that my mom used to cook. I get hungry whenever my mom sautéed garlic and onion picked fresh from the farm.”

“Mangoes and sugarcane. I can feel their smell and experience the juicy taste. It makes me emotional to recollect my sweet childhood memories... I am surprised I can still feel my childhood and amazing taste at this age.”

#### Common themes revealed through this exercise:

- Freshness
- Home
- Family
- Food sharing
- Fruit or vegetable harvesting
- Childhood

A discussion with staff on the common themes resulting from this exercise demonstrates why using local food as an engagement topic at mealtimes can be successful and accessible to residents and staff. This exercise built the confidence of staff to utilize local food options on the menus to increase resident interest in food offerings.

# ACTIVITY 2:

## Local Food Mealtime Cue Cards

### Overview

This activity takes place during regular mealtimes in the resident dining areas whenever local food is offered on the menu. The purpose is to appeal to a resident's interest in local food and encourage greater mealtime engagement by generating conversation that may be related to skills, abilities and personal history of both residents and staff. Highlighting local food options enhances the "fine dining" experience offered in the home.

### Themes

- Connecting through meaningful conversations
- Supporting active mealtime participation
- Long-term memory recall
- Knowing residents as unique individuals through personal histories
- Encouraging resident skills and abilities

### Preparation

Materials needed:

- 21-Day Menu for the season
- Daily Menu highlighting local ingredients
- Cue cards with fun facts

### Planning & Delivery

Higher Cognition Activity: Local Food Mealtime Conversation

- Supervisor reviews the 21-day menus at the beginning of each seasonal menu change and photocopies or prints cue cards from this toolkit for local ingredients offered in the current menu cycle OR create your own cue cards with fun local food facts. Keep the cue card text simple.
- Staff providing mealtime support receive the cue cards from dietary aides when offering residents their meal choices.
- Staff can utilize the talking points on the cue cards or draw on their own interest in food and/or knowledge of the residents' personal history when offering the local food choice.  
For example: "We have on the menu today Ontario chicken breast." Then staff can engage residents while assisting them with meals: "You raised chicken on your family farm, didn't you? Tell me about your chicken farm."

Lower Cognition Activity: Identifying Local Food at Mealtime

- At the beginning of meals, food service staff review the posted daily menu and note the local ingredients.
- When offering meal choices with show plates, staff identify local food options. For example: "On the lunch menu today we have Ontario BBQ Pork with Ontario minced coleslaw OR Western Egg on whole wheat toast. Which would you prefer?"

## FROM THE FIELD: Tips from the Mealtime Frontline

These are some of the topics and techniques the Dietary Aides and Personal Support Workers from the *Serving Up Local* Training use to engage residents at mealtime:

### Approach

- Be positive and enthusiastic
- Smile
- Keep questions simple

### Show Plate

- Always offer the two choices on the menu that day to ensure resident preferences are respected
- Emphasize sensations: colour on the plate, yummy smell of the food
- Highlight the fresh, seasonal produce

### Topics of Conversation

- Childhood memories of eating this food
- Memories of preparing this food
- Past gardening or farming experience

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## Make it Your Own!

The mealtime cue cards on the following pages were tested using Ontario cucumber salad, vegetarian chili, succotash, carrot salad, garlic mushrooms and Pennsylvania Dutch cabbage. You can put in your own daily menu items featuring these vegetables commonly grown in Ontario!

Print the Local Food Mealtime Cue Cards and write in your own menu item or enter your own text in the PDF in 4 easy steps:

1. Download Adobe Acrobat for free
2. Select "Edit PDF"
3. Draw a text box on the card
4. Write in your new text box

To print your cue cards, print double-sided.



### Today's local food feature:

- Cucumbers add a great “crunch” to meals
  - The inside of a cucumber can be up to 20 degrees cooler than the outside temperature!
- 
- *What I like about cucumbers...*
  - *What do you like best about cucumbers?*
  - *Have you ever grown a cucumber?*

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### Today's local food feature:

- Corn is a sweet and tasty source of fibre and vitamin C
- 
- *When I think of eating corn I think of...*
  - *What are some of your favourite memories of eating corn?*

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### Today's local food feature:

- In Ontario, carrots are mainly grown in the Bradford area north of Toronto.
  - People first grew carrots as medicine, not food.
- 
- *I ate a carrot that was purple the other day!*
  - *Have you seen carrots that weren't orange? What colours were they?*

TOOLKIT: SERVING UP LOCAL FOR LONG-TERM CARE MEALTIME ENGAGEMENT



### Today's local food feature:

- Do you know what the biggest species of mushroom in Ontario is? Puffballs.
- The Japanese were probably the first to grow mushrooms, raising Shitakes two thousand years ago!
- Do you have a favourite kind of mushroom?
- Have you ever picked wild mushrooms? If so, where?

