

Back To Our Roots

The HEAL Retreat, Prince George, BC, November 1st-3rd 2007

HEAL

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Table of Contents

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION - JOANNE BAYS	2
BLESSING	2
LEARNING AGREEMENT –	2
REMARKS FROM NORTHERN HEALTH - JULIE KERR	3
GROUNDING OUR STORY - CATHRYN WELLNER	3
OPENING ROUND – SUMMARY	3
WHEN THE TIDE IS OUT THE TABLE IS SET KEY NOTE SPEAKER -	3
DISCUSSIO	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
WORLD CAFÉ REPORTS	4
FOCUS GROUPS.....	5
OPEN SPACE REPORTS	8
DRAFT ACTION PLAN	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
CLOSING ROUND	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
CONCLUSION	12
APPENDICES.....	13
APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT AND COMMUNITY CHECK INFORMATION.....	14
APPENDIX 2 EVALUATION REPORT	19
APPENDIX 3 CLOSING ROUND.....	24

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the Heal retreat 'Back to Our Roots, held in Prince George November 1-3 2007. This intensive three day meeting was designed to re-focus the work and direction of HEAL for the next 5 years. Combining both hands on experiential learning and group discussion techniques, participants had the opportunity to connect in a meaningful way with other individuals sharing a passion for food security in the north, discuss together emerging trends and identify a set of priorities for Food Security Action in the region.

Welcome and Introduction - Joanne Bays

Blessing

Violet, Elder; welcomed the group on behalf of the Lheidli T'enneh Chief and Council and asked for a blessing on the good work we do and the path we travel .

Learning agreement -

One of the lessons from HEAL's work has been the importance of applying attention to the way we do our work. Key to our longevity has been the learning agreement – an articulation of what we want and need from each other to be able to work together most effectively. The three step process produced the following learning contract that would help guide the work and directions of the HEAL Network. We agreed that:

“Say what you mean, mean what you say and do what you said you were going to do.”

Barbara Coloroso

Overall: Our meetings will have a purpose, an agenda, short and long terms goals, that further our overall goal as regional network. To achieve this:

- We will support local and regional communications and learning.
- We will always take time to build relationships.
- We will find exercises and tools to help us learn about each other.
- We will check out and clarify our thinking.
- We will have clear roles in our meetings, including clarifying, facilitating and chairing meetings.
- We will respect the strengths of both introvert and extrovert, and make sure they both get a chance to speak.
- We will respect our own wisdom and have the courage to share it.
- We will teach and learn from each other.
- We will enter partnerships that acknowledge and account for power differentials.
- We will walk gently among other people's ghosts.
- We agree conflict can be a very positive creative force that engages both (or all) sides of an issue.
- We will stay focused on issues not personalities.
- We will respect all styles of learning and communication.
- We will acknowledge “intentional hanging out and focus on balancing action and thinking.
- We will keep or promises and make them thoughtfully.

Remarks from Northern Health - Julie Kerr

Julie has spent many years working in the field of mental health and addictions. We now know how linked these issues are, and how the path to wholeness and wellness is a difficult journey, including housing, healthy food. Now in her new position with Population Health, Julie wants to bring that broader perspective with how we can be more proactive and not just focusing on hospital or GP visits. Julie loves the work of HEAL and has followed it over the years, starting with the early work on body disorders and the community gardens, and she is a founding charter member of good food box. Julie is very excited about the work of HEAL, its new connection to the population health team, and the future directions – she is excited to be part of this group.

Julie commented that there is an alignment of the stars within the Authority putting emphasis on the importance to help people be healthy in the first piece. There is a new emerging sense of shifting resources up stream so that we can focus on health not curing. She stressed that she will act as resource – anything she can do for you and your community, her mandate is to support.

We know that community health initiatives in small communities are actually making a difference – Population Health department (Julie) is very interested in a) supporting and b) broadcasting those stories. e.g. a small community with terrible problem with tooth decay – last year had only 1 child with caries.

Throwing the pebbles in the stream...

Grounding our story - Cathryn Wellner

Opening round – summary

The opening round allowed the group to reconnect, to learn about the individual and the communities that make up the Heal Network. In HEAL, we believe that the communities themselves know what will make the difference. We asked participants to share who they are, what they do that makes a difference and what is contributing to health in their community. (See appendix 1 for full details).

Key note speakers

At the gathering we take time to all get on the same page. That is, we have briefings from thinkers and activists in the field. This retreat, we were very lucky to have Katharina Patterson and Monte Fox as speakers.

When the Tide is out the table is set Key note speaker - Katharina Patterson

See attached Power Point presentation

World café reports

Table #1-COLLABORATION... “What do we want HEAL to be in the future?”

We envision HEAL to be an umbrella organization that collaborates to facilitate the exchange of a “green mindset” on multiple levels of society, in a variety of forms that can adapt and cater to the diversity of the audience represented in the region of Northern BC, while promoting a sustainable presence.

