

# **Final Report to SDIF from OFCM “Educational Outreach-Organics in Manitoba”**

## **Executive Summary and Introduction**

### **Successes**

As of October 2009, we will complete the first year of an educational outreach project of Growing Up Organic (GUO) program. Public and institutional interest in this educational outreach project has been phenomenal. Between October 2008 and July 2009, three facilitators have provided more than 60 interactive workshops to 40 urban and rural institutions. These workshops, which focused on organic agriculture and food, reached approximately 1200 individuals. The bulk of these workshops were made to students at the high school level. The workshops elicited highly positive feedback from educators and participants alike and resulted in numerous requests for further workshops. In addition to the 40 institutions that received workshops, facilitators received additional requests from other institutions for workshops. Facilitators will be able to support some of these institutions in the fall of 2009 and throughout the second year of the educational outreach project. Over the period of April to July 2009, two facilitators and two volunteers staffed an information booth at 20 conferences, forums and/or events. The facilitators also coordinated three urban garden tours with a fourth scheduled for August 2009. Most of these events were held within the Winnipeg city limits and reached approximately 800 individuals. Through the education outreach project, we designed and distributed a number of age-appropriate materials as well as educator resource packages. These materials were very well received and we even had requests from educators to purchase some materials. Samples of these materials are now posted on the updated portion of the GUO page on our website ([www.guomanitoba.ca](http://www.guomanitoba.ca))

Through the educational outreach project, the GUO gained commitment from a number of new institutions. Since October 2008, more than 18 institutions or programs have indicated their intention to increase organic food options on their menus. A number of these institutions have begun ordering through Fresh Option Organic Delivery (F.O.O.D).

Visits to the GUO page have increased from on average 120 per month in 2008 to 150 hits per month in 2009. We observed that when we increased our public outreach, visits to the website also increased. Several local websites featured links and/or information about our program and two newsletters/magazine articles detailing this outreach project are scheduled for publication in the fall of 2009.

### **Challenges**

In this last year, we increased our outreach to institutions and the public. As a result, we have experienced an increase in the request for services from GUO program participants as well as from those not associated with our program. We receive many more requests than our program can support. Clearly with the limited funds and staff on hand, we have had to restrict the amounts of services that we can offer.

With regards to the workshop and tour outreach, facilitators faced three main challenges. On occasion, we were asked to modify the workshop content to meet participant needs. When possible, we did, but in some cases, the modifications required too much work. The second challenge related to scheduling of workshops. In some cases both facilitators had to present workshops at the same time. Facilitators should look to design a second display booth and perhaps a second set of workshop materials. The third challenge involved collecting written

feedback from educators and or workshop participants. Even though we provided institutions with copies of the evaluations, it was not always easy to collect completed forms.

### **Overall program evaluation and conclusion**

The first year (beginning October 2008) of the education outreach project of the GUO program was extremely successful. We had more interest in the workshops and tours than we anticipated and received excellent feedback from the evaluations. Through the outreach, we were able to reach new urban and rural communities and forge new collaborative partnerships. The outreach project enabled the GUO program to establish new connections with a number of urban and rural institutions interested in program participation. From April 2009 until July 2009, we provided 25 workshops to varying ages of students. The bulk of our workshops were offered at the high school level, as these are educational institutions that are equipped to offer full food service to students. For the same time period, we coordinated three urban garden tours and staffed an information booth at 20 events. We received some local press about our outreach and have two articles scheduled for publication in the fall of 2009. Support for this outreach project came from three part time contract staff, two volunteers and the OFCM-COG Executive Committee. As we enter the second year of the education outreach project, we plan to offer more workshops, increase outreach to institutions and continue to coordinate more urban and rural tours.

### **Program Objectives**

■ *This symbol is used just prior to notes indicating how we have addressed the goals within the project.*

- Provide key information about benefits of organic agriculture and production through a workshop series, tours and tabling information booth outreach to students and the general public;
- Inspire project participants to become involved with organic food production, be it urban or rural;
- Increase the production and consumption of local organic food;
- Involve more institutions in the larger GUO program; and
- Develop local rural and urban organic food systems.

