

GUO Interim Report April 2009

1. Previous GUO report (December 2008)

The final report for SDIF completed at the end of December 2008 also doubled as the GUO report and provided an overview of a year in the GUO program in review. Visit the GUO page to view this report. <http://www.organicfoodcouncil.org/growingup.php> (see near the bottom of the GUO page)

2. Institutions currently involved with GUO

Through child care outreach, there are currently 21 centers involved with the program. 8 of these centers are connected to the YMCA/YWCA child care programs and recently (April 2009) indicated a willingness to participate in the program. Through the outreach to educational institutions (conducted by Katharina Steiffenhofer November 2008 – March 2009, see attached report) there are now a number of schools and colleges and universities that are working to incorporate local and organic food. The GUO program must reconfigure the way in which it measures “program participation”. Educational institutions such as public and private schools, universities and colleges, can not participate in the GUO program in the same way in which child care centers participate. See program recommendations for the program #9 for more details.

3. Grants and Funding

Current Status of Project Funding The GUO program received funding (\$15,000) from Sustainable Development Innovations Fund (SDIF) for the third year of our program. This funding is not for core administration of the program, but rather for outreach to mainly educational institutions. This funding will be completed by the end of July 2009. No further funding from grants has been secured for GUO at this time.

SDIF work: Beginning in mid April, a workshop series will be designed and outreach to mainly educational institutions or locales that service school-aged children will be conducted. This work will continue until the end of July 2009. For the same time period, GUO will be at more than 20 public events with a GUO-focused information booth in and around Winnipeg.

Early Childhood Education Council Membership (ECEC-M)

In the summer of 2008, GUO received a \$1000 grant to design and print educational activity based materials related to organic agricultural. The materials were designed with an elementary school focus in mind. Kris Antonius put together the content and did the design work on these 4 activity sheets. The sheets come with a teacher guide, are tied to the curriculum and showcase real Manitoba farms. Once the final edits of these documents have been done, we will go to print and submit a final report to the ECEC-M.

Pending applications

The Winnipeg Foundation – application submitted December 2008, awaiting June 2009 response.

Investors Group Community Project Fund – Application submitted February 2009, unspecified date for response, summer predicted.

ACU’s Sustainability Grants Application – Application submitted April 2009, response date not specified.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WED) – Application to be submitted by the end of May.

Sponsorship

Kroeker's Farm/ Poplar Grove has provided sponsorship for the GUO program.

Vita Health Food Natural Food Stores of Winnipeg has confirmed sponsorship for the program. Details regarding the sponsorship are in process.

Organic Meadows confirmed sponsorship for the 08-09 year. Janine will approach for 09-10.

4. Outreach: Tours/Presentations/Workshops

- Tours:
 - This past winter we held two tours one to Tall Grass Prairie Bakery at the Forks and a second to Breads and Circuses.
 - Upcoming tours – Two childcare centers have requested tours to community gardens in the Winnipeg area. Julie is working with the Landless Farmer Coop that has garden plot near the Pan Am pool to coordinate these tours for June 2009. Marg's Strawberry Patch has offered to host tours during the summer months as well.
- Outreach Presentations and Workshops:

During the winter months of February and March 2009, 4 general GUO presentations were made. Here is an overview.

 - **The Family Center (Upstairs in Portage Place) – February 3rd**

There were about 20 people in attendance at this event. Many were child care providers, both directors and educational staff. Julie prepared all the materials and workshop components and Janine made the presentation as Julie had had a root canal earlier that day. Feedback from the session was excellent and GUO has received a few e-mails requesting information, also a request to present at an Earth Day celebration in Brandon. The workshop ran for 2 hours and consisted of a PPT presentation followed by 3 learning centers 1) sprouting and seeds, 2) vermicomposting and 2) tasting and comparing. GUO provided a variety of handouts. Janine's feedback was that the group was very much interested in the session and had many questions. Julie continues to maintain contact with the family center to see if other opportunities for presentations exist.
 - **Getting Vocal Growing Local – (University of Winnipeg February 20th, 2009)**

The GUO presentation was a panel presentation that consisted of moderator Julie Fine, Outreach Coordinator Katharina Steifenhoffer, producer Betty Kehler and Assistant Director Cindy Landles (Provincial Employees) There were approximately 30 people in attendance. The presentation began with the joint PPT presentation designed and presented by Julie and Katharina. The second presentation was scheduled from Marnie Feeleus of Fresh Option, but she was ill, so Julie presented the content as provided by Wayne, a staff person of Fresh Option. The second presentation was by Betty Kehler and then followed by Cindy Landles. The star of the presentation was by far Cindy Landles who offered a cynical-turned strong-organic-advocate angle.

She highlighted some of challenges and plusses. Julie would have liked more time for questions, as there were many from the audience. We did manage to answer about 4 or 5 questions. Suggestion - limit the speaking time by the presenters and leave more room for questions at the end. GUO also included materials on the OFCM table that was available at the conference for 2 days.