Heal Facilitates:

- the collection and compilation of knowledge from already established experts
- the exchange of information such as research or new technologies, methods
- the diffusion of financial support and resources to younger projects

EXAMPLES:

... an “Expertise Directory” that aggregates wisdom and knowledge of seniors, elders or experts in book, DVD, video or

Multimedia format that can be easily accessed

... a “Seed Bank” of plants and varieties native to Northern BC

... a “Volunteer Directory” that links potential volunteers with nearby projects in need of help- ‘weeding bees’

... workshops, garden parties, expos, symposiums-these could be themed or un-themed and could also travel throughout the region

... “Tool Swaps” –these could be local or regional events or even an online directory

... “Travel & Train” – experts and staffing support for educational initiatives that could provide a variety of information, cooking with native plants, green house construction, seed saving & swapping, soil health

Partners:

- on a multi-generational level
- with a diverse audience of interest groups such as female or male only shelters, food banks, homeless shelters etc...
- with educational institutions to help develop accredited curriculum
- with other regions, on the local, national and even international level

EXAMPLES:

... mentorship programs that engage seniors with children

... working with the province and municipalities to establish an environmental curriculum that is uniform throughout the province at an elementary and secondary school level-these could also take advantage of already established “Professional Development” days

... “Tool Swaps” to encourage resource partnership and sharing

... Turkey and hydroponics/spectrum bending technology

Focus groups

Hosted by John Rusted, the group participated in a world café process of focus groups

Question 1: How effective would a hosting community dinners using 100 mile challenge be for raising awareness? What kinds of things should be included for the dinners to be effective?

There was much passion and enthusiasm for the idea, believing the idea has merit in enhancing awareness about a number of issues, including supporting local economies. Suggestions ranged from:

- Let's challenge politicians to embark on the 100 mile diet too. Their direct experience would influence policy. For example, asking local council meetings or school boards to have 100 mile limits on the food served at their meetings and at school and community related functions meetings. i.e. "regional miles" or "Just miles"
- May need to expand to include a bio-region as locations like PG would struggle with only 100 mile.
- Build on expertise of local people and linking local initiatives to the broader perspective – Important to include First Nations and their contributions, especially round local foods
- Hiring local people to coordinate/ kick start the catering would also boost economy in smaller centres and expand the educational component
- Food production and processing – there is a need to make sure the volume and sources are there
- Hospitals and health centres need to take on this challenge too.
- 40,000 jobs from Olympics – how to build long term visions and benefits beyond 2010
- Alternatives for some foods will need to be considered
- Expand educational aspects – e.g. include canning and preserving workshops so people can learn how to preserve the local foods for the winter season
- Is there a way to engage school curriculum? A workshop for Pro-D teachers on incorporating the 100 mile diet into classroom activities?
- Share information and resources for it in advance: e.g. A seasonal map of available produce and foods to support increased local self reliance
- Encourage other ethnic cuisine to incorporate local foods
- At some point we have to look at what we can't have "contraband foods" – what regulations and polices impede or facilitate local food initiatives?
- Build on the Iron chef: challenge local chefs to create menus;
- How can we collaborate and integrate culinary art institutes? (rumour ha it 40,000 new chefs required for 2010 Olympics)
- Show case BC only foods at the Olympics!
- Revisit tried and true – e.g. MCC cookbooks *More with Less*
- Media: look at the *Wine trails* magazine which showcases wine making, including supporting tourism, or *Go camping* magazine which promotes camping. Is it possible to develop something similar for the north that showcases Aboriginal way of life, ranching and farming?
- To Province: Showcase the gold standard of world class healthy eating and active living in BC – our world class parks, and amazing foods.

What values do you want to see in a provincial food charter?

Feedback on this topic suggested a holistic and comprehensive policy that addressed the inter-connections of food, health and the economy in a positive way would be welcomed. The group felt that this would be a very important act if the central purpose of the charter was to acknowledge that food is a social and environmental good not just a trading commodity and that local food can be the heart of increased safety and risk avoidance in an increasingly urbanized, globalized and industrialized food system .

- Definitions would be important: e.g. community food security; including food sovereignty. Language has to include support for local farmers and land
- Support for feeding the family and trading of left overs is important too.
- Policy suggestions: tax breaks for growing locally
- “food is culture- it is the glue that bonds us together as families, as communities
- In short: no farms, no food
- Promote relationships between farmers, food and those who buy food: “Adopt a farmer”
- Regulations and guidelines need to support LOCAL initiatives, not just big business. Support local entrepreneurial spirit and initiatives. “The meat regulations are supposed to increase food safety – we know safety is not found in the big operations – in fact centralization appears to increase risk and spread the impacts of failure faster and further.”
- Adjustment to quotas should be addressed (e.g. milk and eggs)
- Links between public health – community food security – and population health must be made. The individual “pastures” of each often have contradictory outcomes for community well being.
- Support for sustainable practices, traditional approaches and culturally appropriate foods needs to be built in.
- Understanding : the fundamental right to locally grown food; Food not grown locally and grown to aesthetic standards and travel requirement is steadily falling in nutritional value
- Awareness campaign / needs assessment - a strength based approach that emphasise what communities have to offer while promoting great attachment to local land
- Educational aspects – especially with different sectors of the population – e.g. young mothers
- Is should be “easy to be green”
- Role modeling - the ripple effect of policy to expand and support change
- Land zoning – is going to have a direct impact on future – what is the legacy of decision made today? We need consideration for the health of future generations.
- Include support for local communities and cities that have their own food charters – local governments need to incorporate understating and support also by upholding food charter principles in other areas of their mandate –such as industrial decisions; and maintaining the percentage of agricultural land
- Accountability – mechanisms to introduce and uphold this important principle at all levels Government , grass roots and take into account community concerns (i.e. economy and industry)
- Resolve the tension between quantity versus quality
- Affordability and hierarchy of food needs

What benefits or disadvantages do you see in a carbon tax on food?

