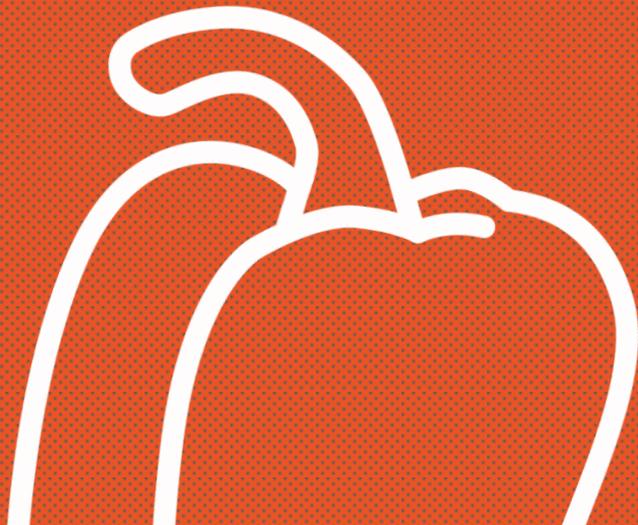
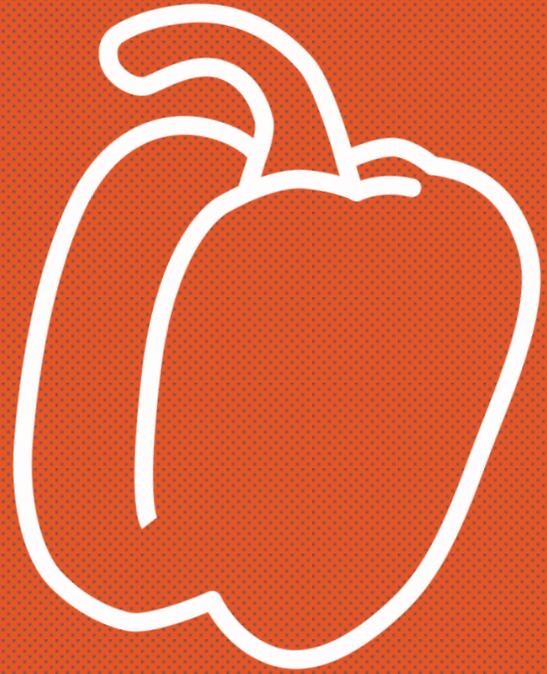
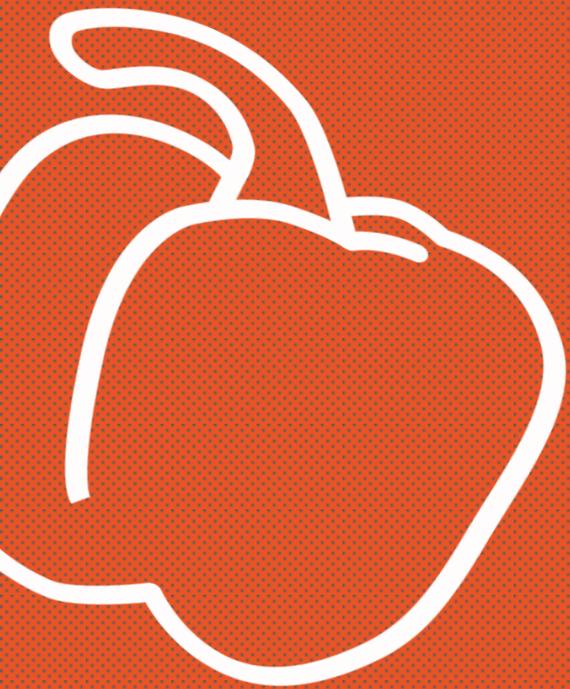


# 6.0 FOOD EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND LITERACY



## 6.0 FOOD EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND LITERACY

### 6.1 Findings

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs defines food literacy as “understanding why local food is important, knowing what local food is available and when, knowing how to prepare local food and knowing where local food comes from.”<sup>112</sup> More generally, food literacy is a set of skills that help us plan, prepare, and cook meals for ourselves, and our families. These skills help us prepare food that is healthy, tasty, and affordable. They can also build our confidence and help us problem solve when working with food.<sup>113</sup> As the Local Food Act for Ontario moved through the legislative process, food literacy was identified as a top priority. The ministry established the following three food literacy goals on January 28, 2015:

1. Increase the number of Ontarians who know what local foods are available.
2. Increase the number of Ontarians who know how and where to obtain local foods.
3. Increase the number of Ontarians who prepare local food meals for family and friends, and make local food more available through food service providers.<sup>114</sup>

#### **Nutrition Ignition!**

A comprehensive school-based nutrition and physical education program for school-aged children and their families. The goal of the program is to promote an improved knowledge and awareness towards a healthy lifestyle in children and their families by taking a whole school approach, addressing intrapersonal, interpersonal and community factors known to influence behaviour change. The program consists of three 40-minute classroom lessons, monthly “Dance/Fitness” events, monthly “Snack Attacks,” family events, Brescia/UWO Field trip days, monthly bulletin boards, and a website for families. The program currently runs within three Catholic elementary schools and is built on strong relationships between the schools, Western University and Brescia University College.