### **Program Goals**

#### **A. Project Goals and Objectives**

##### **Short Term Goals**

- Design a hands-on, Manitoba-based workshop series, adaptable to all ages to teach about organic production, including organic agriculture and gardening skills. ■ The project designed an age-adaptable workshop series with two streams 1) square foot gardening and 2) composting. With regards to composting portion of the workshop, we sourced a good deal of our materials from Resource Conservation. In general facilitators presented one of the two streams, incorporated interactive activities, video clips, demonstrations and discussions.
- Provide at least 20 presentations of the workshop series to the public, with a focus on the student-aged population. ■ Two facilitators presented 25 school-aged workshops over the April to July 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 time period.
- Design accompanying display materials and educational handouts for this project. ■ Completed design materials and educational handouts including an updated informational display board with student-focussed photographs, informational sheets


and posters; activities and student handouts to accompany each of the two streams, an educational package for educators.

- Provide information through public outreach tabling at a minimum of 15 conferences, seminars, forums, and others. Facilitators provided information at 18 conferences, seminars, forums, and other events for the April to July 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 time period.
- Increase the number of institutions serving local organic food through the GUO program from current numbers of institutions (~15) to 35 by year 2011. There are currently approximately 23 institutions and or programs serving or committed to serving organic food through the GUO program.


### Long Term

- Increase knowledge and understanding organic food production through education. Between October 2008 and July 31<sup>st</sup> 2009, the outreach component of this project reached more than 2000 children, youth, educators, business, administration staff and the public in both rural and urban Manitoba. During this time, three facilitators provided approximately 40 institutions with 60 organic-food and agriculture focussed workshops. The interactive nature of the workshops, coupled with the participant feedback surveys indicated that workshops were informative and that following the completion of the workshops, participants had a better understanding of organic food. Educators and teachers readily accepted the handouts and educational materials that facilitators provided and many indicated that they would use the resources in upcoming semesters. In addition to the workshops, we also facilitated four urban garden tours. Participants, including parents had the opportunity for hands-on interaction with organic gardens and urban gardeners. Additionally, for the same 10 month period, we offered an information booth at more than 30 events. Many people visited the booth, gathered materials and signed up to receive information about GUO and OFCM-COG. In November 2008, we had a database of approximately 175 people who had signed up at previous events, indicating that they were interested to receive information about OFCM-COG's programming and outreach. As of July 31<sup>st</sup> 2009, this number had close to doubled. Compared to the previous year for the same 10 month time period, the traffic to the GUO page of the OFCM-COG website doubled. We attribute this increase in traffic to our increased outreach through the program. Through such means as tabling, e-mail updates and our website, we continue to increase knowledge and understanding around organic food production in Manitoba.
- Increase visibility and access to local organic food options for various institutions in Manitoba. Our outreach to institutions for the past 10 months targeted mainly Winnipeg urban high schools and included some rural schools as well. Some of the institutional outreach included elementary schools, junior high and preschool institutions, as well as summer programs for children and youth. We provided these institutions with a resource package including materials prepared by Fresh Option Organic Delivery (F.O.O.D.). The F.O.O.D. sheets listed a wide variety of local organic food options. Over the same time period, F.O.O.D. provided a number of Manitoba organic sample products to those institutions involved in Growing Up Organic. Some of these products included Yumpeez - a flavoured high protein split pea snack; Italian Taralli - a pretzel snack made with local organic flour, and flax; Hemp Moo - a vanilla soy/nut/dairy/gluten free beverage; roasted hemp seeds and organic milk from Organic Meadows. Providing these samples to institutions gives them the opportunity to access new and different local organic food. In our outreach and presentations to workshop participants we highlighted a number of key organic

food options including where to purchase food; organic products that were available on the market; and referred people to the OFCM-COG on-line Down to Earth Guide to Organics in Manitoba as well as the current on line and hard copy versions of the Manitoba Organic Directory published by MAFRI. In January, February and March of 2009, we met or spoke with a number of intuitional food service providers and in some cases the administration as well. The purpose of these meetings was to encourage institutions to make the more to include more local and organic food as part of their menu. Some of the larger institutions included: the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, Red River College, Canadian Mennonite University, and Winnipeg Technical College. Of particular interest were the meetings with the University of Winnipeg's food service manager, Steven Josephson, Chartwells, & Chartwells District Manager and the Director of Food Services at the University, Lydia Warkentin. Since that time, the University of Winnipeg has announced the use of a new independent food service provider – Diversity Food Services. Beginning in the fall of September 2009, this food service will focus on nutritious, affordable and ethnically diverse food option and wherever possible include locally sourced, organic ingredients, with a commitment to fair-trade practices. F.O.O.D, who has serviced the University of Winnipeg's Student Association Soma Café the past year and a half, has confirmed that Ben Kramer, the new Executive Chef of Diversity Food Services, will be ordering organic products for Diversity Food Services. Additionally, for four weeks in the summer 2009, the GUO program and F.O.O.D. provided food to Eco-U Kids Camp (Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport and Achievement Centre -WASAC). This camp provided programming for 130 children from 15 different schools, many of which are inner city. For many of the children in this program, this was the first opportunity to learn about and taste locally grown and organic food. As our program continues to grow, we look for opportunities to increase the visibility and access to local organic food for the institutions that we service through outreach.

