



Evaluation Report:
2015 Guelph Community Food Drive

Prepared by:



Introduction & Background

The Guelph Community Food Drive (GCFD) started in 2010 in an effort to fill the shelves of mid- to small-sized charitable food providers. Every year, volunteers from neighbourhood groups and faith-based organizations across the city collect food and cash donations to help meet the needs of those experiencing food insecurity in our community.

In 2015, The Seed (theseedguelph.ca) and the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination (PTF) (gwpoverity.ca) committed to providing planning and operational support to the GCFD. From March to May, a series of planning meetings were held with staff from The Seed, PTF, and other key stakeholders interested in participating. Support provided by The Seed and the PTF included:

- Identifying and engaging previously participating organizations and new organizations to the GCFD
- Developing, personalizing, and distributing a GCFD flyer
- Developing and distributing a GCFD volunteer kit
- Organizing planning and debrief meetings
- Organizing sorting and distribution of food collected from workplace and community campaigns
- Leading communication efforts (e.g. created new logo, press release, social media strategy, etc.)
- Seeking partnerships with Guelph Public Libraries and workplace campaigns
- Coordinating collection areas across Guelph with participating organizations
- Shifting messaging from charitable model to social justice model
- Evaluating GCFD
- Collecting food from workplace campaigns and city-wide drop off locations

The GCFD ran from May 29th – June 14th, 2015. This year, 28 organizations worked together to collect over 25,750lbs. of food and \$661 in monetary donations to support 10 mid- to small-size charitable food providers. This report provides a summary of the results from the GCFD evaluation.

Methods

As part of the support provided, The Seed and PTF committed to conducting an evaluation of the 2015 GCFD. The evaluation focused on three components – the community-wide food drive, the workplace campaigns, and the individual drives run by neighbourhood groups and churches under the umbrella of the GCFD. Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from the workplace campaigns and the Guelph Public Library (drop-off location for the community-wide food drive). To receive feedback from individual drives, an online survey

was distributed in September 2015. The results of the interviews and the survey were analyzed by staff of The Seed and PTF and summarized in this report.

Discussion of Main Findings

Community-wide Drive

Guelph Public Library committed to providing support to the GFD by providing 6 local branches as drop off locations for the community-wide drive. All food collected at these locations was distributed equitably to the participating charitable food providers. In total, just over 1000 lbs. of food was collected from the community-wide drive. An additional 100 lbs. were collected by the North End Harvest Market, which also operated as a drop-off location. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the percentage of food collected by each library branch.