(Source: Danielle Battram of Western University [Nutrition Ignition! Researcher])

Additionally, Ontario’s Food and Nutrition Strategy for 2015 has identified Food Literacy and Skills as one of its strategic directions. Action areas of focus within this strategic direction include increased healthy eating knowledge, skills and capacity; restricted advertisement of unhealthy food, beverages and snacks to children; enhanced services for at-risk populations; increased access to public information about healthy eating through retailers and food services; and increased availability of professional nutrition services. The Ontario Food and Nutrition

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<sup>112</sup> Province of Ontario, Ontario’s Local Food Report, 2014-2015 Edition, 2015 Print, at p. 9.

<sup>113</sup> Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health, Food Literacy Flyer, Web. at <http://www.osnpnh.on.ca/upload/membership/document/foodliteracy-flyer-final-ps.pdf>

<sup>114</sup> Province of Ontario, Ontario’s Local Food Report, 2014-2015 Edition, 2015, Print.

Strategy argues that a focus on food literacy and skills is necessary for sustaining positive food system change and improving public health.<sup>115</sup>

This section on the environmental scan focuses on highlighting the activities occurring in Middlesex-London that pertain to food education, food knowledge, and food literacy. More specifically, this section aims:

- To provide an overview of the food literacy initiatives in the area (i.e. food budgeting, grocery shopping, cooking, growing, etc.) and who is targeted;
- To provide an overview of how the formal and informal educational programming in the area has implemented a focus on food education; and
- To provide an account of the public knowledge and opinions about healthy, local and sustainable food in the area.

The Local Food Report, provided by the Government of Ontario, provides an annual report on the government's local food activities. Within this report, Ontarians were interviewed regarding their knowledge of local food, to get an understanding of people's food knowledge and literacy.

Research of 1,500 principal grocery shoppers demonstrates that many Ontarians have a good understanding of what Ontario-grown produce is available in season. In the survey, two-thirds of shoppers can identify half or more of the produce grown seasonally in the province; however, consumers experienced more difficulty identifying produce that is available year round (only 40% of shoppers were able to identify at least one product grown in Ontario throughout the year).<sup>116</sup> Product knowledge also tended to differ by category as 80% of shoppers found it easy or very easy to identify Ontario grown fruits and vegetables; however the ability to identify products drops to 55% for Ontario-produced meat.<sup>117</sup> These results support the notion that Ontarians are food literate; however, there is definitely room for improvement. This is especially true in particular populations such as Indigenous peoples, lone-parent families, women and children, immigrants and the elderly who have shown to be at greater risk of being less food literate when compared to the general population, in turn, making these populations more likely to be food insecure.<sup>118</sup> In order to improve food literacy amongst Middlesex-London residents, a number of programs and courses are offered.

### ***Food Education, Knowledge and Literacy in the Classroom***

Numerous elementary and post-secondary schools have developed Ontario Student Nutrition Programs (OSNP) (mentioned previously in Section 3.1). These programs are a provincial initiative that functions to provide nutritious food to children and youth. This aids students to attend school well-nourished and ready to learn. While the program primarily focuses on

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<sup>115</sup> Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy, Technical Report, 2015, Print, at pp.4-22.

<sup>116</sup> Province of Ontario, Ontario's Local Food Report, 2014-2015 Edition, 2015, Print.

<sup>117</sup> Province of Ontario, Ontario's Local Food Report, 2014-2015 Edition, 2015, Print.

<sup>118</sup> Alison Howard and Jessica Edge, Enough for All: Household Food Security in Canada, 2013.

providing nutritious food, many of the programs within the schools also provide food education for the students (providing nutritional facts, cooking classes, and program wide initiatives, such as, the Great Big Crunch).