- **Manitoba Child Care Association (MCCA building March 3rd, 2009)**
There were 20 people who attended this session. All were in the child care field and most were educators, not directors. This group was very much engaged and interested in the presentation. Following the workshop, participants were asked to complete an evaluation form. Julie received copies of the feedback and the content was very positive. This workshop was 2.5 hours in length and included a PPT overview of the program with 4 learning centers. Julie included a new activity that in retrospect needs to be a completely separate learning center. There was not enough time to go through the activity within the allotted time frame. Julie received an e-mail from one participant who requested more information to take to her center. Julie will continue to be in contact with the MCCA to see if more opportunities for presentations exist.
- **Seedy Saturday (Assiniboine Park Conservatory, March 7th, 2009)**
This event was absolutely packed. There was excellent attendance to the event as a whole, but GUO also made a 40 minute presentation with more than 30 people in attendance. There were lots of questions following the presentation, mostly related to milk. Julie needs to do some follow up with one individual who had a milk related question that Julie was not able to answer. GUO and OFCM should certainly continue to be involved with Seedy Sat in the future.
- Upcoming Presentations/workshops – Over the next 5 months, under the SDIF funds, GUO will present more than 20 workshops and table with an information booth at more than 15 events.

5. Website

Updates to the website have not been made over the last number of months. The next GUO update to the OFCM website will be completed by the end of May and then updated again at the end of July 2009. If you haven't seen the wonderful "splash page" created by Kris Antonius, please do visit www.guomanitoba.ca In terms of visits to the website, we currently have a tracking system that indicates how many visits the OFCM website has received, but also tracks certain pages. In January 2009 the GUO page received 124 visits, in February 196 visits and in March 159 visits. The numbers in February and March rose considerably compared with past months. This increase in interest can be in part attributed to the excellent outreach that Katharina did.

6. Organic Cracker Study and the Canadian Wheat Board

Over the latter 6 months of 2008, an organic cracker study was conducted by contract person Chris Hrynkow. In addition to the research done and reported on (see <http://www.organicfoodcouncil.org/growingup.php>), we also included two bakery tours. For

a summary of the findings or for the full report, please visit the above website. Special thanks to Chris Hrynkow for his dedication and commitment to this project. The final report to CWB has been submitted. We are awaiting their final payment.

7. Collaborative Efforts

The GUO Coordinator, Julie Fine, currently sits on the Manitoba Eco Network Board as the Chair of the steering committee. OFCM-COG had two members on this year's Growing Local, Getting Vocal Steering Committee – Julie Fine and Janine Gibson. Long time OFCM-COG member David Neufeld participated as well.

GUO has attended one of the Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Project Advisory group meetings and will be attending a second mid April 2009. This project is supported by the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba. GUO will participate in the Farm To Cafeteria meeting hosted by Manitoba Food Charter.

Assiniboine Park Conservatory

GUO coordinator met with Bonnie Tulloch, Education Coordinator at Assiniboine Park Conservatory in mid September 2008. At that time, Bonnie requested that GUO partner with the Conservatory in offering weekly workshops about organic food to public school children both on site and at public schools. GUO neither had the funding, nor the personnel to undertake this project. GUO has maintained contact with Bonnie and presented about the GUO program at Seedy Saturday in February. In mid May, 2009 GUO will present a segment of a 90 minute workshop to children in grades 5 and 6. Should funding become available to GUO, we may be able to offer more workshops through the Conservatory outreach to school-aged children.

Children's Health and the Environment Partnership

GUO coordinator Julie Fine attended a one-day workshop provided by Children's Health and the Environment Partnership. The workshop titled, Playing It Safe Building Capacity to Reduce Environmental Risks to Child Health was held at the end of February and covered a number of key issues regarding children's health. Julie has begun to incorporate some of the content from this workshop into her presentations.

University of Winnipeg

Graduate students in the Master of Public Administration program in Professor DeRiviere's class completed their program evaluation framework for GUO. They also completed a logic model of GUO which is a useful tool when dealing with funders. Julie attended a class presentation in mid January 2009. A PPT presentation of their work is available as well as the final paper. Please request it from Julie should you be interested. guo-ofcm@cog.ca

8. Media

GUO was interviewed by Simply Green editor, Suzanne Martin in early January about the program. Simply Green is a new publication from University Campus Sustainability Office University of Winnipeg. The interview had not been published as of April 2009. November 2008 edition <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action?file=pdfs/sustainability/simply-green-fall-2008.pdf> In March, 2009, Julie was interviewed by University of Winnipeg regarding the new standards. Julie included some information about GUO in her interview. <http://uniter.ca/view/674/>

9. Recommendations for the GUO Program

Revision of Strategic Plan -At present funding for GUO is provided by SDIF and a full workplan guides the type of work we are to do until the end of July 2009. Should more funding become available, GUO should revise the strategic plan to incorporate some of the outcomes from Katharina's report as well as some of the following suggestions.

