

Greener Village

community food centre

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BACKGROUNDER: Greener Village

Published: July 6, 2015

Greener Village Community Food Centre has served the Fredericton area for over 30 years. Today, it has become a wellspring for those who share the idea that food has a unique power to bring people together. If we start with food, we will discover our near limitless capacity to care for others no matter what the challenges of life may hold.

Greener Village was founded in 1984, as a conventional not-for-profit food bank. It has since shed this model and joined the growing movement of using a community food centre model to address hunger and food security issues. It has since become a vibrant staging ground for new growth of every kind.

Greener Village adopted its new model because passively combatting hunger was no longer enough. The team had seen the underlying issues and was resolved to meet this growing challenge as a community. Today, Frederictonians come to participate in the programs developed under the centre's four pillars: the food bank, the community gardens, the teaching kitchen, and life skills development program.

In 2011, the centre moved from its former residence on Grandame Avenue to its current home on 22 acres of riverfront property on Riverside Drive. The transition involved an extensive renovation to the old "Green Village Nurseries" property, including the addition of an industrial walk-in freezer, receiving dock and high-efficiency food distribution area. Through the generosity of the community, Greener Village is proud to also have a full-size commercial kitchen to support its programming.

These renovations have made Greener Village the largest of the 66 registered food banks in New Brunswick. Each year, over 1 million dollars worth of food passes through the centre and over 10,000 community members participate in the programs and services offered.

The centre has hosted local political and business figures to share its vision and to showcase the hard work done by over 125 regular volunteers and 7 full-time staff. These intelligent and passionate people have helped bring about new initiatives like the "fresh is best" program; the rain catchment and compost demonstration site; the incredible restoration of the monarch butterfly house; and the outdoor wood-fired cob oven in the garden.

In the years to come, Greener Village hopes to host more school visits, build new and supportive relationships within the community, increase its growing capacity and create signed walking trails down to the Saint John riverfront.

To those who cannot afford perpetual comfort, the world can seem a cold place. But the power within a warm healthy meal extends far beyond its nutrition. The dignity, warmth and acknowledgement that follows food makes it the fundamental instrument of social development. Greener Village will continue its commitment to open new doors of hope, fellowship and opportunity for the all the people of Fredericton.

Greener Village is a not-for-profit community food centre in Fredericton, New Brunswick that seeks to promote food security through its inclusive programs and services. Visit www.greenervillage.org to learn more.

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