Within Middlesex-London there are 133 elementary and secondary schools, of which 80 participated in OSNPs during the 2014-2015 school year. This shows an increase of seven schools from the previous school year (2013-2014). Of the 80 schools that participated in OSNP in 2014-2015, 56 of the programs take place in elementary schools and 24 are in secondary schools.<sup>119</sup> When compared to the total number of elementary and secondary schools in Middlesex-London, only 54% of elementary schools offer OSNP whereas almost 100% of high schools offer OSNPs.

### ***Let's Get Cookin'***

A cooking program, which trains volunteers from the school community to teach junior, intermediate and secondary school youth basic cooking skills. There are seven core sessions associated with the program. The first session is a student orientation session with six successive core cooking sessions.

The program provides basic nutrition tips and includes recipes that emphasize vegetables and fruits; It is based on a "train the trainer" model; Trained volunteers from the school community lead the *Let's Get Cookin'* program; All volunteers must be trained by the Middlesex-London Health Unit before leading the program in their school community.

Each cooking session has a theme (e.g. breakfast, lunch, snacks etc.). The recipes in the program are based on Canada's Food Guide and each recipe includes either a vegetable or a fruit.

(Source: Middlesex-London Health Unit, <https://www.healthunit.com/lets-get-cookin>)

Additionally, the Middlesex-London Health Unit offers a program, Let's Get Cookin', to teach junior, intermediate and secondary school youth how to cook (see textbox for more information). The program functions within a train-the-trainer model and since its commencement in 2012, 166 facilitators have been trained in the program. This breaks down to 44 schools and eight community agencies with trained facilitators.<sup>120</sup>

Children and youth are also able to enhance their food education through course work. Students in grades 1-9 are required to complete a credit each year in Physical Education and Health. A part of the Health aspect of this course teaches students about healthy eating and student nutrition; however, there is limited knowledge of what is actually being taught, if its relative to the teach, and how much of what is taught is dependent on food skills. After grade 9, students are no longer required to take Physical Education and Health.<sup>121</sup> Secondary students

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<sup>119</sup> London Middlesex County, Coordinator at Ontario Student Nutrition Program, 2015.

<sup>120</sup> Dietitian for Let's Get Cookin', 2015.

<sup>121</sup> The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 to 12: Health and Physical Education, 2015, Print, at pp.109-187.

are also able to enrol in hospitality and tourism classes where they learn to prepare, present and serve food.

Higher-grade level courses within hospitality and tourism (grades 11 and 12) are designed to prepare students for a career in baking and/or with Chef training. It is important to note that while Let's Get Cookin' and hospitality classes offer a great opportunity for children and youth to learn to prepare food, these opportunities and courses are not mandatory in the Ontario curriculum.<sup>122</sup> With the absence of home economics in Ontario's curriculum, many argue that children and youth are provided with insufficient means to learn basic life skills, including those that foster food literacy. Home economics courses previously provided students with knowledge about balancing food budgets, planning meals, health and nutrition, and cooking and baking. It is recommended that food education be built into school curriculum to ensure that students are learning about food, given the important and never ending role it plays in everyone's day-to-day lives.

Some children and youth are able to learn about food and the food system if their school has a school garden. For example, John Paul II Catholic Secondary School in London, recently created a school garden where students learn to produce their own food in an urban setting. The Principal noted that the garden is a great teaching tool for the students, where students built garden boxes to hold plants such as cherry tomatoes, cauliflower, carrots, onions and green beans.<sup>123</sup>

Academic courses that improve food knowledge are also available at the post-secondary level. In London there are two local universities (Western University and Brescia) and a local college (Fanshawe College). Middlesex does not have any post-secondary institutions. In London, a large number of university and college courses that focus on the food system are available. This includes 41 courses at Western (39 courses in Food and Nutrition, one in Geography and one in Sociology); 32 courses through the Food and Nutrition Department at Brescia (32 courses offered through 11 programs<sup>124</sup>); and 88 courses through Fanshawe College (88 courses through eight programs<sup>125</sup>).

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<sup>122</sup> Ministry of Education. "What do you need to graduate?" 2015, Web, at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/graduate.html>

<sup>123</sup> The London Free Press, "Urban Garden at John Paul II Catholic Secondary School in London a Big Hit," 2015, Web, at <http://www.lfpress.com/2015/09/18/urban-garden-at-john-paul-ii-catholic-secondary-school-in-london-a-big-hit>

<sup>124</sup> Food and Nutrition Programs include: Honours Specialization in Nutrition and Dietetics (BSc), Honours Specialization in Food Science and Technology (BSc), Honours Specialization in Nutrition and Families (BA), Honours Specialization in Food Management (BMOS), Honours Specialization in Nutrition and Dietetics/HBA Combined Degree Program, Specialization in Foods and Nutrition (BSc), Specialization in Nutrition and Families (BA), Specialization in Food Management (BMOS), Major in Nutrition and Families, Major in Food Management (BMOS) and Minor in Foods and Nutrition.