- Increase local food security  As one of the tenets of food security, the GUO program has promoted regional self-sufficiency by way of increasing locally available food. We continue to work alongside of organizations such as Manitoba Food Charter, Heifer International, Manitoba Eco Network, the Harvest Moon Society, West Broadway Development Corporation, Spence Neighbourhood Association, Fort Whyte Centre, The Herb Society of Manitoba, Slow Food Manitoba, Manitoba Child and Nutrition Council and Assiniboine Park Conservatory to advance regional self sufficiency.


### **Results and Discussion: Timeline**

Adjustments in time may have been indicated in the timeline category. The  symbol indicates that the duty has been completed. Read the additional comments following the check mark.

### **Project Work Plan**

#### **a. Time frame of project and deliverables**

October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009

| Task              | Duties                        | Timeline  |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Design a hands-on | • Research existing workshops | •  Completed by December |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| workshop series about organic agriculture, including production and gardening skills | <p>and programs (K-12, university and colleges) and compile data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct outreach to determine specifically what types of components must be included in the workshop series for Manitoba (consult with needs of partners or potential partner organizations)</li> <li>• Design workshop content and prepare workshop booklets (ready to print)</li> </ul>   | <p>2008 and updated in April 2009</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed December 2008 and again in April 2009</li> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed by April 2009</li> </ul>  |
| Workshops to interested groups and institutions                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and compile a contact database of suitable locations and events at which to offer workshops (focus on public and private schools, as well as universities and colleges in Manitoba, consider other institutions such as the Public Library, SAG workshops, the Wellness Centre and others)</li> <li>• Complete at least 25 presentations of the workshop series</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Begin October 2008 and updated again in April 2009</li> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed 25 presentations of the workshop series by July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009</li> </ul>   |
| Public outreach  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop educational materials (three handouts) and display materials for tabling (workshop details, photographs, gardening, composting and other)</li> <li>• Post educational outreach project information on OFCM-COG website</li> <li>• Create database of events to table at and locations for tours that include target groups</li> <li>• Table at minimum 15 education and community events, complete at least 5 tours</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed by May 2009</li> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Updated July 2009</li> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Updated in October 2008 and again in April 2009</li> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Target number completed by July 31<sup>st</sup> (18 tabling events and 4 tours, one additional one scheduled for Aug.09)</li> </ul> |
| Follow Up  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of first year report including recommendations &amp; feedback from the project</li> <li>• Feedback from the workshop presentations in the form of a</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed by July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009</li> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed by July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009</li> </ul>  |

|         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
|         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>report</li> <li>• Report on success of outreach and commitment to GUO program involvement</li> <li>• Initial survey and follow up survey to workshop participants and institutions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed Oct 2008, March 2009 and May 2009 interim reports</li> <li>• Survey work conducted until October 2008, second round scheduled for fall 2009</li> </ul> |
| Media   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 2 articles published about the outreach programming</li> <li>• At least 1 radio and or TV segment</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Articles completed, scheduled for printing in fall of 2009 – ECEC newsletter and ACU Asterisk</li> <li>• By October 20, 2009</li> </ul>                          |
| Website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the OFCM-COG website with project details and reports, including final report</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed July 2009</li> </ul>   |

### Performance Measures

#### 1) Number of institutions and individuals participating in workshops and tours

| <b>Workshops and Tours (October 2008-July 2009)</b> | <b>Number(s)</b> |
|---|------------------|
| Number of institutions participating in workshops   | 40               |
| Number of workshops presented                       | 60               |
| Number of individuals participating in workshops    | ~1200            |
| Number of institutions participating in tours       | 4                |
| Number of individuals participating in tours        | ~90              |

#### 2) Number of conferences, forums and events tabled

| <b>Information booth outreach</b>                                 | <b>Number</b> |
|---|---------------|
| Number of conferences, forums and events tabled (April-July 2009) | 20 events     |
| Number of individuals reached through events (April-July 2009)    | ~700 people   |

#### 3) Report compiling evaluation forms, surveys and feedback from workshop and tour participants

Following workshops and urban tours, we provided participants and in some cases staff with feedback forms. Also, we provided institutions with a survey regarding their food services. The following section will highlight the key findings of these surveys. See package for sample results of the various surveys.

