

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Provincial Funding of \$100,000 Marries Local Food Producers with Health Unit and YWCA Food Security Programs

New Funds to Increase Access to Local Produce for Just Food Box and Come Cook With Us Programs

Friday, December 4, 2009, Peterborough

MPP Jeff Leal announced today that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is investing a total \$100,000 over two years to increase the amount of local produce used by the Peterborough County-City Health Unit and the YWCA in their food security programs.

"This is an exciting initiative that creatively links those in need of nutritious food with our local farmers who produce it," said Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health with the Health Unit. "This is an innovative partnership that addresses an urgent need now while developing strategies to sustain farmers' ability to supply nutritious foods for a local market. This is truly an example of building **community** food security from which everyone benefits."

Entitled "Putting Local Food on the Table", this project will provide more opportunities for local food producers in Ontario to sell their products while giving local consumers the necessary skills to prepare and preserve these foods. The food will be purchased for use in the YWCA's JustFood box program which packages and distributes nourishing food together with a newsletter providing healthy recipes and storage tips for local parents, seniors, people living on their own and people living in isolated parts of Peterborough County. This new funding will also enable the Health Unit's Come Cook With Us program to incorporate more local foods into its classes that teaches healthy cooking and food safety skills to participants.

"The Ontario Government recognizes the importance of good nutrition in everyone's lives. Our youth need to start the day with a nutritious meal and adults need proper food to meet the challenges of their daily lives. Putting Local Food on the Table is a vital program that is being offered to low income families in our area by PCCHU. It helps families and local producers; everyone benefits," said MPP Jeff Leal.

Another component to this project involves a partnership with the Trent Centre for Community Based Education to identify barriers farmers face in order to produce enough food for these programs. Another important partner is Kawartha Choice FarmFresh, a local organization that

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promotes agricultural products of the Kawarthas, to identify more farmers as well as local retailers, wholesalers and grocery stores that supply both Ontario and locally produced foods.

The goal of “Putting Local Food on the Table” is to increase local consumer access to local foods, thereby supporting local agriculture. Through the food security programs of the Health Unit and the YWCA, it intends to reach new audiences with information about the benefits of locally produced food, and will use a unique distribution/education system to get local food to more community members.

Over the course of the two-year project, more than 700 people are expected to participate through Come Cook With Us, and 14,400 JustFood boxes will reach those in need.

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For further information, please contact:

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