<sup>125</sup> Programs at Fanshawe College offering courses with a focus on the food system include: Culinary Skills, Food and Nutrition Management, Dental Assisting, Baking and Pastry Arts Management, Practical Nursing, Hospitality Management- Food and Beverage, Horticulture Technician and Dental Hygiene.

At the continuing education level, Fanshawe College offers a graduate certificate in Artisanal Culinary Arts, which incorporates 11 courses with a focus on the food system. While Western University does not offer any continuing education classes for adults related to the food system, Brescia (an affiliation of Western University) offers a Masters in Food and Nutrition, which contains five courses with a focus on the food system. It should be noted that while Middlesex-London has a wide range of post-secondary opportunities to learn about food and the food system, these opportunities cost several hundred dollars to enrol and often require enrolling in a particular degree.<sup>126</sup>

As can be seen through the number of student nutrition courses and post-secondary university classes, Middlesex- London offers a wide variety of formal learning opportunities in regards to learning about food. These learning opportunities are consistent with the Province of Ontario’s goal to increase food literacy.

### ***Food Education, Knowledge and Literacy in the Community***

Outside of the academic environment, residents of Middlesex-London also have opportunities to learn about food and the food system. Middlesex-London offers a range of programming to improve people’s food skills; at least 27 examples were identified through secondary research. Table 31 contains a list of some organizations offering food skills programming and the name of the program; however, this is neither an exhaustive list nor contains multiple programs that organizations may offer. In addition, some programs may fall under more than one category.

**Table 31: Examples of Food Skills Programming in Middlesex-London**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Program Name</b>
<b>Community-Based</b>	
Adaptive Cooking	Cooking Classes (designed for improving the navigation of own kitchen for persons with disabilities)
Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre	Slow Food Collective Program & Canning Classes (usually just in Fall)
Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre	In Partnership with: Compass Community Church or London Training Centre
London Intercommunity Health Centre (Huron Location)	Canning Classes & Cooking on a Budget, program by NELCE
London Training Centre	Local Food Skills Program; Safe Food Handling; Smart Serve; Culinary Pre-Apprenticeship
Middlesex-London Health Unit	Let's Get Cookin' ('train the trainer' program)
South London Community Centre	Cooking Program
Thames Valley District School Board: Adult, Alternative & Continuing Education	Lifeskills - Cooking; Cooking Classes
London Community Resource Centre	Grow Cook Learn
Life Resource Centre	Community Kitchen Cooking Classes

<sup>126</sup> Fanshawe College, “Admission Fees,” 2015, Web, at <http://www.fanshawec.ca/admissions/tuition-fees>.

Organization	Program Name
<b>Youth Focused</b>	
Carling- Thames Family Centre	Stir It Up with Literacy Program; Kids Cooking; & Sprout Gardening Program
Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre	As part of Funky Foods
Family Centre Argyle (in Lord Nelson Public School)	Stir It up
Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre	In partnership with Compass Community Church or London Training Centre
Growing Chefs!	Growing Communities; School Project
London Community Resource Centre	Cook It Up!
N'Amerind (London) Friendship Centre	As part of the Wasa-Nabin Program
Northwest London Resource Centre	As part of an after school program
South London Community Centre	Youth Chefs
The Boys & Girls Club of London	As part of the M.A.P Program
White Oaks Family Centre	Stir It up
YMCA of Western Ontario	In Partnership with Growing Chefs!
<b>College Courses</b>	
Fanshawe College	Chef Training
<b>Private Business (*potentially Fee-based)</b>	
Aroma Restaurant	Cooking Studio
Chef Chris Squire	Cooking Classes
Cooking Matters	Cooking Classes by Chef Suki Kaur-Cosier
Jill's Table	Cooking Classes
Kiss The Cook	Cooking Classes
PC Cooking School	Adult Classes; Teen Classes; Kids Classes

Food education, knowledge and literacy can also be accessed and improved through means of social media. Recent studies show that an increasing number of people, especially youth, rely on social media to access information and that social media serves as a tool for enhanced learning opportunities and awareness raising.<sup>127</sup>

Social media communication regarding the local food system within Middlesex County often utilizes two hashtags (one to specify geographical location and one to communicate about the food system). The table below illustrates hashtags that are currently trending on the geographical area and the local food system. While there are three hashtags that specify the City of London as a geographical area, there is not one that focuses on Middlesex County. The hashtag #MiddlesexCounty is currently being used to specify the geographical area of Middlesex County, New Jersey.