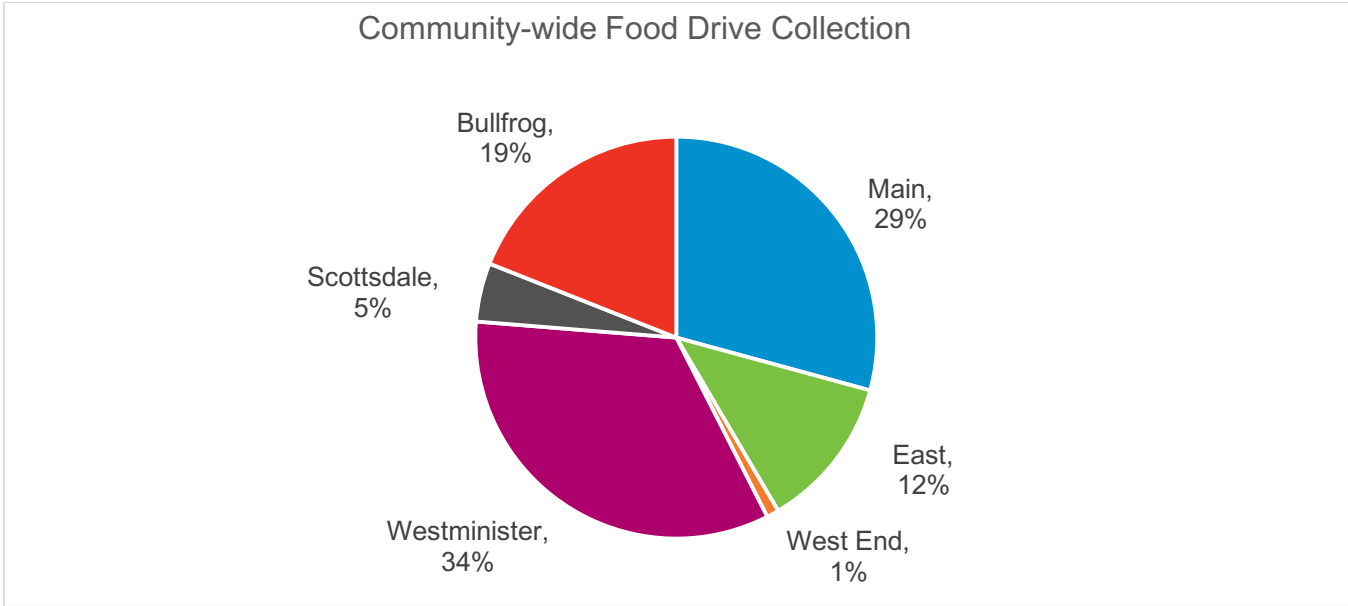


Figure 1 - Percentage of food collected from community-wide drop off locations

A number of factors may have influenced how much food was collected at each location. Larger branches, such as the Main branch were expected to collect more due to their central location and heightened traffic from community members. Others were expected to collect less as most donations were directed toward the neighbourhood group drop off location (e.g. West End). Finally, differences in the amount of food collected could largely stem from effort put in by library staff to advertise and communicate about the GCFD with patrons. In an interview with a representative from the Guelph Public Library, it was reported that the placement of collection bins just inside the main doors or next to the main desk worked well. It was also noted that the GPL used the infographic on social media and found the 'Frequently Asked Questions' document provided by The

Seed and PTF very helpful for staff to answer questions from community members. It was suggested that in the future, the GCFD provide the following:

- A start date for promotions going public
- Quotes/testimonials from people helped by the GCFD
- Video to help with promotion/story telling

Workplace Campaigns

A total of 6 organizations/businesses agreed to run workplace campaigns to support the GCFD. These included:

1. County of Wellington
2. Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health
3. City of Guelph
4. Guelph Community Health Centre
5. Hitachi
6. Linamar

In total, 4,300 lbs. of food and \$735 in monetary donations were collected by the workplace campaigns. Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the percentage of food collected from each of the workplace campaigns.

