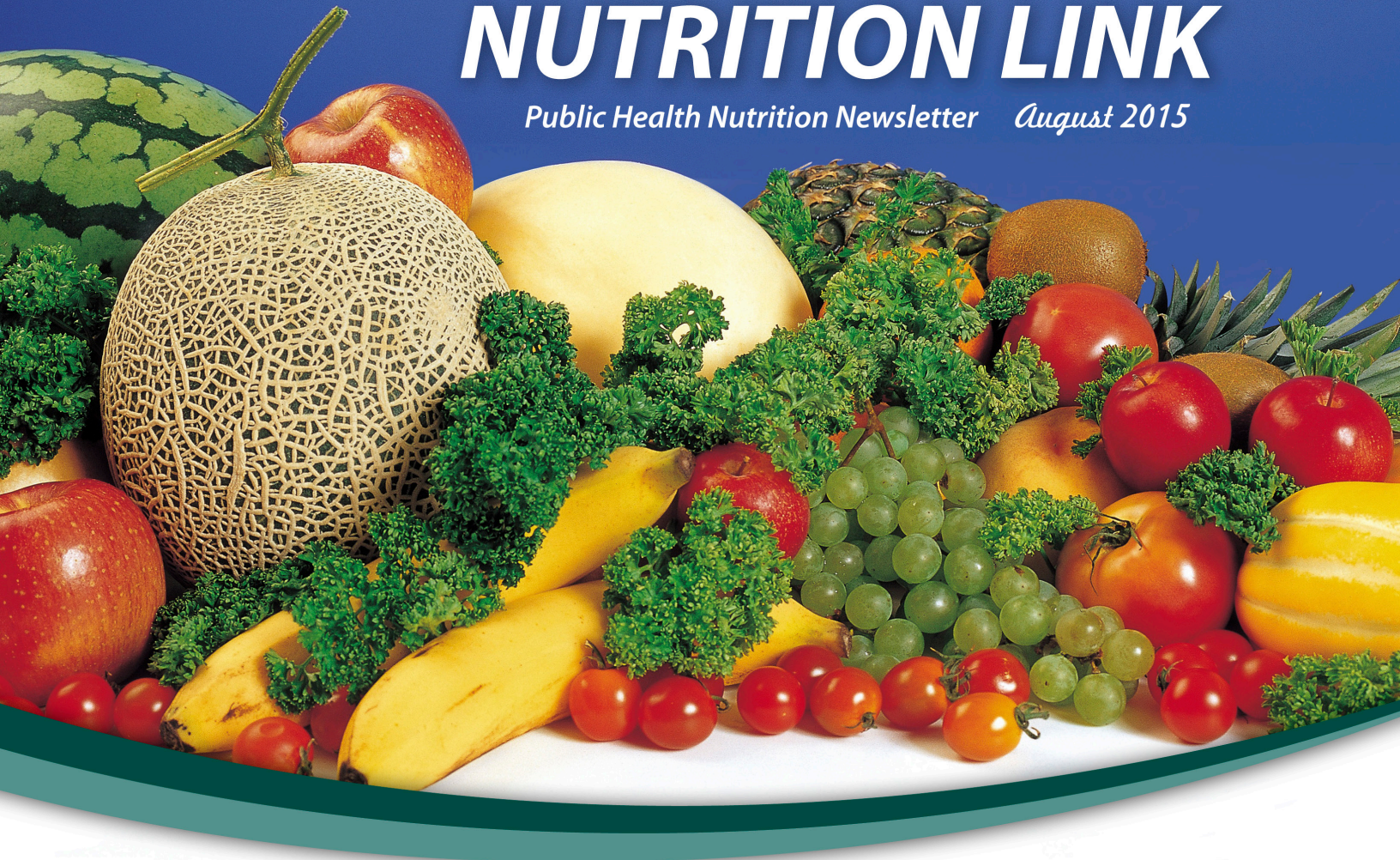


# NUTRITION LINK

Public Health Nutrition Newsletter August 2015



Welcome to the first edition of Nutrition Link of 2015! The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH), Vitalité Health Network, and Horizon Health Network are all excited to share with you a few of the exciting initiatives and activities taking place throughout the province to support the New Brunswick Public Health Nutrition Framework for Action. Activities include the breastfeeding friendly restaurant initiative, the evolution of Vitalité's zero-waste, healthy lunch box initiative, and Horizon's Mango Mania.