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<sup>127</sup> Gween Schurgin O'Keeffe and Kathleen Clarke-Pearson, *The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families*, 127(4), 2011.

**Table 32: Geographical Hashtags for Middlesex-London and Popular Food System Hashtags (Source: Twitter, 2015; Bucky Box, Hashtags for Local Food, 2012)**

Geographical Hashtags		
#Ldnont		
#Downtownlondon		
#londonontario		
Food System Hashtags		
#publichealth	#eatlocal	#foodchat
#farmersmarket	#agriculture	#farming
#fresh	#AgGen	#goodfood
#local	#foodbloggers	#SustainableAg
#food	#SustAg	#Agroecology
#organic	#foodsystem	#profood
#nutrition	#eatlocal	#locavore
#localfood	#realfood	#SlowFood
#foodsecurity	#SlowMoney	#foodies
#agchat	#UrbanAg	#CSA
#FoodHub	#permaculture	#biodynamic
#FoodRevolution	#FoodSummit	
#localfoodsoftware	#foodtech	

A list of Twitter leaders and influencers within the local food system who communicate on social media using the above noted hashtags are listed in the table below. These Twitter accounts were selected through searching a combination of the geographical hashtags and food system hashtags noted above. This is not an exhaustive list and in no way should be seen as an endorsement of the handles; however, it serves as a sampling of Twitter leaders on the local food system. The list is intended to assist in the further development of an online “local food” community in Middlesex-London.

**Table 33: Twitter Accounts Tweeting about the Middlesex-London Food System (Source: Twitter, August-October 2015)**

Twitter Handle	Number of Followers
@LondonSoup	1265
@FarmBoy	5077
@London_Training	2301
@WFFarmerMkt	5351
@LondonGetsLocal	1046
@LDNCommFdn	3388
@CouponForHunger	357
@EcoPlaceOrganic	790
@VegFestLondon	950
@RootCellarLdn	1618
@Soho_market	784
@MasonvilleMkt	1594

Twitter Handle	Number of Followers
@YMICafe	1297
@Heemans	3090
@CoventMarket	6334
@LondonFoodBank	2141
@FoodNotLawnsLDN	571
@realissue	530
@growingchefs	1515
@MLHealthUnit	7866
@WestministerLdn	297
@LondonCRC	670
@MasonvilleMkt	1667
@southdalemkt	240
@Nutritionbites8	918
@EatGreenOrganic	538

### The Healthy Kids Community Challenge

Through the Healthy Kids Community Challenge 45 communities in Ontario, including both Middlesex County and London, will receive resources (funding, training, and marketing tools) over a four-year period from the Province of Ontario to help promote healthy eating, physical activity, and healthy behaviours for children through community programs and activities. The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is based on the EPODE (Ensemble Prevenons l'Obesite des Enfants – Together Let's Prevent Childhood Obesity) methodology. This strategy began in France and has been recognized as an international best practice in obesity prevention by the World Health Organization. The EPODE model has the potential to be applied to other types of community programming in order to evaluate their effectiveness.

Source: Government of Ontario, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/healthykids/hkcc.aspx#communities>

Food system stakeholders noted specific resources as being particularly **useful to them** for staying informed about the Middlesex-London food system. These are listed in table 3.4.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>128</sup> This report is not endorsing the resources listed in Table 34; they are simply the one stakeholders identified during the CFA process.

**Table 34: Communication Resources Identified by Community Stakeholders**

Food Secure Canada – webinars and resources	Local Food for Local People committee (Elgin County)
Food Not Lawns – webinars	Child & Youth Network
Seeds of Diversity – mailings	Ontario Trillium Foundation
Pillar non-profit – resources and trainings	London Environmental Network – trainings and event promotions
Local Gets Local Facebook group	Community Gardens London
CityFarmer.info	Forage City London
Sustain Ontario resource library	Colleagues at OMAFRA
Pfenning’s Organic Farm	On the Move Organics – emails
Victoria Order of Nurses (OSNP)	Sustain Ontario Facebook page
Poverty Research Centre	Good Food Organizations
Food Land Ontario	Bryan Lavery
Eat Drink Magazine	Heemans Farm
Growing Chefs!	Food section of the Globe and Mail
Bon Appetite magazine	Fine Cooking magazine
Ontario Cow Feeders Association	Ontario Pork – Newsletter
London Food Bank – website	London’s Carolinian Food Forest
Beautiful Edibles	Ontario Edible Education Network
Middlesex-London Health Unit	Community Foundation London
London Community Resource Centre	Community Food Centre Canada – POD exchange, newsletter, and social media