Program Involvement - As the type of outreach we have begun to do has expanded the depth of the project, GUO should consider how we consider "program involvement" Criteria for program involvement should be drawn up. Prior to the outreach piece undertaken by Katharina, our focus was mainly on childcare. Program involvement was based on whether or not child care centers were purchasing organic food through the program. We need to expand our definition of the program, as some institutions would not be able to purchase from a local distributor, but would still be interested in accessing local organic food.

Expanding the organic food source options - At present Fresh Option Organic Delivery is the key distributor for the GUO program. They have been mainly servicing the child care centers. If we are to continue outreach to a variety of educational institutions, we need to provide a variety of options for accessing food. For example, university and colleges are for the most part bound by contracts with food service providers and would not be permitted to order through Fresh Option. When dealing with these institutions, an alternative approach needs to be taken. As a program, we would do well to provide any potential GUO location with a list of possible options for how they could access food. In the past we were bound by needing to track how much food was ordered by whom and what types of foods were ordered. COG no longer requires this component, and therefore we can consider expanding the food source options. This area needs to be more fully explored with a group of people and structure for program involvement should be included with this portion of work as well.

Funding - This program has continued to operate from month to month on small parcels of funds from grants and sponsorship. We would do well to try and secure a larger sum of funding to carry the project for a few years. GUO should consider hiring a professional grant writer to submit 1 or 2 key grant applications. Funding from sponsorship could be used to support this endeavour.

Links to the Curriculum - If we are to continue outreach to public and private schools, our outreach should incorporate links to the curriculum. In order for workshops to be relevant to teachers and administration, they want us to ensure that there are curriculum links.

GUO Calendar – At present there is an internal calendar of events for GUO, OFCM and Mentorship. GUO should update the OFCM public calendar on a regular basis so the public can be aware of where and when there are opportunities to hear about the program.

10. Administration Feedback

Overseeing contract staff

As coordinator of the GUO program, a good deal of time is spent overseeing GUO sub projects such as the organic cracker study, the ECEC-M contract, as well as the work that Katharina completed under COG national. Julie estimates that approximately 50 hours were used to oversee the CWB study. This time includes coordination and attendance of two

bakery tours. Time required to oversee the ECEC-M project was more than 30 hours. Additionally Julie estimates that between 80-100 hours were required to oversee the COG contract with Katharina. Some of this time included getting Katharina up to speed on certain aspects of the program locally, other time was spent on in-person and phone meetings, responding to e-mail requests and general support and feedback. Part way through contract negotiations between COG national and Katharina it was decided that Julie would not assist with the administration of this sub project. In part, funding was not available to support her position and in part COG national indicated that they would administer the contract. In retrospect, this was an unrealistic goal. COG national, more specifically GUO national is not in a position to take on the administration of contract staff at the local level. They neither have the staff nor the time to oversee this work. This was made evident in Katharina's final report. From a logistic perspective, GUO national does not have a handle on the daily workings of the GUO program in Manitoba. They are not aware of 1) which local contacts have been made, 2) whether certain documents have been designed 3) which support people might be helpful to advance the project or other key local components of the program. It is Julie's recommendation that GUO Manitoba only accept funding from COG national for outreach positions should an administrative component be included. Much local support is needed for the administration of contract staff for GUO and this time must be budgeted into future sub projects.

Education Outreach Coordinator Katharina Stienffenhofer – Katharina began her contract work with COG as the GUO Education Outreach Coordinator in November 2008. Prior to this she had volunteered for GUO mainly in outreach to child care centers. The focus of this specific contract was on outreach to educational institutions – public and private schools, colleges and universities. Katharina put in an incredible amount of time and energy into this work with very successful outcomes. Her initial approach to survey schools regarding their interest in the GUO program was met with some difficulty and as a result her focus was spent mainly on providing workshops to the targeted group, as well as negotiating with food service providers. Katharina also presented a gardening component, the Edible Schoolyard to schools and some pilot projects may go through in the Spring of 2009. Katharina's dedication and perseverance the GUO program is greatly appreciated.

Early Childhood Education Council work – Kris Antonius - Kris began work on the ECEC project for GUO in November of 2008. She researched and designed 4 seasonal sheets, including a farm bio, seasonal recipe and information and or activities about organic farming pertaining to one of the four seasons. The sheets have been edited and reviewed by Julie as well as the Executive. They are currently in the final edit stages and will be printed shortly. Kris also designed a teacher guide, answer key and terms of reference for teachers to use. Some of this content will be available on the GUO page of the OFCM website. We thank Kris for her excellent work and contributions to this and other OFCM projects.

11. Miscellaneous

- A new GUO business card was designed by Kris Antonius. We will print and distribute the card shortly.
- Melanie Mills, an OFCM volunteer will begin a short volunteer project to survey the current volunteers that we have on a list. This work will be of great help to GUO, as we are often in need of volunteers. Thank you Melanie for agreeing to help out with this.