

From The Ground Up



Summary
Report
2014

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Website: www.yukonfromthegroundup.ca



“I ♥ this fundraiser.”

What a great way to promote healthy eating + support the school + farmers!”

Participant



Introduction

From The Ground Up (FTGU), is a healthy eating program piloted in 2012 by the Department of Health and Social Services, Health Promotion Unit as a way to encourage and support Yukoners to eat more vegetables. Using a healthy-choice fundraiser model, FTGU promotes healthy eating opportunities for Yukoners and brings fresh, locally-grown vegetables into Yukon communities.

The FTGU program, with its multiple activities and messaging, connected schools to farmers and gave school communities (students, teachers, families) learning opportunities to improve long term health through healthier eating practices.

Now in its third year, feedback from the Yukon community indicates a strong interest in supporting From The Ground Up, a program that engages the whole community; students, teachers, families, farmers and others, to eat healthier!

Good nutrition is an important part of individual and community health and well-being. It is crucial for:

- healthy growth and aging,
- effective functioning of the body,
- protection from illness and infection, and essential for children's development.

Nutrition provides added benefits, supporting a positive frame of mind and active participation in the family, school, workplace and community. Without it, there can be serious consequences over time.

Inadequate nutrition contributes to:

- poor health and increased risk of chronic disease, and,
- compromises productivity, employment and food security.

Taking a proactive approach to healthy eating, from providing accurate nutrition information to supporting local and traditional foods, can improve Yukoners' overall health, quality of life, and may even reduce long-term health care costs.

Yukon Nutrition Framework, 2010

Canada's Food Guide recommends that vegetables and fruits be eaten daily with the number of servings ranging from 4-8 for children and teens, and 7-10 servings a day for adults.

However,

The Canadian Community Health Survey conducted in 2009/10 found that less than half (49%) of Yukon residents reported eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

And;

"This fundraiser is an amazing thing. I love veggies so much. Thanks !

Participant



"Great school Fundraiser! Local + healthy Thanks!! "

Participant

The Health and Health-Related Behaviours among Young People in Yukon survey conducted in 2011 found that only 34% of Yukon males (grade 6-8) reported eating vegetables once per day or more and less than half, (47%) of Yukon females (grade 6-8) reported eating vegetables once per day or more.

From The Ground Up is consistent with the Department of Health and Social Services Strategic Plan 2009 – 2014, The Yukon Nutrition Framework (2010) and the Four Pillars of Comprehensive School Health (www.jcsh.ca).

It is a healthy eating program that focusses on:

- **accessibility of information on healthy eating,**
- **food security; reliable access to affordable, nutritious food, and**
- **creating environments which support healthier eating for Yukoners¹.**

Each September, participating schools are connected with local farmers to sell boxes of locally-grown vegetables. Yukoners can purchase a box of fresh potatoes, beets and carrots to prepare at home with the option to use the simple, easy recipes provided. Schools have access to the Community Dietitian for additional healthy eating materials and activities. Each participating farm hosts a hands-on experience for a class of students giving students, teachers and chaperones the opportunity to learn where their food comes from as they participate in harvesting, cleaning and packaging produce for the fundraiser.

FTGU, when used in place of traditional fundraisers such as chocolate and cookie sales has provided a profitable healthy-choice fundraiser for Yukon schools.

Fantastic!! Happy we could help out! We love fresh veggies!!

Participant



“Project is a great idea”

Participant

¹ Department of Health and Social Services Strategic Plan 2009 – 2014, pg 17

Background

In 2012, the Health Promotion Unit partnered with one local farmer to pilot FTGU as a healthy eating initiative to increase the amount of vegetables on the plates of Yukoners. Two Whitehorse schools participated in the pilot.

In 2013, a website was developed for teachers and the community to help them learn about the goals and objectives of the program, find healthy eating materials, and discover farm facts and new recipes. Videos detailing farm visits and interviews were added to the website. Following Year 2, an extensive evaluation of the FTGU program was completed by an external evaluator. The overall response from participants was positive: This program "promotes healthy eating, supports local farmers and the economy, gives students the opportunity to raise funds for their school and contributes to the overall health of Yukoners through healthier eating practices". Participants described the program as a Win-Win-Win for everyone.

In Year 3, (current year), FTGU continued to grow by incorporating new schools, a second farm, the opportunity to donate a box to a local charity and the creation and distribution of a new recipe booklet, specific to the FTGU vegetables. Also in Year 3, the Health Promotion Unit formed a new partnership with the Yukon Agriculture Branch to access funding to offset the cost of the cardboard boxes. A summary that reflects the yearly growth of FTGU is offered in the table below.

From The Ground Up yearly summary

Year	# of participating schools		# of farms	# of boxes sold	pounds of vegetables sold	# of boxes donated *	total funds earned by schools
	Whse	rural					
2012	2	0	1	467	9,340	*	\$12,495
2013	8	1	1	2,083	41,660	*	\$36,450
2014	11	3	2	3,489 Includes donations	49,510	442	~\$45,000

*First offered in 2014.