As can be seen from the information above, there are a number of opportunities for people of all ages to learn about food and the food system. Unfortunately, there are a limited number of these opportunities that are mandatory. Roughly twenty to thirty years ago, students were required to take home economics, where they learned basic cooking skills, sewing, how to stock a pantry, healthy eating and nutrition, and meal planning. When home economics was removed

from the curriculum, the information it taught was not completely covered by other courses, and the courses that did cover some of the information were not mandatory courses. As a result, this has left today's children lacking key knowledge about food and the food system. There are opportunities to see greater engagement by children and youth in learning about food and the food system by encouraging children and youth to seek these opportunities on their own, possibly by making this a "cool" topic to learn about, or through making learning this knowledge mandatory by building it into existing and/or new curriculum.

## **6.2 Gaps in Knowledge**

Although there are a number of different opportunities for people to engage in food education efforts within Middlesex-London, we do not have a clear indication of how many people within Middlesex-London are taking part in these programs, courses, and using the resources available to them. Without this information, we cannot know how many Middlesex-London residents are learning about food and the food system.

The list of local food system leaders via Facebook and Twitter is neither comprehensive nor been evaluated. The Twitter list was gathered via local food system hashtags; therefore, it is highly likely that more local food system leaders are using Twitter and hashtags that haven't been included in the search. Similarly, the list of Facebook food system leaders was populated through conversations with key local food system stakeholders. As a result, it is highly likely that there are Facebook leaders that have not been included.

## **6.3 Strengths and Assets**

There are several assets within food education, knowledge and literacy in Middlesex-London. Over 50% of elementary and secondary schools in London and Middlesex County offered Ontario Student Nutrition Programs (80 of 140 schools) in the 2014-2015 school year. Of these programs, over two-thirds (56) are held in elementary schools and 73% of high schools have OSNPs. John Paul II Catholic Secondary School's school garden was noted as an asset in helping to improve youth's food literacy skills and knowledge. Food education is also widely available at the post-secondary level within Middlesex-London. Food education courses at the post-secondary level are offered through Western, Fanshawe and Brescia and focus on the food system ranging from production to consumption. There are also a variety in food education courses offered through community organizations and private businesses that target people of different ages (targeted audiences of children, youth, adults and families). Additionally, the Child and Youth Network is engaged in multiple projects that teach children and youth about healthy eating as well as other projects focusing on food security in London. It was noted by community members, during consultations through the Community Food Assessment process, that more and more people are becoming interested in knowing where their food comes from and are taking steps to learn more about the food system.

Programming related to food, specifically Growing Chefs!, Nutrition Ignition!, Life Resource Centre’s Community Kitchen Cooking Class, and the London Training Centre’s Local Food Skills program were noted as strengths. These assets can be leveraged and built upon to increase food literacy in Middlesex-London. As people become more food literate, the potential to advance the movement for a more sustainable, local healthy food system becomes greater as people are more familiar with the issues in need of addressing within the local food system. The Conference Board of Canada articulates that food literate populations impact the local food system as they become especially concerned with environmental outcomes including; the presence of pesticides, antibiotics, and growth hormones. Food literate populations are also increasingly concerned with dietary and health outcomes that result from the food they consume.<sup>129</sup>

Table 35 lists all of the strengths and assets identified through the community food assessment process that pertain to this section of the report (please see 1.2 for Asset Legend).

**Table 35: Strengths and Assets within Food Education, Knowledge and Literacy**

FOOD EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND LITERACY						
						
81. Growing Chefs! London, Ontario						
82. Community support for and interest in local food						
						
83. Food education courses at the post-secondary level offered through Western University, Fanshawe College and Brescia University College						
84. Brescia University College (Foods and Nutrition program)						
85. Fanshawe’s culinary programs						
86. School garden at John Paul II Catholic Secondary School						
						
87. Nutrition Ignition!						
88. Life Resource Centre (low budget nutritious cooking and skills development)						
						

<sup>129</sup> The Conference Board of Canada, What’s to Eat? Improving Food Literacy in Canada, 2013.

## FOOD EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND LITERACY

89. Over half of elementary and secondary schools in London and Middlesex County offered Ontario Student Nutrition Programs (80 of 140 schools); 73% of high schools with OSNP

90. Child and Youth Network (Healthy Eating Initiative)

### 6.4 Areas to Cultivate

One key area to cultivate within Food Education, Knowledge and Literacy pertains to the limited opportunities children and youth are exposed to in which they learn about food and the food system.