The group was concerned about the impact this initiative might have on poorer people in the population.

Open space Reports

Action Plans for HEAL

“Building on Best Practice-What is HEAL? A Movement a Network or a Think-Tank?”

Contributors: Laurel deGoeij; Larian S. Mel S. Alice D. Sylvia Byron; Michelle Lessner

“HEAL needs to evaluate exactly where it is and what it is considering its current status and history and clearly integrate and frame that for the general public and the people involved to further promote a united vision within HEAL members for HEAL.”

1. a) Need to have clear articulations that HEAL is an approach, theory, ideology.
b) Heal does not do projects, however, it does support community initiated projects.
- 2) HEAL is a Regional Network of like minded people, brand messaging, best practices...a think tank.
- 3) Heal creates opportunities for people/ to create their own messages (synergy).
- 4) HEAL is a *Form* for sharing, learning, interaction, peer learning and advocacy.
- 5) Heal is **NOT** starting new it is building from 6 years of work (including previous years of local work). We are not into continual re-inventing/discovery.
- 6) HEAL funds:
 - ✓ seed projects in the local areas
 - ✓ Supports innovation and ideas leading to action
 - ✓ Writes up articles in newsletter (i.e. Showcase the Quesnel Farm to School pilot project)
 - ✓ Are linked to participation in HEAL

“Marketing-Building Communications & Awareness Networks”

“HEAL will endeavour to reach out greater audiences through active planning and consideration for communication strategies to help embody and represent the knowledge and principles of HEAL.”

- 1) Why?
 - to identify priorities locally
 - to value food by creating connections with food and land
 - to create awareness, behaviour, and systems changes in meaningful ways
 - to engage everyone, and try to measure our success of engagement
- 2) How?
 - through each HEAL member
 - ...HEAL individuals are agents of communication where we work, play, live in “Role Modeling” positions
 - by connecting and networking with champions, and people with knowledge

- by moving beyond language and terminology to enact community engagement
- starting small
- by teaching through new an innovative ways

EXAMPLES:

- ... (Trendy) Garden, Farm, Tours
 - ...meet the Farmer opportunities
 - ...opportunities to taste traditional and/or organic food
 - ... “HEAL Master Proto-type Plans” to help plan and implement tours-later farmers and gardens can gain a financial state of self sustenance.

“Viability of Small Farms in Regulated Environments”

“HEAL will purposefully support small farms and individuals aspiring to manage small farms, with the understanding of the greater benefit local food production can bring to not only economic development but the social and environmental development of a community.”

1) What individuals can do and think about:

- be inventive...share the ownership
- how does a small farm get income if not large enough to do quotas (to claim “farm status” to attain tax discounts)
- donations of produce and farm goods need to be able to have an agreed value for both the vendor and the recipient even if it is a donation or a gift
- communal approach to the farm as a whole
- always remember safety first!

2) What we need and where HEAL can help:

- inspection certificates courses offered to farmers for free
- students education center-to educate about your area: i.e. Gardens and soil checking
- policies and regulations: need to promote small farms
- communal approach to the farm as a whole
- how does a small farm get income if not large enough to do quotas (to claim “farm status” to attain tax discounts)
- donations of produce and farm goods need to be able to have an agreed value for both the vendor and the recipient even if it is a donation or a gift

“Pro-D Education Regarding Healthy Food in Schools”

“HEAL understands the importance of education in health, and will pursue partnerships and plan with intent for a bigger role and emphasis on health for our children within our education system.”

HEAL will gain and promote:

- balance so that there are solely “good” and “bad” actions without the enjoyment of foods...food has a role, but this is not a moral issues

- HEAL: promotion in schools for teachers
- “-partnerships with school districts, teachers, and nutritionists
- web site for schools
- community mobilization
- life skills
- reframe “free food” to “test gourmet food” (for teens) to get kids interested & keep it “cool”
- Food security

EXAMPLES:

- ...“Farm to School”
- ...School of the Month”, “Teacher of the Month”, “HEAL Communities” with profiles of families
- ...HEAL certified schools w/ criteria for bronze, silver, and gold status

“Links between economics and food: Time vs. Money”- Rene Poulin

The goal of this discussion was to recognize the lack of knowledge about personal finance, home economics, and self sufficiency among local populations. Time vs. Money relates to food in that when time is in short supply we spend more on food and other items. Fast food or processed food is purchased to save time and impacts negatively on long term health. Those who are unemployed or underemployed have an often unutilized opportunity to spend less money on food and more time growing and cooking food at home, practicing home economics, saving money, and increasing long term health. We discussed debt and savings. In general debt levels are high and savings levels are low. If you are unable to save, you have no choice but to go into debt. Cost of housing is often too high and many are trapped renting, or servicing subprime mortgages. Low interest rates and easy credit kept housing prices artificially high until just recently. Add to this credit card debt, automobile financing and student loans. Once overwhelmed with debt, your ability to make positive decisions relating to time and money disappear. You cannot take time to look after yourself and your family and you have no surplus money either. The speaker advocated for more education through workshops addressing personal finance, home economics etc. As an example, he commented on the fact that he personally is currently reducing his debts and continuing to improve his finances, not by trying to make more money but building a better time/money balance in his life. A close look at the surrounding macro economic picture today in the US and Canada tells him that he is headed the right direction.

