Public Health Association of BC

FOOD BANKS BC

Community Food Systems Development

#CFSD-BC

Taste of Hope

Quesnel, BC, on the traditional and unceded territory of the Lhtako Dene Nation



Who We Are

Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN) is a peer-led alliance improving life for people who use drugs across northern BC and Canada. CSUN offers safe spaces, harm reduction, advocacy, training, outreach, and peer support while ensuring inclusive, trauma-informed, client-centered services and representation in health, housing, and overdose response efforts.



Project Overview

The CSUN Taste of Hope Project hired a peer Food Coordinator to collect and distribute surplus food from local food recovery organizations Nourish and Green Hope, reducing waste and increasing access for people experiencing food-insecurity. Taste of Hope provides meals and support, plus food-safe training, supplies, and gift cards for fresh produce.

Key Highlights

Through this project, one of CSUN's peer substance users was employed as Food Coordinator to provide access to food for 3,935 people who use drugs, most of whom are Indigenous. CSUN fostered five new partnerships in Quesnel through this project. All 30,697 CSUN harm reduction service touch points provided during this project benefitted from knowing drug user peers could access food and hydration at CSUN.



Stories of Impact

This project provided vital access to food and community connection for people who use substances. By collaborating with local partners like Nourish, Green Hope, and the food bank, it ensured people have what they need to prepare full meals while fostering dignity, trust, and links to vital health services.

Next Steps

The Taste of Hope project was fully implemented prior to CSUN's closure. While the society has since dissolved, the project stands as an inspiring example of peer-led food access and harm reduction in Quesnel.

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

Acknowledgments

This project was supported through a Rapid Stimulus Grant.

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**