For those that are older, post-secondary courses require students to register in nutrition/culinary-related programs to learn about the food system and these are expensive. Often times, even people who are passionate about food have difficulty finding programming (post secondary and community based programming) that will teach them food preparation skills. Overall, it appears that people receive little education on the local food system (more specifically, basic food nutrition, purchasing and preparation of healthy food, and food production).

Also noted was a lack of awareness about the London Food Charter and a focus on food security as the most prominent issue within the food system. Community members noted that by focusing primarily on food security issues, the importance of food sovereignty in building a strong, resilient local food system is undermined.

### 6.5 Opportunities for Change

Through the community survey, residents of Middlesex-London were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement: “It is important that children, youth and young adults learn about food and the food system.” Overall, residents were highly supportive of this statement. 82% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, 8% somewhat agreed, and the remaining 10% either didn’t agree or disagree, strongly disagree, or didn’t know how they felt about the statement. When compared to other food system issues, opportunities for children, youth, and young adults to learn about food and the food system was the second most supported issue.

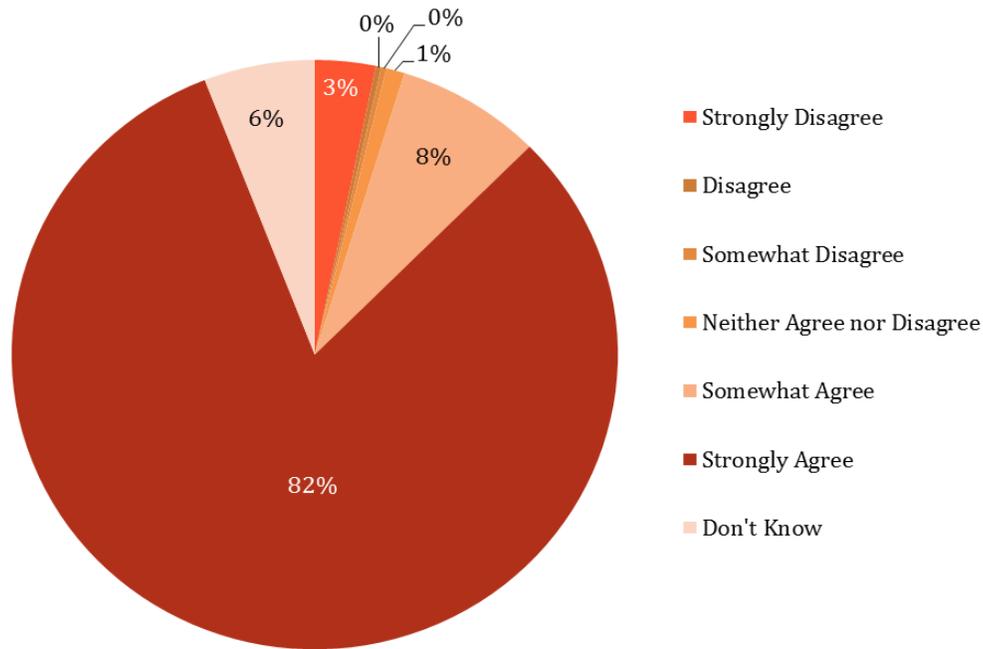
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“Not just one-time learning opportunities, need a required course where all kids need to learn the basics.”

- *Survey Respondent*

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**Figure 47: It is Important that Children, Youth and Young Adults Learn About Food and the Food System**



In identifying the need for children, youth, and young adults to learn about food and the food system, several opportunities exist to make this a reality. Within the school system, an opportunity exists to build more food education curriculum into the Ontario Student Nutrition Program and also, make course material on the food system mandatory (e.g. through field trips to farms, greenhouses, and farmers’ markets, having farmers visit the classrooms, and school gardens). School gardens are a highly effective learning environment that can enhance any school’s ability to improve children’s food literacy. Additionally, if policies about external agencies/individuals were less restrictive, existing education opportunities could be scaled up to teach more students, and teach them on a more regular basis.

Outside of the school system, opportunities exist to educate people about healthy eating and the benefits of buying local food. More generally, opportunities are available to increase food literacy through the creation of a food literacy working group; the group would develop a common food literacy message which could then be disseminated through their networks to residents of Middlesex-London (e.g. through social media). Lastly, an opportunity exists to pilot food based projects (aimed to increase food literacy) with a comprehensive evaluation strategy so participant’s knowledge can be assessed pre-and-post project. This will enable a better understanding of which projects (i.e. school garden, community garden, cooking classes) increase food literacy amongst residents the most.