### **High school or high school-aged workshops (April 2009-July 2009)**

Of the 12 workshops presented to high school-aged students, we received feedback forms from 10 institutions, totally 134 surveys. The workshops focused on square foot gardening and/or composting in the context of organic agriculture. Participants were asked a series of 7 questions. They included: 1) Did you enjoy this workshop? Please explain why or why not. 2) What did you find the most useful out of this workshop? 3) Was the facilitator knowledgeable about the topic? 4) What did you think of the facilitator's presentation and /or activities? 5) Please provide one suggestion of how the workshop could be improved in the future. 6) Give one example of another type of organic workshop that you'd like to attend. 7) Please add any additional comments. The responses to the second question are compiled below.

| <b>Responses to #2“What did you find the most useful out of this workshop?”</b> | <b>Numbers (134)</b> |
|---|----------------------|
| How to make a square foot garden/grow your own garden/information about plants  | 40                   |
| It was informative/interesting facts  | 22                   |
| The activities/videos/discussions/video clips                                   | 31                   |
| The difference between organic and conventional food                            | 10                   |
| No response to this question  | 10                   |
| Information about composting  | 8                    |
| What is available locally/how to access local food                              | 7                    |
| I liked everything  | 5                    |
| How to take care of the environment   | 1                    |

For the same 12 workshops, we provided teachers or program staff with a survey. We collected 11 surveys, which represent 9 institutions. In some cases more than one instructor or program staff completed the 8 question survey. Consistent with the feedback forms from the participants, instructors also indicated that students/youth enjoyed the workshops. Many of the participants and instructors surveys wrote that the workshops were informative and interesting. The following charts summarize the responses to question #3.

| <b>Responses to #3 “What did you find the most useful out of this workshop?”</b> | <b>Responses (11)</b> |
|--|-----------------------|
| Provided a good overview to the variety of topics/was informative                | 3                     |
| The conventional vs. organic debate  | 2                     |
| The interaction/involvement/hands-on   | 2                     |
| Information about square foot gardening  | 3                     |
| Where our food comes from  | 1                     |

In terms of how the workshops could be improved, some instructors indicated that they would like to see more up-to-date videos, more hands on content, i.e. actually building a garden,

more oriented to high school students and more time allotted to the workshop. From the facilitator perspective, we were able to incorporate some of the suggestions and revise the workshops as we progressed with the sessions. We changed the video clips, included more activities and included more photographs oriented to high school students.

### **Adult Workshops**

We presented two workshops out of the 25 to adults. One of the workshops was to a group of Early Childhood Educators in training. This group received the same survey as the instructors at the high school level. One survey respondent indicated that it was the first time that she had learned about organic food, while another wrote that the workshop helped her to learn about how to look for organic foods and where they are grown. A third respondent wrote that she didn't realise that some Manitoba farmers were organic and prior to the workshop she didn't know what the term "organic" meant.

### **Early Years Workshops**

We provided six of the 25 workshops to elementary school students and an additional two workshops to preschool children. Of these eight workshops, we received four completed surveys from the instructors and 3 sets of completed surveys from the participants. The students and instructors provided a wide range of comments about the workshops. Most students wrote that they liked the interactive activities and/or the videos. The suggestions that the instructors provided for improving the workshops included: more time, bring in organic food vs. conventional to taste test, and more visuals to help the younger children understand the concepts.

### **Urban Tours**

In addition to the 25 workshops, we coordinated three urban garden tours for the April to July 2009 time period. Two of the tours took place at the Pam Am Forest and were provided by the Landless Farmer Coop. Two different child care centers visited the site. The third tour took place at the Kids Garden, which is run by the Spence Neighbourhood Association. We received three completed survey forms that represented two of the three tours. All three respondents remarked that it was wonderful for children to experience the growth of local food and begin to understand the importance of growing locally.