“Map of Regionally Available Foods: Tools for Regional Connections”

“HEAL will not only promote Food Security and active investment in the local, regional, and traditional food production and gathering methods but will develop innovative tools to help its members further share the value of food security through a variety of forms that will not only inform but attract.”

1) Resources:

- start with farmers associations and aboriginal communities
- look for individual community members who already have knowledge

2) Include:

- links to other individual submitted experiences

- tips and advice for gardening and recipes
- calendars
- food/health guides (modified BC health guide or our own version!)
- tour information that include food character and production description of different regions in Northern BC (addresses, contacts)-“Northern BC
- list of plants and uses for all parts (i.e. Beet tops that should be consumed and not wasted)

EXAMPLES:

- ... “Northern BC” or “Aboriginal” Health Guide
- ... “Northern BC Cottage Industry Guide”
- ... “Tradition Plant Directory”
- ... “Northern BC Circle Farm Tours”

3) Mediums:

- internet websites or blogs
- handbook
- articles or information leaflets

“Educate and Learn about First Nations’ Tradition Health Practices / Foods / Medicines”

“HEAL acknowledges and respects the value of First Nations involvement, and will consciously incorporate components to include the education of Aboriginal traditions within its strategies to not only educate non-Aboriginals, but also help in the cultivation of successful Aboriginal communities.”

1) What?

- Indigenous leadership of Food Security
 - reconnecting with traditional values around land, food, activity
 - sharing awareness of traditional practices
 - awareness of/respect for spiritual values of land/flora and fauna-preserving and passing on knowledge
 - understanding our history of wealth of land and people
 - to promote literature and literacy with our history of wealth (not monetary but values). Knowledge and family
 - leave a legacy of wealth not poverty
- ~always acknowledge whose land you are on~

EXAMPLES:

- ...demonstration project: gardens of land and traditional plants
- ...healing gardens
- ...pamphlets about diabetes and unhealthy food
- ...a film? “We Were Once Warriors”
- ...a book?

2) Who?

- hereditary chiefs-role as models; involving elders and their knowledge
- HEAL's role as connector and political catalyst
- HEAL connect with other initiatives, community resources
- HEAL as educator/ awareness catalyst regarding Aboriginal Food Sovereignty
- awareness of and assistance for those who need help

~always acknowledge whose land you are on~

Conclusion

T: insert from closing round details and from evaluation report (full version of each will be appendix)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant and community check information

The participants shared highlights from the work and their communities.

Corenne Zamedhurst – Canadian Cancer Society – Yukon to Williams Lake. The farmers' market is the place to meet producers, get to know them and thank them.

Marissa – coordinator for PIRG/UNBC – community of students and university people. My example would be the organic food box we put together. It is entirely volunteer run. Gives me weekly view of how much power there is in volunteers.

Deepthi – I live in the West End of Vancouver, which is a community. HEAL example is a small farmers' market, where the community comes together with producers. During the summer that is the only produce I buy.

Ed – We have a little farm downtown. I'm not allowed to use Roundup so everyone has to look after their own grass. What I enjoy most is seeing the growth in the garden and harvesting – and the kids seeing the animals.

Lynne – what I enjoy the most being on Queensway, our children worried about our being there, but if you take one small step, lead to hope. My favorite part is the colorful fence, which people are inspired by. One neighbor plays music for events. Others donated paint and garden tools. Our garden spot is part of their community. It brings the community together – respectful and interacting with each other.

Michelle – school meals coordinator for district. Started as small job, to feed people lunch, but I've been involved in a lot of HEAL initiatives. Salad Bar program is important part of my life – feature local produce and teach children it's important to buy local. Just had salad bar day yesterday. One of participants was surprised it was still possible to buy local, fresh carrots so late in the year. Root vegetables available through the winter.

Rene – healing garden coordinator, Chetwynd General Hospital. Brought pipes to show how they can be bent, to form frame for greenhouses – affordable structure, curved and efficient, covers most amount of ground with least amount of materials. Sheds snow. When wind blows across, little structural disturbance. At healing garden, good first year that has made difference to patients. More than grass – flowers, trees, shrubs, vegetables. Clients of community health agencies have individual garden plots. Rene teaches skills of vegetable cultivation, tries to get people thinking about greens (lettuce, cabbage greens – things that thrive in our cool weather and are nutritious and not available enough in north). Worked with an elementary school within walking distance. Came about four times during season. Grew flower seedlings in classroom, planted in the garden; also potatoes (which fit into school year). Came end of September and harvested. Planted flower bulbs for next spring. Floral display will appear first in spring.

Lindsay – bringing community together; learn about healing

Ryan – working on proposal to purchase facility to be used as agricultural society to make community self-sustaining. Using food to bring community back together, generate revenue. Will be looking for guidance as to how to put proper agricultural facility there.

Christiane – passion for gardening and people. ??agency – garden for seniors. Built greenhouse. This year harvested tomatoes. Tracks depression in s seniors. Can see that as people plant, their hopes go up. Through the summer hope

risers. In fall there's a grieving process. This year started two pilot projects for preserving food, to carry hope over into fall and winter so people won't have to turn back to other things that make them high.

Julie – daughter ran Y 5 km run. This year son's Grade 2 teacher opted to do friendship soup, where each contributed something. Harvested last bits of daughter's small garden and take homegrown salad items to share. Herbs, lettuce, tomatoes in garden. People learning to take time to teach kids things that are better for their health. Choosing to run, walk – sign of healthy community.