As always, feel free to share this with your own networks and partners. In addition, we welcome your comments and feedback on Nutrition Link as it continues to evolve. If you have feedback you would like to share, or if you would like to get involved in creating these newsletters, please email [laura.brennan@gnb.ca](mailto:laura.brennan@gnb.ca).

## *Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health Update*

Knowledge management (KM) and communication is one of the Public Health Nutrition Framework for Action's six strategic directions. KM and communication is all about how we can promote and support nutrition in New Brunswick by creating, accessing, interpreting, sharing and using information, research, evidence and best practices. One of the most important tools in OCMOH's toolbox for KM and communication is the framework's external SharePoint site, which we have been working hard to populate in the last year. The site is a hub where OCMOH, Vitalité and Horizon can share and access the latest information, research, evidence and best practices related to our priority areas for action. For example, recently, the SharePoint site was used to share Health Canada's use of Canada's Food Guide assessment report, as well as a national panel of experts' recommendations on responsible marketing to



children. More importantly, SharePoint is used to share knowledge created by the Public Health system and other framework stakeholders; for example, OCMOH's Energy Drink Policy Analysis, the Department of Social Development's Community Food Action Stories, and Saint John's Garden Mapping Inventory.

In addition to being a hub to share and access information, the SharePoint site is also a place to create and interpret knowledge directly related to the framework. Most recently, the framework's Evaluation Working Group has been collaborating on the site to:

- Create the [Framework Case Studies](#) launched last December, and
- Interpret available evidence to identify nutrition indicators for the province.

The SharePoint site enables yet another of the framework's strategic directions: capacity building. Through the SharePoint site, free learning opportunities related to the framework's strategic directions and priority areas for action are promoted as they arise. Since the site's launch, OCMOH has been able to draw users attention to over 15 learning opportunities – like webinars, conferences, and open houses – related to food security alone.

OCMOH strongly encourages you to check out the SharePoint site regularly to learn about new developments and resources related to public health nutrition. Keep in mind that all users of the SharePoint site have the ability to post content and are encouraged to do so. Please contact Laura Brennan ([laura.brennan@gnb.ca](mailto:laura.brennan@gnb.ca)) if you are looking to gain access to the site.

### ***Restaurants go “Breastfeeding Friendly” with new Public Health initiative***

Breastfeeding is the biologically normal way to feed human babies. It provides the best source of infant nutrition, immunologic protection and remarkable health benefits to the mothers. In 2013, 79.6% of New Brunswick mothers initiated breastfeeding and yet only 21.5% of babies were exclusively

breastfed at six months of age<sup>1</sup> falling short of the Health Canada's recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of age.

There are many barriers to initiate, to continue breastfeeding and to breastfeed “exclusively”. A mother's interest and efforts to breastfeed are influenced by public perception, culture, social norms, policies, and physical environments. Though women have the right to breastfeed in public places, many mothers have been criticized for doing so and asked to stop breastfeeding, or even to leave. Breastfeeding in public is not a widely accepted practice. A study surveyed university aged young men and women in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, asking them how they felt about breastfeeding in public places and they all said they hoped their future children would be breastfed, but the vast majority said public breastfeeding was “only okay if discreet,” “should use the washroom,” and other negative comments. Only 15% expressed positive, unrestricted statements about breastfeeding in public.<sup>2</sup>

Changing attitudes is crucial to improve breastfeeding rates and health outcomes. Mothers who felt comfortable breastfeeding in public locations and/or in the presence of friends were 2.9 times more likely to continue breastfeeding to six months than mothers who were not comfortable breastfeeding (or did not breastfeed) in these locations.<sup>3</sup>

Most new mothers start engaging with their life outside the home not long after birth: attending baby clinics, doing the shopping, visiting friends and family, going out to restaurants, theatre, etc. But breastfeeding in these contexts and spaces can be challenging. The most frequently mentioned public

1 Statistics Canada. 2014. *Health Trends*. Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 82-213-XWE. Ottawa. Released June 12, 2014. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/health-sante/82-213/index.cfm?Lang=ENG> (accessed April 22, 2015).