TOOLKIT: SERVING UP LOCAL FOR LONG-TERM CARE MEALTIME ENGAGEMENT

### Today's local food feature:

- Cabbage is a source of vitamin C and fibre
- Locally-grown cabbage is available year-round in Ontario
- Do you have a favourite dish using cabbage?
- Do you like sauerkraut or coleslaw?

TOOLKIT: SERVING UP LOCAL FOR LONG-TERM CARE MEALTIME ENGAGEMENT

### Today's local food feature:

- In North America people used to grow tomatoes because they were pretty, not to eat them!
- It was only in the 1900s that tomatoes started to become popular in cooking
- Tomatoes contain vitamins C and A - both are a great way to boost your body's germ-fighting power.
- I've heard tomatoes are pretty easy to grow.
- Have you ever grown tomatoes?
- Did you ever can tomatoes?

TOOLKIT: SERVING UP LOCAL FOR LONG-TERM CARE MEALTIME ENGAGEMENT





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# ENGAGING RESIDENTS THROUGH LIFE ENRICHMENT

## ACTIVITY 3: Local Food Dining Room Conversation Cards

### Overview

These cards can be placed on the tables in the dining area prior to meals so residents can look at them on their own or discuss with friends or staff. The cards show scenes relating to local and home-cooked food to prompt long-term memory of times spent with family and loved ones. The purpose is to appeal to a resident's interest in local food and encourage greater connection with other residents and with staff while reminiscing about positive experiences from the past.

### Themes

- Connecting through meaningful conversations
- Long-term memory recall
- Knowing residents as unique individuals through personal histories
- Encouraging resident skills and abilities

### Cognition Level:

Low or high functioning residents

### Preparation

Materials needed:

- Conversation cards
- Dining area tables

### Planning & Delivery

- Staff members print, laminate and fold the conversation cards so that one side shows photos and one side shows the prompt questions.
- Staff place cards on each table in the dining area before mealtimes.
- When staff are available as they set up for mealtime, they can direct residents' attention to the cards, or sit down and discuss the questions on the card with residents who are visually impaired.

### Follow-Up Actions

- Get to know your residents. If your resident is non-verbal, find out from family/visitors if they had experiences in farming/growing vegetables and use these examples to start conversations.
- When discussing these cards, if you find it helps calm a resident or improves the person's mood, be sure to share this information with your team.





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ON THE FARM

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ON THE FARM

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Can you name these items you might find on a farm?

Did you ever have the chance to harvest one of the items on this card? If so, what was it?

What other animals or plants might grow on an Ontario farm?

**Sample answers:** Animals: Pigs, Cows, Sheep Plants: Wheat, Onions, Pumpkins

Do you remember a time when you visited or worked on a farm?



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# IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

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# IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

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Can you name these items you might find in a vegetable garden?

**Answers, left to right:** Garden spade, Tomato Plant, Garden Gloves, Cucumber Seed Packet

What is your favourite garden food?

Did you ever grow food or help someone else grow food?

Do you remember a time giving food you grew to neighbours or receiving food neighbours grew?

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TOOLKIT: SERVING UP LOCAL FOR LONG-TERM CARE MEALTIME ENGAGEMENT

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## IN THE KITCHEN

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## IN THE KITCHEN

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Are any of these items favourites that you would have in your kitchen?

Did you ever preserve your own foods?

Do you remember a time baking or cooking with local foods in your own kitchen?

What was your favourite part about family meal time?

# ACTIVITY 4:

## Local Food Matching Game

### Overview

This worksheet can be placed on the activity carts for staff to support residents' memory recall and cognition. The cards show pictures of foods grown in Ontario which residents can match with the corresponding words. The purpose is to appeal to a resident's interest in fresh local produce and enhance what is being offered at mealtimes through greater connection with staff.

### Themes

- Connecting through meaningful conversations
- Memory recall
- Cognition support
- Encouraging resident skills and abilities

### Cognition Level:

Lower functioning residents

### Preparation

Materials needed:

- Local Food Matching Game Worksheet
- Scissors

### Planning & Delivery

- Staff cut the local food images along the dotted line, print and laminate the images as well as the corresponding word table.
- The game can be placed on an existing activity cart or library.
- When staff are available to interact with residents during social times they can assist with this activity by helping residents match the local food image with the corresponding word and engage in conversation around local foods on the menu.

### Follow-Up Actions

- When discussing these cards, if you find the resident has an interest in eating local foods and knowing what is locally-grown on the resident menus, share this information with your mealtime staff team.

## ONTARIO FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

**APPLE**

**CARROT**

**CABBAGE**

**TOMATO**

**CORN**

**STRAWBERRY**



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# SUSTAINING LOCAL FOOD ENGAGEMENT

Local food has been identified as a desirable and impactful offering all along the food value chain in long-term care – from residents and their family members, to food service staff and their distributors. Yet, with so many priorities and legislated responsibilities in a healthcare setting, it takes dedicated focus to sustain the local food commitment. Luckily, food has a powerful ability to connect all people and offers a fun and light way to learn and enrich the lives of both residents and staff.