### **Institutional Food Service**

We received six completed food service surveys from the institutions. Four of the six surveys specified that they would be interested in offering local and organic food. One of these four surveys came from a summer camp program that was already committed to ordering organic food and did so at the end of July. Follow up with these institutions and those that did not complete a survey should take place in the fall of 2009.

## 4) Project Results and Completion of Deliverables

Through the education outreach project we were able to achieve all of our objectives and completed the deliverables (see table above). In terms of our objectives, we provided key information about benefits of organic agriculture and production through a workshop series (25 completed between April and July 2009); tours (3 completed between April and July 2009, additional tour scheduled for August 2009); and tabling information booth outreach to students and the general public (completed 18 events between April and July 2009). We inspired project participants to become involved with urban and or rural organic food production. A number of students indicated in their surveys and through the workshops that they planned to get more involved with buying local food and growing their own food. In terms of increasing

the production and consumption of local organic food, through the various forms of outreach, a number of institutions indicated that they were interested to incorporate more local organic food in their menus and some larger institutions such as the University of Winnipeg committed to using local organic food in part of their food service. GUO continues to work with F.O.O.D. to develop the local, rural and urban food systems that can service various institutions.

#### 5) Report on Communication – Where the program was profiled

- Media coverage
  - **Newsletters articles** - Early Childhood Education Council Newsletter – to be published in fall 2009, circulation to membership, approximately 4000; Assiniboine Credit Union – Asterisk Newsletter, published quarterly article included in fall 2009, circulation to all members 100,000 plus and copies available at the 22 Winnipeg branches and two additional branches Gillam and Thompson; Manitoba Eco Network - Eco-Journal, May June 2009, mention in article, circulation ~4000; Vita Health E-newsletter, published in both June and July 2009, circulation ~10,000 members, *see hard copy in mailed package*
  - **Website Links** -Vita Health website under Eco Living [www.vitahealthstores.ca/about-partners.php](http://www.vitahealthstores.ca/about-partners.php); Canadian Organic Growers website under Growing Up Organic [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca); Green Party of Manitoba [www.greenparty.mb.ca/GPM/res-int.html](http://www.greenparty.mb.ca/GPM/res-int.html); Children’s Health and Environment Partnership [www.childrenewvironment.ca](http://www.childrenewvironment.ca); Resource Conservation [www.livinggreenlivingwell.ca/school/farm-to-school](http://www.livinggreenlivingwell.ca/school/farm-to-school)
  - **Growing Up Organic reports** - posted on the Organic Food Council of Manitoba website, Growing Up Organic page [www.organicfoodcouncil.org/growingup.php](http://www.organicfoodcouncil.org/growingup.php) and on the Canadian Organic Growers’ website ([www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca))
- Conferences, Workshops and other events (*If interested, please request database of events attended. We also have a folder of photos taken over the April 2009 – July 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 time period.*)
- Educational Materials
  - A resource package provided at each of the 25 workshop includes age appropriate poster (either child or high school oriented), updated GUO FAQ, organic information sheets (2 types), resource package for educators, F.O.O.D. information package
  - New handouts and materials include: 4 seasonal sheets oriented to early years with a farm bio, seasonal recipe and information and/or activities about organic farming (Spring sheet was sent to institutions involved with GUO and both Spring and Summer sheets were provided in resource packages to early years workshops), a farm handout activity sheet, square foot gardening activity handout, composting activity handout and organic vs. conventional card activity and materials from the resource package (listed above) provided at information booths and workshops
  - GUO oriented materials for information booth including photos, posters, and age appropriate handouts
  - Visit the GUO “splash” page [www.guomanitoba.ca](http://www.guomanitoba.ca) to find a direct link to the GUO program on the OFCM-COG website

- Other outreach
  - F.O.O.D. included copies of a GUO update letter with institutional deliveries including Yumpeez samples May 2009

**How the project contributed to 1) *Encouragement of environmentally sound decisions and actions* 2) *Support economic development and diversification* and 3) *Supported activities that may benefit the global and local environment***

1. *Encouragement of environmentally sound decisions and actions.*

This project promoted education surrounding local organic food production and consumption. Organic agriculture is seen as environmentally sound for the reasons stated in the *Sustainable Agriculture Practises* section in the original proposal submitted in October 2008. The project targeted students, food service providers, administration at high school learning facilities and the public. Students, teachers and educators learned about ways to reduce their impact on the environment by buying local, producing their own food and composting. The program provided teachers and educators with tools (resource guide, website links, and activities) to access information about organic food. Institutions, as well as the public, learned about what kinds of organic foods are available locally and how to access these foods. Through this outreach, we increased understanding around the consumption of local organic food and Manitoba products. In collaboration with F.O.O.D., we provided a number of new food product samples to preschool facilities. Some of the outreach lead to purchases and or commitment to purchase local organic food.