Terry – BC Cancer Agency. Work in schools incredible. Burns Lake SS removing all junk food from schools. Got rid of vending machine except for water. Revenue has increased over what they got from pop. On a personal note, I have horses. This year I found a rancher who is using fertilizer for hay. Great to support it.

Laura– my show & tell is Tammy, fitness coordinator. Started breakfast program which has expanded from a couple days of week for breakfast, now every day, plus lunch – all from small seed.

Tammy – Kitimat Village, director of rec centre. Works with rehab for people from all over the province – change drug habits to healthy habits, how great it can feel if body is healthy. Has seen heroin addicts become healthy & strong. Runs recreation centre. Last year got \$40,000 in donations from major corp for weight room. Runs fitness classes for all ages. Teaches osteofit with elders centre. Has five active kids at home – model for community.

Maxine, Fort St. John Friendship Society – programs to build healthy lifestyles, focus on aboriginal community. Special Friends breakfast for homeless. After-school program picks up at-risk youth from school. Feed them nutritious, healthy snacks and meals. At all parties try to get healthy eating involved with everyone.

Robin – UNBC – came to help out because Theresa is my professor. I helped put up signs. Saw agenda and decided to stay. From Vancouver area. Staying because I'm interested in local food security. Part of fruit tree project in Lower Mainland. Exciting to see what's happening in Northern Health Authority

Keenan – from Smithers. Volunteer for friendship society. Have traveled around, Kamloops to Terrace. Help mother with traditional gathering, medicines. Went on Peace & ? journey in 2004, from Alaska Panhandle to Panama. Natives from north and south run from Alaska to Panama every four years. Found I was a lot stronger after running for 22 days. Healthy eating is very important. I share with as many people as possible. My whole life I've been a healthy eater. I'm here to learn some more and am happy my mom signed me up. A lot of times I share food with my friends. I know a lot about healthy eating. That's why I'm here, and I look forward to learning some more.

Joanne Peter – Smithers. Name means Raining Maiden. Born and raised in Cedarville. Through my work as mental health outreach worker at friendship centre...My boss is modern, high energy, motivated Gitxan woman. I brought roots with me – devil's club, other roots that are powerful medicine. Through my work, I take people out on the land to gather things such as devil's club. Powerful purification medicine to be used for smudging, protection. Others – wild mint, balsam bark, yarrow, sassafras, red alder bark, yellow? root. One year worked with RCMP people. One of RCMP out in lake pulling up this root. I'm afraid of leeches and things like that, but this is one of the ways we try to get people back to their roots because people have been disconnected from the land, our roots. Also offers Chinese traditional therapy (five-needle protocol, for addiction therapy), learned from traditional Chinese doctor. Training for Reiki. Counseling, healing circles, workshops, and more traditional therapy. Schools invite people to talk about areas of expertise. I do presentations on healing medicines and show them parallels of different medicines used in Europe. I bring red cloth, cedar, baskets, pictures & talk about the ones they might see. Children share their

experiences, have questions. In Moricetown, laid everything out. Must have looked dramatic. One girl said, “She’s going to do magic!” In Smithers a little boy, non-native, mentioned his grandmother makes mint jelly (connected with the wild mint). Sharing knowledge of traditional ways helps raise self-esteem of First Nations children.

Joanne Bays – regional manager of healthy communities – HEAL is my community. What’s meaningful to me is to look across the communities and see how they’re connecting. To PG in 2001, degree in food security. Met Jane Mowat Smith, Gitxan woman. Both out of their nests. Jane helped Joanne connect with land and its stories – moose tracks, bears. Invited Joanne to naming ceremony. Said you’ll have to be at no-name table. We make fun of them. Said if I had a name to give you, I think I’d call you Raven. Felt puffed up until Jane said, “because you chatter a lot”. Then told me Raven is trickster – always get what they want; close to creator; like pretty things. HEAL has been journey in understanding this place, people, and myself. Went to shield making ceremony; drew her journey on it – place of origin, work of connecting people, and move from east to west. Two months later her father told her she had two great-grandmothers who were First Nations.

Theresa – came to PG in 1994 to stay a year. When Joanne came up with the idea of HEAL, I thought she was completely bonkers. Health Canada would never give money to let community do what it wanted to do – but it happens. With HEAL from the beginning. Years later still doing what we set out to do – make a difference. Margaret Mead’s saying is her mantra.

Phaedra – Loraina’s daughter; here to learn.

Loraina – on journey with HEAL since Baldy Hughes. Had breakfast with Anne Docherty; figured it didn’t matter what happened with HEAL. Would want to be part of it because of person I was talking to. That has continued – extraordinary people. As CN work locally, regionally, provincially. Part of Queensway garden; see all of amazing stuff happen and sometimes be part of it. First municipality in province that has active living/healthy eating as part of community plan. Personally a long journey with activity before wrecked my knee. Got HEAL dog (out walking) & now a HEAL donkey. I do lots of dreaming. For my donkey, my dream is to get donkey to carry berries down from the mountain. We love berry picking, mushroom hunting, wild foods, and farming. Calendar, joint with HEAL and Rural Roots practitioners. Comparisons with what’s going on in our food and active communities – about relationships. In HEAL, what’s important is relationships, moving beyond content areas and moving into areas beyond our boundaries, our comforts – sharing the journey.