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“I wish people were more aware of how important local food production is to the security of our community and the nation. We cannot depend on the global food supply to provide good, consistent food in the future.”

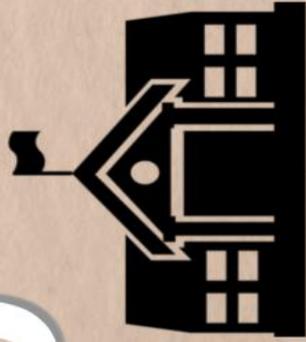
- Survey Respondent

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# 6.0 FOOD EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND LITERACY

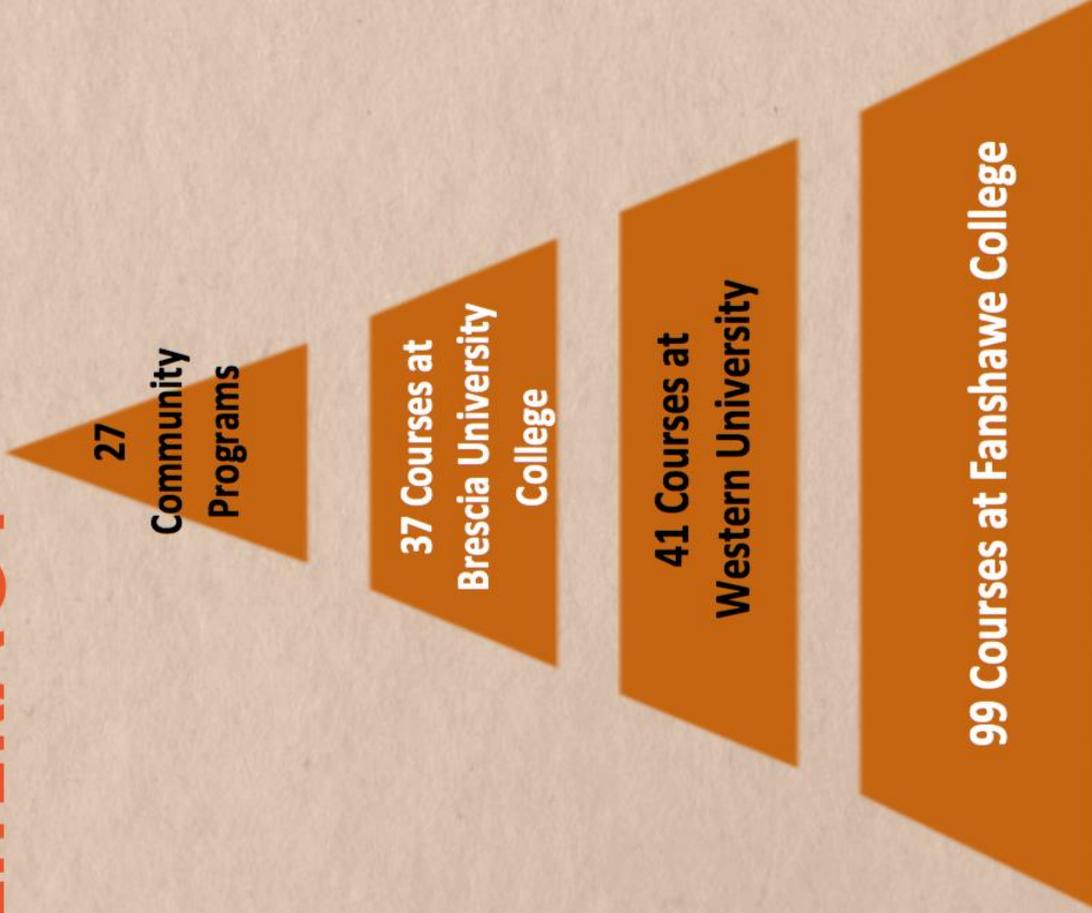
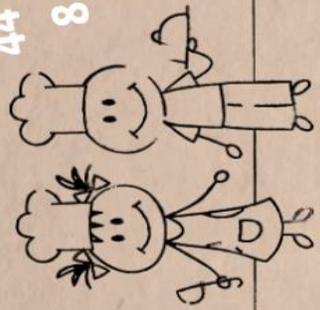
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OSNP



166

Let's Got Cookin'  
Facilitators in  
44 schools &  
8 community  
agencies



Increasing Food Literacy

@MLHealthUnit  
7866



@CoventMarket  
6334

@WFFarmerMkt  
5351



@FarmBoy  
5077



@LDNCommFdn  
3388

@Heemans  
3090