## Keep up the local food purchasing

Continue the dialogue with your home's food distributor and Group Purchasing Organization (GPO) to emphasize local as a priority and to find new Ontario food options. Keep testing new options with the residents.

One engaging way to keep up the local food purchasing momentum that was tested during the *Serving Up Local* Training project is to request an all-local vendor menu planning day from your distributor. This is an opportunity for residents and/or food staff to taste and review new potential local food options from your home's vendors and for purchasing staff to make new connections.

## Integrate local food themes into programming at the home

Local food programming during other social times at the homes appeal to residents' interest in local food and can enhance the local food choices on the menu. Here's a list of other fun ways to incorporate local food into long-term care home programming tested by *Serving Up Local* long-term care teams:

- Summer BBQ for residents and families featuring local foods (corn on the cob, burgers and sausages made with Ontario meat)
- Taste testing local foods with residents and adding a sensory component at Food Committee
- Local food themed Bingo and Jeopardy
- Gardening programs to grow veggies, harvest and cook as part of Life Enrichment program



## Choose a month or week to promote local food on the menu

Select a time period where staff are encouraged to emphasize the Ontario options on the menu to residents at mealtime. The *Serving Up Local* Training project selected a month-long period to deliver:

- **Local food training with frontline mealtime staff.** The training offered a fun way for staff to practice talking about local foods with residents. Topics included: Why local food in long term care? What is local on the menu? How can I best communicate local food options to residents?
- **All-local vendor Food Fair.** The fair was offered in partnership with the home's food distributor, and gave staff the opportunity to taste new local food options and to make new purchasing connections.
- **Local food mealtime blitzes.** During select meal times, dietary aides and Personal Support Workers made extra effort to discuss local food menu options with residents by using the local food mealtime cue cards.
- **Complimentary life enrichment activities.** Local food Jeopardy, conversation cards and the matching game were launched to generate a greater connection between staff and residents and enhance the mealtime local food education.

*See page 18 for the Dining Room Conversation Cards and page 22 for the Local Food Matching Game.*

*See page 12 for the Local Food Mealtime Cue Cards.*



## Incorporate local food in annual training education booklets

The following local food additions were made as a part of the *Serving Up Local* Training project:

1. Added to Dietary and Personal Support Worker (PSW) booklets under mealtime service/meal choice:
  - Check the posted menus to see which meals have ingredients from Ontario and tell residents which meal is locally-grown when showing meal choices.
2. Added to all booklets: Dietary, RN/RPN (Nursing), PSW and "Other" (includes Admin support staff, Life Enrichment, Social Work, Housekeeping, Laundry and Maintenance staff), under "Montessori approaches to Care" as an example of a way to engage a person in conversation that is related to their skills, abilities or personal history.
  - Encourage engagement at meals and use meals to connect people.
  - E.g. Ask residents if they grew or picked their own food; when you see Ontario ingredients identified on the menu, tap in to their personal history e.g. "you raised chicken on your farm, tell me about your chicken farm"

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# CONCLUSION

Public institutions all across the province are making local food a priority. Fortunately, we now have examples from long-term care homes that consistently offer local food options that appeal to their residents, resident families and food staff. Making this switch to local food purchasing is necessarily strengthened by communicating these efforts and new options to staff and residents.

Creating change and asking staff to do new things is not always easy. Making a personal connection to food and empathizing with residents is essential to making the change. Luckily, having staff reminisce about their own positive food experiences lends itself not only to a more positive space for residents, but also for staff, and it makes mealtime more enjoyable! The activities in this toolkit are offered to support you on your way.

For more information on local food in long-term care and other public institutions in Ontario, visit:

- The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA), for case studies of the long-term care homes participating in *Serving Up Local* project at <http://www.foodandfarming.ca/current-projects/serving-up-local/>
- The Greenbelt Fund, for local food resources prepared by Broader Public Sector institutions, including those in healthcare, at <http://www.greenbeltfund.ca/resources>.

For more on mealtime in long-term care, visit:

- Making the Most of Mealtimes from the Research Institute for Aging [www.the-ria.ca/m3/](http://www.the-ria.ca/m3/)

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## SOURCES

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- <sup>vii</sup> Local produce can be healthier than its imported counterparts. (2016, March 21). CBC. Retrieved from [www.cbc.ca/radio/checkup/blog/local-produce-can-be-healthier-than-its-imported-counterparts-1.3500788](http://www.cbc.ca/radio/checkup/blog/local-produce-can-be-healthier-than-its-imported-counterparts-1.3500788)



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