*"This program is fantastic!
It's local
It's healthy and it gives back to the school. I just love it!!
Thank you"*

Participant



"I love the fact that we can easily buy local produce. Ordering is easy. Thanks. Cost affordable"

Participant

In 2014:

- Donated boxes were distributed by the schools to families in need, Whitehorse Food Bank, Mary House, Sally and Sisters, Salvation Army, community elders, school lunch program.
- Funds earned by schools were used for playground equipment and field trips, to purchase school equipment such as iPads, a promethean board, literacy supplies and a lunch program in one of the rural schools.
- 1,500 FTGU recipe books were made and distributed.



“The recipe book is a good addition”

Participant



“Wonderful way to support Yukon agriculture and bring healthy food into Yukon homes!”

Participant



“Great program! Really like that boxes can be donated.”

Participant

Evaluation

In 2013, FTGU was externally evaluated (report is available at www.yukonfromthegroundup.ca), with recommended changes and additions incorporated into the 2014 program. The 2014 evaluation focused on the impact of those changes on participating school coordinators and farmers.

2014: School Coordinators Feedback

- 100% of school coordinators said they received positive feedback from their school community.
- Fourteen out of 15 school coordinators said they will participate again.
- One high school coordinator wrote that their school may not participate in the future, stating that FTGU was better suited to the elementary schools. They also wrote that with the addition of more schools in 2014 there was some saturation in their community.
- Five of the respondents suggested making the student order forms simpler.
- There were varying suggestions about the timing of the program (starting earlier or later) and the variety of vegetables on offer.

Farmers' Feedback

Two farms participated this year and the feedback from the farmers included:

- ⇒ Keys to the success of the program were:
- the overall organization and coordination of the program;
 - having a spreadsheet of all of the deliveries;
 - discussing capacity to provide the vegetables at the outset; and,
 - the school farm visits.
- ⇒ Although compensation for the vegetables was a little less than market value, having a guaranteed order along with the volume of vegetables sold, made it sufficient.
- ⇒ **However** the cardboard boxes used to package the vegetables, (especially two different sizes), were:
- time consuming as they needed to be put together, labeled, filled and taped;
 - the smaller box required the same amount of work as the large box but resulted in less compensation; and,
 - as a single use item they present concerns about the environment.

“very well received. A number of parents have expressed they prefer selling veggies to chocolates.”

School coordinator



“everyone we talked to, heard about it, were happy that we were doing it. I had calls to see if we were involved and how to order.”

School coordinator

Farmers' Recommendations

- ⇒ The deliveries should be scheduled for the end of September and completed at least three days before Thanksgiving.
- ⇒ No changes be made to the varieties of vegetables offered; stick with potatoes, carrots, beets, cabbage and turnips /parsnips if available.
- ⇒ Seek greater media coverage to showcase how FTGU benefits the whole community.
- ⇒ Explore packaging vegetables (for the 10 pound orders) in reusable cloth bags.

The farmers praised the FTGU program and wanted to continue to participate in it.

Recommendations

Based on feedback from customers, school coordinators, participating farmers and the NGOs involved in the FTGU program, recommendations for the 2015 program are:

- ⇒ A key to the success of FTGU has been the level of coordination
 - seek opportunities for partnerships without compromising the high level of coordination
- ⇒ Explore the use of bags instead of boxes.
- ⇒ Further link the healthy eating messages to school curriculum -- offer activities to teachers that link classroom learning with FTGU.
- ⇒ Continue farm visits so students have the opportunity to see first-hand how a farm operates and to see where Yukon vegetables come from.
- ⇒ Clarify a procedure for dealing with unclaimed boxes.

Suggestions for schools/participating organizations:

- ⇒ Host a school-daycare wide local food/vegetable event to celebrate FTGU.
- ⇒ Have recipe samples prepared by students/children at box pick up for customers to try
- ⇒ Incorporate a community feast.
- ⇒ Use veggies and recipes from FTGU for school-daycare lunch programs.

"This is a community event and helping those who need help is an important part of being community. A good example for the students and great connections with services such as the Food Bank"

School coordinator



The option to donate "supports our schools social thinking objectives."

School coordinator

Closing Remarks

Since FTGU was introduced in 2012, more than 100,000 pounds of locally-grown fresh Yukon vegetables have been put on Yukon plates. Feedback has indicated that the FTGU program has supported Yukoners towards healthier eating by:

- ⇒ Increasing the awareness of availability of purchasing locally produced foods and the connection between farm to plate.
- ⇒ Supporting healthy messages being taught at home and in the classroom.
- ⇒ Encouraging Yukon schools to choose healthy fundraising opportunities for their fundraising needs.

Interest has been expressed by the community to expand the program into daycare settings and more rural communities.

“If healthy choice fundraisers such as FTGU were to continue in the future, they would support and contribute to the improvement of Yukoners health through healthier eating practices, the long term impact this initiative aims to achieve”

From The Ground Up Healthy choice fundraiser Evaluation report 2013.



“Great program. Good idea to have 2 sizes of boxes. Hope it continues.”

Participant



“Great way to support local producers, schools + community in the Yukon. Thanks.”

Participant