Sylvie, Vanderhoof – relationships brought me. Loraina convinced me, through her passion. Vanderhoof now has health & wellness centre for alternative healing, as well as community kitchen encouraging all members of community to come in to learn to cook economically and for health. Hope to get more people connected with HEAL.

Emma – works at PG friendship centre. Emergency Resources Coordinator – give out over 200 hampers per month; getting more healthy content (refrigerators downstairs, fresh produce, bison through partnership with men’s shelter). Proud to have local, healthy food. Partners with Queensway garden. Volunteers come to plot. This year babies in bassinets out there; care givers – all learning to garden together. Targeting food that has good response in hampers – turnips, cabbage, beets, and onions. People think people who get hampers don’t know what to do with it, but we see faces light up. Program for families with children age 0-6, community kitchen – level playing field, not client/staff. Another program for families coping with FASD (Structured for Success). Programs only work through partnership. Five years ago it felt as if things were crisis driven. Change of heart. Now kitchen runs at a profit. Prepares foods healthy for elders, people living with diabetes. Menu comes out every week via e-mail, including tips. Gym floor being put in so people can work out. In visioning sessions, people talk about wanting to get away from crisis model.

Margaret, McBride – ED officer. Looking for ideas to pass on to community leaders, perhaps farm to school program.

Melanie – works with Storytellers Foundation to foster active citizenship and build civic literacy. I have been involved with youth engagement, caravan. HEAL is group of activists, hard at work in communities. Our community has told us that active citizenship also means food. Have done research about connection with food – central to who we are, cultural identity, how we operate on the land, central to our health.

Marie – PHN with Healthy Hearts program. Ob is to connect with community, work places, expos, to promote healthy eating, active living, other disease risk factors. When I went into this position I had to start practicing what I was preaching. I belong to a church community (husband is minister). Faith communities eat together. Gave talk to community. Did assessments. Ripple effect of people showing each other the healthy foods they've brought. Also went to Sikh temple, got feedback from community.

Jocelyn – in Ft St. John for seven months. Happy to learn about HEAL. More down to earth. Had food security vision. The few who were there want to do something.

Kathy Hill – works with CN. Mother of four, grandmother of seven. Two daughters are teachers, one at Austin Road, an active HEAL school. Got rid of junk food. Started bucket garden so kids could take buckets home at end of school year and look after them. Pictures around walls here – small percentage of posters that showed kids understand what healthy eating/active living is about. I'm also involved with good food box. It's like Santa Claus, giving out gifts. I'm eating vegetables I never ate before. Jovanka gives us recipes, newsletters. Two big bags for \$15. What means most to me is that I see change in my community and in my own family.

Flo – HEAL is about people, passion, and perseverance – and connection. This spring many challenges because of flooding; panic around food. One family at farmers' market brings huge selection from Dutch Valley. Not there until mid-August. So many excited to see them. Got flooded; impact on what they were able to sell this year. Yes, it's about eating well but also to how we grow it and resourcing.

Tatjana – one of my first contacts with HEAL, contacted by rural school to learn how to be HEAL school. Hats with H E A L; big vegetables – one of first schools to develop school policy. Talking with kindergarteners about gardening. One of kids said, "My dad has a secret garden." (from Likely, where there are many secret gardens)

Elaine – works with eating disorders, mental health. Talks about kitchens, gardens, good food box. Brought photo of canoeing in Bowron Lakes. Did whole circuit; planned the meals. People enjoyed the healthy, tasty food.

Pearl – NH, Aboriginal Health. Met many of you at other meetings. We featured HEAL presentations at our conferences; well received in Fort St. John. Listening to stories, I see I'm involved with HEAL more than I knew. My husband is trucker. Now he's in culinary arts. His whole class failed nutrition test. Learning about nutrition helps him prepare food. Exciting because he is changing; through him I'll change.

Velma – principal of elementary school; committed to healthy school. (Sorry – couldn't hear her at all.) Working on hot lunch. Hope to start salad bar. Mother was fanatical about healthy eating.

Anne – I'm here because of the people and the relationships. We're connected – and that's what HEAL is. If we hadn't had HEAL, we'd never have known each other. We run a good food box, which is crappy. People with limited income eat crappy food, but they get vegetables. Anyone who lives on reserve, it's hard. Decisions made a hundred years ago, we're dealing with. My mantra is, if we keep doing good food box, we perpetuate injustice. But if we look at the causes of the injustice, we can make a difference. We're creating knowledge together. That's what keeps me

involved with HEAL. Community process is messy and ambiguous. I have to keep asking myself why I'm coming to HEAL, which is big, messy, ambiguous, political. We are constructing policy just by being in this room.

Katharina – snow falling is almost like a welcoming. Happy to see everyone. Always carry rock from Haida Gwaii in my purse. Want to acknowledge the Carrier and Sekani people, whose traditional territory we are on today. They used to bring a rock to big potlatches and gatherings and make a pile – a marker for the future, for people to look back on and remember what occurred there. Would be wonderful if there were a place like a garden to leave marker of this gathering. Made “witches fingers” for Halloween for kids schools – all artificial ingredients. When I ate them they tasted funny to me. So when I made my batch (we always had whole wheat flour, real vanilla), mine were a nice brown colour – rice flour, whole wheat flour, a bit of white; real vanilla and almond extract. Daughter compared one from school, mine – “I really like this taste (Katharina’s) way better, not just because you’re my mum.”