In order to measure the increase in consumption of local organic food among those participating in this outreach project, we did administer an initial survey to participants and or institutions and will follow up in the future with a yearly survey. Although not all the institutions chose to complete the survey, those that were completed indicated a great interest in ordering local and organic food. Only one of the six institutions that completed the surveys indicated that they were currently ordering organic food. We have scheduled some fall follow-up time to revisit a number of the institutions that showed an interest local and organic food.

2. *To stimulate economic development and diversification.*

To measure the stimulation of economic development in the agricultural sector, particularly organic agriculture, OFCM continues to work along side of F.O.O.D. Since 2007, F.O.O.D has been the main distributor accessing and distributing local organic food for the GUO program. Recent reports that track the number of institutions ordering, the amount and variety of organic food by project participants from F.O.O.D. continue to show a marked increase. For example, for the month of July, comparing 2008 with 2009, the number of institutions doubled and the amount of food ordered increased by 274%. Other months beginning in January 2009 compared with the previous year, demonstrate consistent growth in food purchasing. Increases range from 13% right up to 274% growth per month. More recently, we have been in contact with Eatit.ca, Blue Earth Organics and the Landless Farmer Cooperative about possibly expanding the scope of the program services. Project participants continue to complete a pre and post survey to assess the variety and amount of increase in organic food consumption.

3. *To support activities that may benefit both the global and local environment.*

Through this outreach project, more goods and services continue to be produced and purchased locally. F.O.O.D. provided a variety of sample food products to those institutions involved with the program. As institutions purchase new products within the local community, less dependency on outside markets and greater community and self-reliance will be developed. Through the workshop and tour components of this outreach, individuals widened their scope of what types of food were available locally and how to grow and access local organic food. As institutions and individuals turn towards selecting more sustainably grown food, they in turn support organic agriculture that reduces off-farm inputs such as chemical pesticides, fertilizers and biotech seeds associated with conventional farming. Fewer inputs mean more money remains on the farm and rural agricultural communities are maintained. Eliminating the inputs and water pollution (due to nitrogen runoff normally associated with conventional agriculture) lessens the environmental impact. Locally produced and consumed foods help to minimize greenhouse gas emissions that are connected to long distance food transportation costs. The more food that can be grown and consumed locally, the better for our environment, both locally, as well as globally.

### **Project challenges, successes, overall project evaluation and conclusion**

#### **Successes**

In October 2009, we will complete the first year of the educational outreach project of Growing Up Organic (GUO). We have had a number of successes related to the educational outreach project. At present there are 24 institutions committed to ordering organic food through the program. 24 institutions are higher than we predicted for the third year of the program, as our goal was to gain a commitment from 20 institutions by December 2010. In previous spring and summer months, ordering of organic food has typically decreased. This year, ordering has increased, in part due to the new involvement of a summer camp program. Looking into fall 2009, the new independent food services at the University of Winnipeg (Diversity Food Services) are committed to ordering local organic foods. Fresh Option Organic Delivery (F.O.O.D.) is working with the Executive Chef to coordinate local organic components.

Through the education outreach project we designed and distributed a number of age-appropriate materials, particularly tailored to students between the ages of 6 to 18. These materials were very well received and we even had requests from educators to purchase some materials. We designed and presented an interactive workshop series oriented to school-aged children and youth. Additionally we compiled and distributed a resource package to educators; updated our website to include school-oriented materials; and adapted our PowerPoint presentations to focus on age appropriate levels.

We created surveys for participants and educators. The information gathered from the feedback helped us to continually modify and adapt the workshops. Additionally we surveyed institutions about what types of foods were offered through their food service. Over a period of four months, two facilitators provided 25 workshops to a wide age range of individuals. The range included preschool, elementary, high school and adults. The project received many more requests for workshops than we were able to accommodate. In some cases, institutions requested multiple workshops for varying ages and in other cases facilitators were asked to provide workshops in a different semester or time interval. Several evaluation forms completed by educators requested

that the facilitators return in the future to present additional workshops. The workshops were very well received and positive feedback was corroborated by both educators and participants alike.