2 Spurles PK, Babineau J. *A Qualitative study of attitudes toward public breastfeeding among young Canadian men and women*. *J Hum Lact*, May 2011; 27: 131-137. Available from: <http://jhl.sagepub.com/content/27/2/131.short>

3 Toronto Public Health. *Breastfeeding in Toronto*. Promoting supportive environment, 2010. Available from: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-28423.pdf>

locations where mothers reported breastfeeding their babies in public locations were malls and restaurants followed by recreational/cultural facilities, places of worship, parks, workplaces, and/or public transit.<sup>4</sup>

New Brunswick Public Health is partnering with a growing number of organizations and businesses to create comfortable social environments that offers acceptance and support for mothers to breastfeed whenever and wherever they choose.

In February 2015, Public Health sent information and an invitation to register as “Breastfeeding Friendly” to over a thousand restaurants with patron seating. This invitation was inserted in the restaurant license renewal package sent by the Public Health inspectors. The invitation included a letter, a factsheet on how staff can create a breastfeeding friendly place, a registration form and the provincial sticker/window decal “Breastfeeding is encouraged here”.



Registering for this initiative indicates that the restaurant will display the “Breastfeeding is encouraged here” sticker and that their staff will be informed on how to support mothers to feel comfortable to breastfeed in their establishment. A list of participating restaurants is available on the Department of Health [website](#) and is also posted on the provincial breastfeeding Facebook page. The list will be updated twice a year.

<sup>4</sup> Toronto Public Health. *Breastfeeding in Toronto*. Promoting supportive environment, 2010. Available from: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-28423.pdf>

Public Health inspectors, while doing their yearly inspection visit, will continue to encourage restaurants to participate in this initiative. Support materials have been provided to inspectors.

Actively supporting breastfeeding in public establishments creates a family-friendly environment, attracts breastfeeding customers, and creates a breastfeeding-friendly community by showing that breastfeeding is visible, accepted, and valued.



This initiative is a good example of how Public Health can work more strategically by providing an opportunity for inspectors, dietitians and nurses to collaborate and share responsibilities on the promotion and support of breastfeeding. Public Health is well positioned to work with communities that address policies and environments that support a breastfeeding culture.

## ***Horizon Health Network Update***

Over the winter months Horizon Health Network has worked on numerous initiatives that support the provincial Public Health Nutrition Framework for Action. Following is a summary of actions taken to support each priority area.

### ***Food security***

The Northumberland Food Security Network in Miramichi area has identified their priorities for next year. They identified decreasing food bank stigma, enhancement/mobilization of Community Food Mentors and supporting Community Fresh Box programs as their three priorities. The Network is also partnering with the New Brunswick Food Security Action Network (NBFSAN) to help organize their provincial conference in November 2015 hosted in Miramichi.

Saint John Area dietitians, Jessica McMackin and Lori Heron, represented Horizon Public Health in November 2014 at the Food Secure Canada's National Assembly in Halifax. They presented as part of a group from across New Brunswick on the Community Food Mentor Program in our province.

### ***Healthy Environments***

This year, Nutrition Month was dedicated to eating well at work. Horizon Health Network, through their Public Health Nutrition Month Workgroup, shared their local campaigns across the different areas. Due to the sharing of resources we were able to better support nutrition month in each area across Horizon. Part of this year's campaign consisted of distributing educational factsheets, providing lunch and learns, presentations, and webinars, as well as offering displays to different workplaces. The Saint John Area organized a contest with organizations receiving the factsheets and the Miramichi Area, along with the Mango program, held a Workplace Challenge.

At present our Horizon Public Health Recreation Facilities Working Group is working on a project in response to a community request for healthy



fundraising for teams and youth groups. In the horizon this group is considering forming focus groups with teams, businesses, recreation directors, and parents.

### ***Prenatal and Early Childhood Nutrition***

Saint John Area dietitians presented at the Provincial Conference for Early Childcare Education NB in June 2014. From this, a need was identified for a more in-depth workshop on menu planning. Two sessions were held in Saint John on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The workshop was repeated in Sussex on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and there are plans to hold the same workshop in Charlotte County in June 2015. Representatives from 19 daycare facilities have attended the workshop to date in the Saint John Area. Feedback received has been positive; presently they are visiting these daycares to discuss their individual menus, answer questions and provide guidance on the healthiest choices. The workshop was shared with Horizon Public Health Dietitians.