Dorothy Charlie - ??? Good to learn from other people. Happy to be here to hear and share information.

Christine – new with PH Protection; working with Joanne. Decided to attend.

Appendix 2 Evaluation Report

This gathering offered a space for learning, networking and dialogue with others in your region who are taking action to build strong sustainable communities by increasing opportunities to access the foods and the activity required for health and well being. We would like to hear about your experiences:

1. Would you agree that the HEAL family has :

Clarified its vision? (18)

YES xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

NO

Clarified its structure? (13)(6)(3)

YES xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

NO xxxxxx

NOT SURE xxx

- *It still needs some work, but the advisory can take it there*

Clarified its resources? (6)(4)(3)

YES xxxxxx

NO xxxx

NOT SURE xxx

- *Partly no, though*

Been inspired and motivated? (19)

YES xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

NO

2. Would you agree your links and networks have been strengthened and/or increased because of today's meeting? (18)(1)

YES xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

NO x

- *Computers and email don't agree with me*

3. Do you feel the group developed priority areas for action? (12)(2)(2)

YES xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

NOxx

SOMEWHAT xx

- *Again--Needs some work*

4. Do you feel the group created a doable action plan for the next three years?(8)(2)(2)

YES xxxxxxxx

NO xx

SOMEWHAT xx

Need to see the full plan but suspect yes

5. What did you learn that will be helpful to you in the future?

- There are others out there that are like -----(what a relief)
- Information regarding farm to school salad bar (√)
- That there are other people I can talk to and work with
- About the new food sovereignty piece in the UN Charter and how we could use this for our work
- Traveling to gatherings such as HEAL, plus listening closely and respectfully to all whom were here had a lot to offer. It reminded me to get moving again and don't stop
- Heal as a network and seed grant and resource center
- About traditional lifestyles and relationship to health
- I've gotten to see who is in the HEAL community. I had heard of this group. Maureen Morgan invited me to this retreat today and I am thankful I came
- The importance of building relationships and friendships
- Outcome does not measure success; action is celebrating and validating baby steps
- About intentions and actions
- Contacts (√)
- More about HEAL-structure and vision
- that there is a movement
- what working for the government really means
- the amazing amount of things that are happening in the north and other parts of the province
- What HEAL is about ☺
- Connected with greenhouses and the remote possibility of winter gardening
- World café stations; food to school program
- Healing, food and nutrition

6. How will you maintain the energy of today's ideas and networking when you return home?

- I will inspire others (that is my gift); give my community awareness and resources
- To remember that we are not in it alone, that we have others around us that can help support what we are doing
- By educating myself and trying to educate others
- By staying in touch with folks
- By joining the advisory committee
- I get my rest, have a good memory and just have to go with the times, have an email address and stand firm with the energy of today's ideas and networking. Thinking positive
- Will relay ideas to local contacts
- Will work on compiling workshop materials for future
- Reflecting on journey, embracing past and present, goal seeking for future
- By focusing on my own physical health needs and acting on those to learn how to really help others to see themselves in a better light, to role model healing
- To contact others to bounce ideas off and to gather ideas and information
- Develop a group-meet with people I have met
- Go garden
- Join the advisory and hopefully they (we) will use what came out to the 2 days as a "litmus" test of "are we meeting our objectives"

- Joined the HEAL advisory Team
- Best practices of what others are doing; stay connected with people like me
- By continuing the implementation of ideas and by linking any like minded local people with my HEAL family and by planting more seeds in more schools
- Explore [adding?] team members to work on food to school project; connect with new acquaintances of HEAL
- Yes!

7. How might the discussions you engaged in today strengthen your ability to address complex community issues?

- Network with knowledgeable people
- It makes me feel more certain of what I want to do
- I have more awareness of the alternatives and the expertise I can refer to
- The UN charter piece will help me to frame our work
- From learning how effective my input, which has been out there and what I feel I can fork on, brainstorm on, to see the light and have people witness the strength that was built to last
- Have awareness of a broad range of issues and potential solutions
- To be able to think of the past 2 days of discussion
- See how this group would work through community
- Use and put those ideas to action
- Realization we are all swirling in the same soup, although a great organic soup that can [???
- Apply for funds for community garden
- Speak with passion about healing ourselves physically not only emotionally, so as to honor our culture, our spirit
- A means of support
- Highlighted complex issues-narrowed possible areas
- “??”
- Looking at how to make community food security possible for the poor
- Do the walk as well as talk the walk
- Understanding is important
- These discussions have given me the strength and courage to continue and face what I am dealt and grind the boulders into sand
- Invite an advisory member to community
- Share what I have learned; learn more about HEL members

8. Were there some important ‘aha’ moments for you? If so, what were they?

- Yes. Diabetes awareness
- Salad bar information
- When I found that there were kindred spirits here
- At the end of yesterday-during Monty’s presentation I was reminded that we need to foster people’s sense of who they are
- Well, everything stressed I related to, understood well, made me think ‘aha’ it’s about time! Time for some action.