Over the outreach period, the facilitators participated and attended conferences, workshops, and networking meetings in Manitoba. The two facilitators and two volunteers tabled at a GUO oriented information booth at more than 18 events. Between April and July 2009, approximately 800 people visited the information booths. Over this same time period, we hosted three urban garden tours for participating centers including two to the Pan Am Forest hosted by the Landless Farmer Collective and one to Kids Garden hosted by Spence Neighbourhood Association. A fourth tour hosted by Spence Neighbourhood Association is scheduled for August 2009.

We maintained a website presence on both our local OFCM-COG website as well as the COG national website. Visits to the GUO page have increased from approximately 120 per month in 2008 to 150 hits per month in 2009. We observed that in the months that we increased our public outreach, visits to the website also increased. Several local websites featured links and/or information about our program and two newsletters/magazine articles detailing this outreach project are scheduled for publication in the fall of 2009.

### **Challenges**

In this last year, we increased our outreach to institutions and the public. As a result, we have experienced an increase in the request for services. Institutions both connected and not connected to the GUO program continue to contact us requesting tours or workshops. We have received increasing requests to sit on food related committees and we continue to receive weekly requests to table at various events. Clearly, with the limited funds and staff on hand, we have had to limit the amount of support that we can offer. As an additional workshop challenge, some institutions requested that we modify the workshop content to meet their needs. In some cases the content had to be adjusted to meet age levels and in other cases the requests related to specific content. When possible, facilitators did modify the content, but in some cases, this required too much work. Furthermore, in a few instances, both facilitators scheduled workshops or tabling opportunities at the same time. The logistics of splitting materials between two locations presented a few challenges. If outreach were to increase, facilitators should design a second display booth and a second set of workshop materials.

Receiving written feedback from the workshops on the part of educators and or participants was not always possible as well. Even though we provided institutions with copies of the evaluations, it was not always easy to collect completed forms. In some cases, there was not ample time to complete the evaluations within the workshop timeframes, in other cases, the sheets were lost or educators were too busy to respond to e-mails or phone calls. In this way, we were not able to collect evaluative surveys from all participants related to the workshops and tours. Further to these types of feedback forms, we also tried to administer food service surveys. Again, we were not always able to collect completed surveys due to the reasons mentioned above. Additionally, in some cases, the educators or staff did not have access to the information and therefore they were not able to complete the surveys.

The facilitators ran into a few challenges regarding coordinating tours. In the past, the program mainly received requests for farm tours. This spring and summer, we received five requests for urban garden tours in Winnipeg. As we were not prepared for these types of requests, we did not have a prepared list of sites that could be visited. As a result, in order to service these requests, we forged some new relationships with organizations. Furthermore, in some cases we were asked to provide an activity or on-site game to accompany the tour. As our program was simply acting

in a coordinator capacity, we took these requests to the organizations that were providing the tours.

With regards to the work plan, we were able to complete and surpass components of the plan with the exception of the one TV or radio interview. We have been unable to coordinate this to date, but hope to be able to interest a media station in featuring a story about our program for the fall of 2009. We continue to write grant applications to secure adequate funding to support, as a part of our program, the ongoing requests for educational outreach.

### **Overall program evaluation and conclusion**

The first year of the education outreach project of the GUO program was extremely successful. We had more interest in the workshops and tours than we anticipated and received excellent feedback from the evaluations. Through the outreach, we were able to reach new urban and rural communities and forge new collaborative partnerships. The outreach project enabled the GUO program to establish new connections with a number of urban and rural institutions interested in program participation. From October 2008 until July 2009, we provided approximately 60 workshops to 40 institutions with varying ages of students. The bulk of our workshops were offered at the high school level, as these are one of the types of educational institutions that are equipped to offer full food service to students. For the same time period, we coordinated three four garden tours and staffed an information booth at more than 20 events. We received some local press about our outreach and have two articles scheduled for publication in the fall of 2009. Support for this outreach project came from three part time contract staff, two volunteers and the OFCM-COG Executive Committee. As we enter the second year of the education outreach project, we plan to offer more workshops, increase our outreach to institutions and continue to coordinate more urban and rural tours.