Horizon Public Health dietitians, under the direction of the Horizon Public Health Infant Feeding Working Group, developed a factsheet to summarize the current feeding guidelines from birth to 24 months for use by professionals working with young families. We are now in the process of sharing this resource with professionals in our Horizon communities.

### ***Breastfeeding***

Different types of initiatives are happening in the area of breastfeeding in Horizon Health Network. Saint John and Fredericton Public Health offices have applied to start the process for Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation. In preparation for the initial assessment, both regions had a capacity-building visit last winter. Fredericton area is also working with stakeholders to create a weekly drop in for breastfeeding families. Miramichi

area received a grant to hold focus groups in the community to better understand barriers of breastfeeding.

### ***School-Aged Children & Youth***

The Anglophone North School District created a workgroup to address consumption of energy drinks in youth. The workgroup includes members from Horizon Health Network, Vitalité Health Network and the school district. The workgroup has expanded its focus to include all beverages and they asked students what could be done to influence their choice of beverages. A campaign will be developed once results of the consultations are analyzed.

The Public Health dietitian working with the Anglophone West School District has been a member of the Cafeteria Services Committee which has created a new Request for Proposal for cafeteria services. The goal of this new contract is to support Policy 711 and the promotion of foods with maximum nutritional value. Public Health dietitians, with the assistance of a dietetic intern, partnered with a local elementary school that is one of the ASD-W pilot Health Promoting Schools to deliver a healthy lunch program to students and their parents. A CHEFS! program was also delivered at École des Bâtisseurs. They have provided input on the Nourishing School Communities initiative to help inform the development of a tool kit to engage school communities in school nutrition policy. They are also encouraging and supporting schools to complete the healthy eating module of Healthy School Planner.

### ***Horizon Success Story***

Mango Mania is an initiative of the Mango Program promoting healthy eating and physical activity through health related activities and challenges. Mango Mania motivates school aged children from kindergarten to grade 5 in the Northumberland County area. Mango Mania is one of Mango's most

successful health promotion initiatives and has been offered to 23 area schools for the past 10 years.

To encourage participation, one class from each school can win the challenge. The winning classes are the classes that have the highest participation rate. The winning classes receive a visit from a member of the Mango Team. Prizes usually consist of a healthy snack donated by Sobeys.

The Mango Mania initiative has evolved and changed over the years to respond to feedback received by the schools. In the past, students were asked to participate in one week challenges, two to three times per year. Examples of past challenges include:

- eat a healthy snack
- be active for 30 minutes each day
- eat a healthy lunch
- screen time per day limited to one hour only

Mango Mania packages that include activity instructions, activity sheets, handouts and information for parents are sent to each teacher from the Mango Program. Students record their health related activity on the forms provided and return the activity forms once complete. This year, a month long Mango Mania Challenge was organized during Nutrition Month in March. This program replaced the two to three week long challenges during the school year.

To adapt to the technologies used in classrooms, the 2015 Mango Mania challenge was developed to work with the Smart Notebook software used in schools with Smart Boards. The 2015 challenge was "paper free" and sent to classrooms by email.

For more information on Mango Mania, please consult the [Mango Mania Case Study](#).



## *Vitalité Health Network Update*

Public Health dietitians of Vitalité Health Network are still involved in the Public Health Nutrition Framework for Action. The following describes the work done.

In the fall of 2013, the District scolaire francophone du Nord-Est (DSFNE) undertook an evaluation of the foods provided in its schools. Two dietitians hired by the district visited the schools, gathered data, and produced an overall report for the district. Vitalité Health Network Public Health dietitians from zones 5 and 6 collaborated on developing grids that were used for data collection and supervising the data collection. Then they prepared one report per school and visited each school to present their observations and recommendations and provide them support in their change initiative. Collaboration with the DSFNE is ongoing to identify the next steps in the process. One of the latest activities was the development of a collection of healthy desserts for schools in collaboration with students from the Université de Moncton. The schools kindly shared their winning healthy dessert recipes, which were added to the collection. The students completed it with healthy dessert ideas requiring little preparation.

Vitalité Health Network dietitians remain active on regional and provincial Baby Friendly Initiative committees. Several initiatives and activities are ongoing such as the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge and Baby Friendly initiatives in the community, e.g. the partnership with libraries.