- The knowledge that there are so many people from very different backgrounds with similar issues
- We are not alone, we have many like and similar minded [people]
- When talking to others on-on-one
- the storytelling—Catherine
- Engage FN, don't just take the best of their culture or give lip service
- Stepped out of "my box"
- Monte's presentation
- We can grow produce during the winter for the salad bar program

9. *The best thing about the gathering was.*

- networking (√)and inspiration
- the frenetic synergy
- The FOOD :) as always April's food was amazing
- Kathryn's facilitating and of teaming up with Theresa
- My visualization and knowledge that I had brought, then my visualization and knowledge after. Everybody was great, I am almost speechless, but, nah, hah.
- The local vegetarian friendly food was outstanding—THANK YOU
- A sense of community. There is a sense of synergy when like minded people get together
- It was fun! and inspiring of course
- Coming together of region
- I am OK and its OK to keep using my voice as I have been as an advocate for healing
- The group—great people
- Thinking about experts in community and how to gather them
- April's amazing food and the third day's workshop groups
- The pace of the agenda
- Renewing friendship and gaining new ones
- Networking with so many culturally diverse groups
- The people that I met
- Practical bread making; Farm to school
- Learning about healing.

10. *One thing I would definitely change about how this even was organized is. . .*

- getting each member to bring a nonmember
- nothing really, it was a great mix
- including green materials—cups, plates, utensils
- include a list of all the participants, their contact/organization information
- I would have focused more on the structure of HEAL and the advisory on day 1—so the new advisory knew what they were signing up for and new folks would know how best to contribute
- Is there anything to change?
- More time for unscheduled sharing/networking
- Meeting such wonderful caring human beings
- To keep all info focused to HEAL and not to single out any one people and or. .
- More focused in presentations

- The 2nd day's meeting of each other and story sharing was although lovely... . did nothing to further my goals within food nutrition and where it meets with HEAL
- Wasted time around breakfast – start was at 8 but always late
- Nothing
- More food from April's ☺

11. What are the top three actions you are taking away on you're to do list?

- Educate
- Network more
- Salad bar project
- Encouraging the consumption, buying local foods
- Start permaculture at UNBC
- Bike through the winter
- Tell people about HEAL
- Articulate my learning
- Drop 500 calories a day (from Monte's presentation)
- Take time to consider how to share my learning with my community
- I have flew with the wind, will fly like the eagles, live and breathe HEAL
- Will participate in advisory committee
- Reorganize, rejuvenate, action plan
- Write our own story, get NH recognition for what we do, identify barriers for growth
- Opening prayer by elder—have someone; a chief of the territory that the meeting place is held on do a welcoming to his/her territory. . . to remember protocol
- Learn more about gardens and greenhouses and policies
- Meet with community heart health
- Start a garden
- Meet with the community kitchen
- Balance—slow down and connect
- Community gardens - Food to farm – connections
- Healing proper diet
- Do actions
- 1) start working on a green house; 2) make a change in my lifestyle; 3) encouraging my community to take advantage of what HEAL has to offer
-

Anything else you'd like us to know?

- It's all good
- There is a professor at Kwantlen University College in Langley who is potentially researching. . . .
- Everyone's contact info?
- I am a “do-er” not an “organizer”. If I can impart my knowledge of gardening to people who want to learn - MT
- You did an amazing job on the organization of this retreat and brought amazing people together

- Would like to know how we all fit into the HEAL quilt, maybe via newsletter not enough time to do so over 2 day event
- Great job! Well done! Never lose the love of life
- Great People! More focused work.
- Everything was good
- More hands on how to do xxx. i.e. build a green house; start a community garden
- I'd like to see more retreats and I will try to bring someone else to the next one

Appendix 3 Closing Round

Participants were asked to share the gift they brought to the gathering and the gift they take away.

- "I bring with me wonder and what I take with me is strength."
- "I think I bring energy & laughter...and I take away a need to slow down and breath."
- "[HEAL] is a whole shift in our approach to life."
- "I like to observe, listen and learn..."
- "...but I will remember where I am from [because of HEAL]"
- "My gift is to inspire...make things happen."
- "I got an awareness of what [HEAL] is about!"
- "I bring my love of people and wanting to share..."
- "We have to give and reshape constantly what is around us starting with here and today."
- "I brought my perspective of youth, and what I took away is so much learning."
- "...a lot of our goals and end principles [within HEAL] are the same."
- "I brought a passion...I'm taking away the working knowledge that there are so many of us working together."
- "I need to come out of my nurturing mode and fly..."
- "I brought with me...gratitude and a piece of HEAL's story, and what I am taking with me is a piece of HEAL's new story."
- "What I am taking away is meeting you people...I think it's awesome."
- "What I am taking is validation that I AM on the right track"
- "What I bring is a can do attitude."
- "I am incredibly honoured to hear people's stories."
- [about HEAL]-"a voice and freedom to say what people haven't been able to say."
- "Where I got my strength from is the land..."
- [through HEAL]-"The light shines off and on us in different ways"
- [HEAL is]-"...the inspiration that there are people with a commitment to more than just themselves."
- "This gathering was a commitment to the people."
- "I am taking away the sense of community."

- “I am taking away hope, after bringing my passion for eradicating homelessness.”
- “The gift I absolutely and unshakeably bring is the belief in the power of people.”
- “I brought my enthusiasm and abilities to plant seeds...and I am taking strength from you people back.”
- [about HEAL]-“I brought my spirit to the group...and I will try to remain strong and grounded like this rock.
- “I am an avid gardener, if I can garden...anyone can garden, and if anyone wants to share [knowledge], then I am here.”
- [through HEAL]-“I’ve learnt a lot, I’ve grown a lot, and I have gained a lot.”
- “Everyone has hope in their heart...a hope to change. It has been a wonderful journey.”

“It’s good to know I’m not alone.”