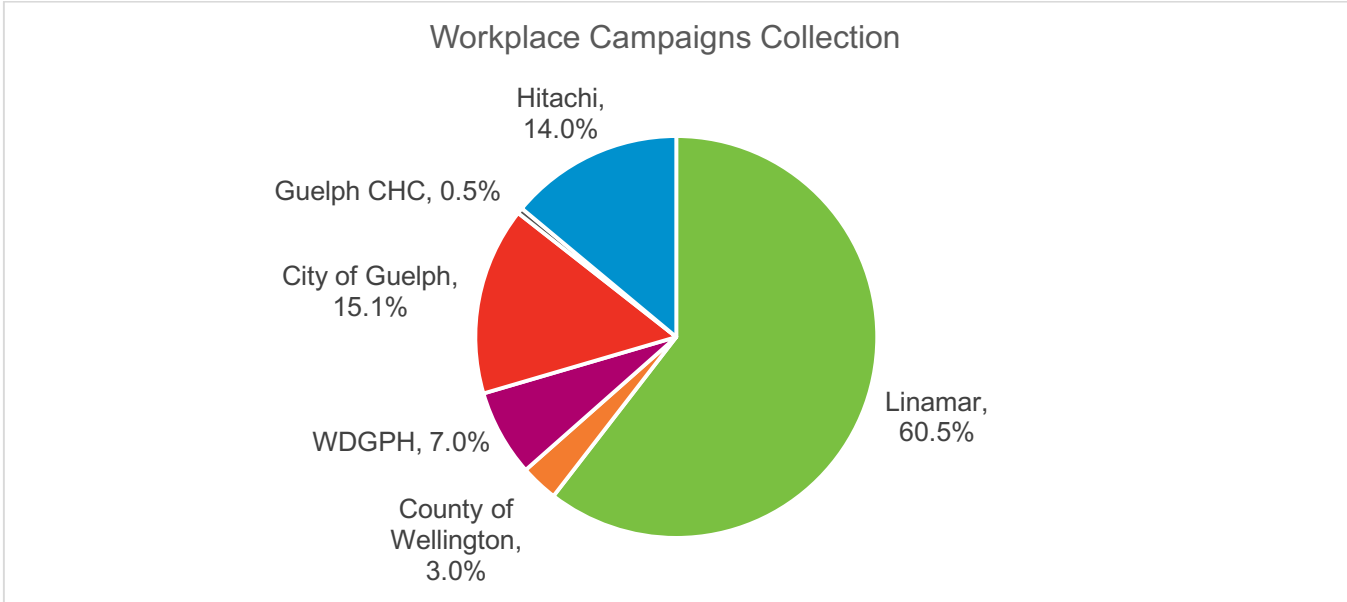


Figure 2 Percentage of food collected from workplace campaigns

The amount of food collected from each workplace campaign was largely dependent on the number of staff, as well as how the drive was championed internally. Each workplace used different strategies for collecting donations. Key informant interviews with representatives from 3 of the 6 workplaces identified the following successful strategies:

- Placing provided posters and bins in shared spaces (e.g. employee lunch rooms)
- Providing donation incentives to employees (e.g. employees that donated entered into a draw for a prize)
- Encouraging donations with competitions between teams/departments
- Using provided communication materials to promote GCFD internally (e.g. emails, newsletters)

In terms of what was helpful to running workplace campaigns, several representatives noted the poster, as well as the summary write-up and bins for collection. Suggestions for improvement focused primarily on communication with staff, such as providing a lunch and learn for staff and clarifying how the drive is different from others in the community. Other suggestions included providing an incentive and sharing personal stories from those that have benefited from the drive.

GCFD Individual Drives

A total of 10 small- to mid-size charitable food providers (including neighbourhood groups, churches, and others) planned and ran individual food drives under the umbrella of the GCFD. These providers included:

- Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Group
- Chalmers Community Services Centre
- Grange Hill East Neighbourhood Group
- Guelph Student Food Bank
- Holy Rosary Guelph
- Lakeside HOPE House
- Parkwood Gardens Neighbourhood Group
- Salvation Army Community and Family Services
- Trinity United Church
- West Willow Village Neighbourhood Group

In addition, 4 community-based organizations participated by collecting food on behalf of charitable food providers. These organizations included:

- Exhibition Park Neighbourhood Group
- Kortright Hills Neighbourhood Group
- North End Harvest Market

- Saint George's Neighbourhood Group

In total, just over 20,600 lbs. of food and \$1190 was collected through the individual drives

The amount of food collected from each individual was largely dependent on staff and volunteer capacity, as well as other factors such as geographic location and resources. Some individual drives have identified a strategy that works well in their area, while others have been challenged to do the same. Nearly all of the individual drives followed one or more of the following strategies:

- Delivered collection bags with flyer to neighbours and return to collect food on a later date
- Delivered flyer only to neighbours and return to collect food on a later date
- Placed collection bins in high traffic or convenient locations
- Collected donations at an event

There appears to be no significant relationship between the amount of food and the collection strategies. This suggests that other factors, such as staff and volunteer capacity, and identifying strategies that works well in each unique neighbourhood, are likely more influential.

In an effort to collect additional information about the individual drives, an evaluation survey was distributed to 12 participating community-based organizations that collected food. A total of 6 surveys were completed, providing a response rate of 50%.

The evaluation survey responses shed some light on the people required to run an individual food drive. All 6 of the survey participants indicated that staff coordinated the individual drives, which were supported by 172 volunteers. The volunteers helped with planning, delivering bags and flyers, picking up and receiving food, weighing and sorting donations, and putting the food away.

Other resources, including finances, were also important. Of the survey participants 67% spent money on running individual drives. The funds were used to print flyers, purchase bags and labels, and supply refreshments for volunteers.

While developing partnerships with other organizations (e.g. schools, businesses, churches, etc.) was identified as a successful strategy for increasing donations in past drives, only 50% of the survey participants reported that they had done so. This may be due to a lack of existing relationships with potential partners and limited capacity to do outreach.

In total, the survey participants printed approximately 12,400 flyers. Half of participants reported that they stapled the flyer to the bag, while 33% handed them out to neighbours, and 17% did not print any, but sent an electronic version to neighbours. Most participants (67%) found the flyer very helpful, while 33% reported that it was only somewhat helpful.

Individual drive organizers were also supplied a volunteer kit that included backgrounder documents, strategy suggestions, and communication tips. Most of the survey participants (67%) reported that this was not helpful, while 33% said it was helpful.