A presentation was given to members of the Anglophone North School District Education Council on the harmful effects of energy drinks. The district also set up a committee to raise awareness of healthy and not-so-healthy beverages among students and staff in the schools.

Dietitians in the Edmundston area are currently developing a healthy menu program in local restaurants. They are also continuing their wonderful work on the project "A Zero-Waste and Healthy Lunch Box and Snack...A Winning Combo!"



A partnership is under way with the City of Dieppe to support a wellness strategy. Dietitians from that area are also very committed to supporting local food safety committees. They also support the Farm-to-Cafeteria program with initiatives promoting farming and harvesting, food preparation, and healthy eating.

### ***A Zero-Waste and Healthy Lunch Box and Snack... A Winning Combo!***

Eating a healthy diet while taking care of our planet and saving money is possible! Children in 16 French-speaking and English-speaking primary schools in the Northwest and their parents have an opportunity to learn how to do it as part of the project "A Zero-Waste and Healthy Lunch Box and Snack...A Winning Combo!"

The project was initiated by the **Northwest Regional Services Commission** (NWRSC), formerly known as COGERNO. To bring this project to fruition, financial assistance was obtained from the province through the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund and the Department of Social Development. Then, partnerships were formed with Vitalité Health Network **Public Health** (Zone 4) and the **District scolaire francophone du Nord-Ouest**.

The awareness and education project "A Zero-Waste and Healthy Lunch Box and Snack...A Winning Combo!" consists of two parallel components: one for kindergarten children and their parents and the other for primary school students.

For more information on a Zero-Waste and Healthy Lunch Box, please consult the [Zero-Waste and Healthy Lunch Box Case Study](#).

### *Kindergarten – parents*

In this part of the project, an environmental extension officer from the NWRSC and Public Health dietitians visit schools to meet with kindergarten children and their parents. Old and young alike learn how to prepare green, healthy, and economical lunch boxes and snacks.

The NWRSC representative explains how the mere fact of using reusable containers can be beneficial for our planet. She also suggests ways to avoid wasting food.

As for dietitians, they provide tips on how to prepare delicious and healthy lunches. They also give advice on how to avoid germs.

Professionals also show that by making better choices when preparing lunch boxes and snacks to go, parents can **save over \$800 per child** during the school year.

Each child receives reusable containers and a reusable bottle as well as a fridge magnet.



This special component of the project has been in place for three years, i.e. from 2012 to 2014.

### *Primary schools*

In this part of the project, groups of student leaders were trained in primary schools in the Northwest. They were visited by the NWRSC facilitator and a Public Health dietitian, who gave them practically the same message as for kindergarten children and their parents, except that this time, they gave them an **assignment**: share their new knowledge with their peers.



The groups of young leaders were invited to use a **giant retractable banner** to help them in their education initiative. Each school participating in the project “A Zero-Waste and Healthy Lunch Box and Snack...A Winning Combo!” received this promotion tool in the fall of 2013.

### *Online educational toolkit*

An electronic educational toolkit was developed to offer primary school teachers educational and interactive resources. Its content covers several specific curriculum outcomes (SCO) of programs of studies (sciences and personal and social training) established by the New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The **toolkit**, which includes various **interactive activities and videos**, can be used by teachers in their classroom, as well as by parents and students.

**It is available at:** [www.ecolosante.com](http://www.ecolosante.com).



**For further details on the project** “A Zero-Waste and Healthy Lunch Box and Snack...A Winning Combo!” visit [www.csrno.ca/en](http://www.csrno.ca/en) under Solid Waste, Schools, Eco-Healthy Lunch Box.

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Commission de services régionaux Nord-Ouest  
**Déchets solides**



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**NB PLAYS!**  
**JOUEZ NB!**

*NB PLAYS! has a game plan for creating a healthier, happier province through quality after school programming.*

The NB PLAYS! initiative has been developed by Recreation New Brunswick to promote and educate leaders on the importance of quality active after school programming and its influence on the health of children and youth. Specifically, NB PLAYS! promotes the use of a blended approach for an optimal balance of programming with emphasis on multiple and diverse components: Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Learning Experiences and Community Strengths. NB PLAYS! also highlights the important role that First Nations Culture can play in the lives of children and youth and encourages leaders to promote positive mental health and resiliency in all aspects of their programs.

