

Sharing the Garden and Earth Apples For All

Dawson Creek, on the traditional Treaty 8 territory and the unceded ancestral lands of the Cree, Dane-Zaa, Sauteaux, Sekani, Slavey and Métis



Who We Are

Wesakechak Garden Society is a Métis-led organization in Northeastern BC that provides land-based healing opportunities and employment skills training as part of its person-centered supportive care services focused on healthy living and increased autonomy for individuals with developmental disabilities, complex needs, and mental health challenges.



Project Overview

The initiative addressed food insecurity through planting, harvesting and distribution of potatoes to food banks, community kitchens, and others. It empowers individuals with physical and developmental disabilities to actively engage in food production and community life, and to gain employment skills, demonstrating the power of inclusive food initiatives. Funding helped purchase a potato seeder, increasing efficiency, sustainability, and long-term impact.

Key Highlights

7000 pounds of potatoes were planted, and over 15,000 pounds harvested, to feed Indigenous Elders, food banks, hot meal kitchens, seniors and individuals with complex needs. This project enhanced food literacy; strengthened community partnerships; and developed inclusive work opportunities. Through this project, individuals with complex care networked with community businesses and volunteers they rarely interact with.



Stories of Impact

This large-scale agriculture project, from planning, weeding, harvesting to distribution, was led and delivered by individuals with disabilities or complex care needs. Participants take tremendous pride in gaining employment experience and delivering locally grown potatoes in person, reversing commonly held negative assumptions and stigma directed towards people with disabilities. It also strengthened inter-organizational networking, broadening its impact. The project didn't have enough potato bags; however, a local company rallied and provided the group with large burlap bags, highlighting the community connections.

Next Steps

Wesakechak continues to seek funding to provide wages for individuals who gain employment training, skills and work experience in agriculture through this annual food production initiative. Wesakechak aims to open a farm gate market to be staffed by individuals with a range of abilities and complex needs.

Stages of Food Systems Transformation



Seeding

- Create spaces and opportunities for communities to gather
- Build skills, competencies and leadership
- Engage in critical reflection



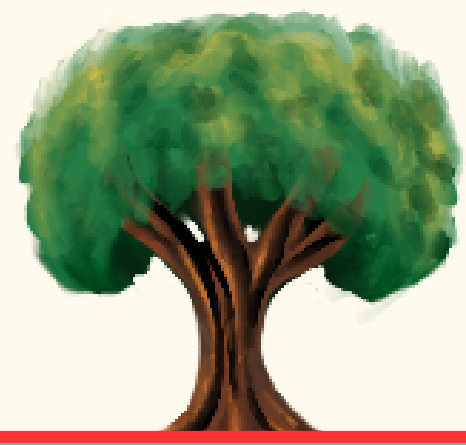
Germinating

- Strengthen networks and coalition building
- Foster equitable relationships and collaboration
- Create processes for accountability and transparency



Rooting

- Facilitate mutual knowledge and resources sharing
- Stimulate co-creation of knowledge
- Leverage community leaders and assets



Growing

- Engage in transformative collective action projects
- Engage in transdisciplinary action research
- Strengthen social movements

Contact

Elsie Wiebe
elsiewiebe@gmail.com
778-349-3080

Acknowledgements

West Moberly First Nation, SLE Enterprises, St. Marks Food Bank, Alliance Church in Dawson Creek, Nawican Friendship Centre, Dawson Creek Aboriginal Family Services, Mountain Christian School, Pouce Coupe Food Bank, Pouce Coupe Community Church, Networks Ministry, Serenity, Dawson Creek Society for Community Living, B-Line Contracting, Métis Society of Dawson Creek, Horse Lake First Nation, Blueberry First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Doig River First Nation.

This project was made possible with funding from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and facilitation from the Public Health Association of British Columbia and Food Banks BC. Learn more: www.CFSD-PHABC.ca