A cornerstone of the initiative, The PLAYBOOK is a comprehensive resource designed for front-line leaders of after school programs offered to children and youth ages 5 to 19. As a key element in the holistic development of children and youth, Healthy Eating is a fundamental component of the resource. The PLAYBOOK teaches that healthy eating is essential for positive development and overall well-being. The resource also recognizes that the earlier children and youth learn the importance of proper nutrition, the more likely they will be to adopt lifelong healthy eating habits. For this reason, The PLAYBOOK provides leaders with kid-friendly information, activities and resources about nutrition labeling, gardening, farm visits, healthy and fun snacks, food from different cultures, cooking, and more!

Since the initiative's launch, the NB PLAYS! team has been piloting the resource with various programs



across New Brunswick. Groups of children and youth have been bringing The PLAYBOOK to life and providing valuable feedback about the after school time frame. New Maryland's Explore Your World After School Program's "Lasting Harvest" is one of several after school success stories highlighted by NB PLAYS! Read on to learn how this program planted the seeds of healthy eating in its children and youth.

To learn more about this New Brunswick-led initiative visit: [www.nbplays.ca](http://www.nbplays.ca) or contact Michelle DeCoursey, NB PLAYS! Coordinator via email: [nbplays@recreationnb.ca](mailto:nbplays@recreationnb.ca) or phone: (506) 459-5031.



*Children gardening at the Explore Your World After School Program in New Maryland, NB. Photo credit: Terry Kelly*



*Children gardening at the Explore Your World After School Program in New Maryland, NB. Photo credit: Terry Kelly*



*Children enjoying a healthy snack at the 2014 New Brunswick Indian Summer Games in Burnt Church, NB. Photo credit: Terry Kelly*



*Children preparing lunch at Tir na nÓg Forest School in Roachville, NB. Photo credit: Terry Kelly*

## ***Evaluation Working Group Update***

Since their last Nutrition Link update, the Evaluation Working Group has been busy pulling together the work of the individual task groups into a draft evaluation plan. The evaluation plan coordinating group, alongside the two indicators task groups, has matched priority evaluation questions with appropriate indicators, and indicators with data collection methods and tools. 40 unique indicators have been identified to answer the six evaluation questions. A combination of different data collection methods have been proposed, including key informant interviews, document reviews, World Café, secondary data analysis and surveys.

While most evaluation activities have been proposed to take place at the end of the framework's lifetime, the Evaluation Working Group has proposed that some evaluation activities be initiated sooner. This will allow us to evaluate efforts to date and make mid-course adjustments consistent with a developmental evaluation approach.

The evaluation plan coordinating group completed the draft evaluation plan in February 2015 and the plan has received technical approval from OCMOH management. Plans are underway to initiate the proposed 2015-2016 evaluation activities.

### ***A LASTING HARVEST***

#### ***Explore your World After School Program***

***— New Maryland, NB —***

With its cycles of growth and decay, something as simple as a vegetable garden can go far in reconnecting children with nature.

Two apprentice gardeners lean over plots, knee-deep in soil. As they clear a few weeds from a freshly planted row, they debate how much water their seedlings will need to sprout vegetables this summer. It's the kind of scene that perfectly illustrates what happens when children are given the chance to garden: not only are these apprentice growers active for hours on end, but also they learn how to tend to something small and delicate by sharing its care with others. Such interactions are precisely what Judy Wilson-Shee had in mind when she started a community vegetable garden for children in New Maryland.

"We're a happy bunch," Wilson-Shee declares of Explore Your World After School Program, a community she has nurtured for over thirty years as an early childhood educator. And it's not hard to tell why: as the children tend to their plots, they are discovering what it means to combine their efforts, to sustain a project over time, and ultimately to share in the rewards of their labour.

For children raised in urban environments, the sense of wonder that results from witnessing a seedling break through soil is also rare and empowering. With its cycles of growth and decay, something as simple as a vegetable garden can go far in reconnecting children with nature.

Wilson-Shee knows that the benefits of cooperative learning flow both ways. "We really can learn from our children," she remarks, observing that the experiences children have at a young age can stay with them into adulthood. In both gardening and teaching, she adds, "you always have to be positive."