



HEAL

Dig in & plant the seeds of HEALth in Northern BC

Healthy Eating & Active Living
in Northern British Columbia
Issue #8: July 2003



Northern Route to HEALth

It was inspiring. It was fun. It two days of good company, good food, good networking, collective dreaming and shared laughter. Northern Route to HEALth, May 29-30 in Prince George, was the second annual gathering for Healthy Eating and Active Living in Northern BC.

From communities around the north, participants brought skills, resources and visions and left with much more.

The photos here are a small snapshot of the riches shared. Starting at upper left and moving in a clockwise circle:

Emily and Christina Dick from Anaham Reserve (Tl'etinqox'T'in), where a network of gardens and root cellars provides more food security than most communities even dream of.

The map shows part of the expanding network of healthy eating and active living initiatives around

northern B.C. Participants posted photos and descriptions and linked them on the map with their home communities.

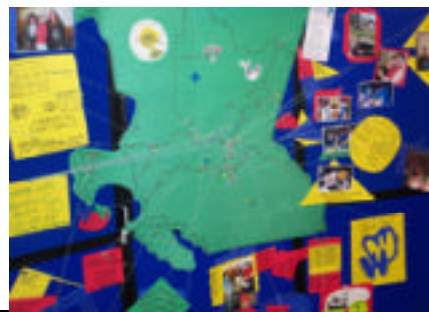
Below the map is 10-year-old Vanessa Houghton, the youngest HEAL Hero. She designed

the Good Food Box pages for her school's Web site, bringing that noteworthy initiative to the global audience.

She joined 17 other HEAL Heroes at a banquet in their honour.

The photo bottom left is a scene from the Youth Forum performance, which posed the question of how to cope with blocks when youth question the status quo. The nine youth participants brought more than their share of energy and enthusiasm to the conference.

The whole, rich mix of people and ideas and challenges can be downloaded from <http://healbc.ca/pubs.htm>.



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News around the North

Burns Lake Garden in 2nd year



Last year's dream now in its second season

The garden is looking wonderful, lots of green, and slowly awareness and community involvement are increasing.

We have a Social Service Worker Program student, Joan Conlon, doing her practicum at the garden...it really helps to have a "co-ordinator". [NB: It's Mary in the photo, not Joan.]

The college is just completing major

renovations, and we have a community kitchen!!!! Very exciting. It will be great to have both components, the garden and the kitchen.

~Andrea Scarth

5th anniversary for Ft Nelson Garden

The garden is doing great. This is our five-year anniversary. The community garden was planted in 1999 and is still growing, so to speak! So this year we decided to erect a sign identifying ourselves. This is probably the year of the most planted soil. We have about 16 plots planted, 2 of which are the size of three plots! Wow we have some ambitious people this year.

We are hoping to have kind of like a farmer's market but have people come right to the garden site and buy right from the ground. What a concept, a garden store. ~Tova Dancevic

Tunes for kitchens

Prince George choirs held an annual Gospel Jubilee on May 4th. Emma Faulkner reports: The evening went well. It was a two-hour concert, including the youth choir from Vanway Elementary school, the Sweet Adelaides, the Spruce City Choristers, and the Cantata Singers.

The musical director, Barb Parker,

maintained the theme of kitchens throughout the evening, starting with an explanation of the kitchens run out of the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, and ending with a description of the challenges she faced after becoming disabled, losing two jobs, being unable to qualify for social assistance, and living off Kraft Dinner for months on end!

She expressed what relief she would have felt if she was able to access community kitchens at that point in her life.

Audience members all donated generously to the kitchens.

On another note, the local Buddhist Meditation group just contacted me to say that they would like to contribute seed, labor, or some such to our community gardens and kitchens. It is wonderful to see this project capture so many people's imaginations!

Canoe Creek digs 36 gardens

We are gardening at Canoe/Dog Creek - 36 new gardens are going in right now. We did a survey and the members wanted their own garden areas in their own yards...delivering manure from the ranchers and rototilling right now... ~Denise Skarra

Masset makes healthy eating easier

Serve meat alternatives like split peas, black beans or lentils at least twice a week.



The Masset flagging initiative provides grocery stores with shelf cards that help consumers pick the "Best choices for healthy eating", such as the one above. Terrace Community Nutritionist Flo Sheppard worked with a local committee and hopes to see the program spread to other communities.

Download all 21 cards from the HEAL Web site, http://healbc.ca/Masset_Flagging_Initiative.ppt.



Bulkley Valley Regional Trail Signs 180 Members

By Norma Stumborg

The Bulkley Valley Regional Trail received HEAL seed funding in 2002. This excerpt is from a longer update.



10 days, 536 respondents indicated support for the project. The Bulkley Valley Trail Society evolved from the original working group and was organized in order to promote active living through the development of recreational trails as well as manage and maintain the trail system.

To encourage active living as a way of life, the Village of Telkwa saw the need for a connector trail linking Telkwa to Smithers, approximately 12 kilometers. Many rural and Telkwa residents work in Smithers and commute daily while other community members want low-risk physical activities and recreation opportunities that allow them to enjoy our natural environment.

The Village of Telkwa invited interested residents to complete a survey on the proposed trail. Within

We expect to have our route finalized within the next few months and plan to have a public meeting early in the fall to announce the route and kick off our fund raising campaign.

Promoting the natural beauty of the area and encouraging residents to use our natural resources in activities with low environmental impact is one of the key aspects of this project. As well, the health benefits of active living are worth promoting.

Interior Health expands School Food Project

Community Nutritionist Rose Soneff reports the Interior Health Authority has approved a \$60,000 expansion of the School Food and Nutrition Policy project. One of two projects supported by HEAL in 2002/2003, the initiative has become a role model for community-based school nutrition. Project details and a guide for school fundraising can be downloaded from <http://healbc.ca/schools.htm>.

PG couple donates garden space

One of the stops on the community garden tour during the Northern Route conference was the urban farm of Lynn and Ed Gilliard. When the couple decided to move into town, they bought an acreage completely surrounded by the city. With a sense that such bounty must be shared, they have donated space for non-profit organizations to garden in a spot that has the feel of a peaceful urban retreat.

Healthier Choices

At least two BC companies are responding to the growing call for healthier choices in vending machines. Steve Korpi of SDS Vending (Skeena Distribution Services) says clients have been asking for healthier choices, and manufacturers are responding with new product lines.

Rite Bite in Vancouver is also exploring healthier options for its machines.

Vending machines are everywhere. Most of the goodies are baddies, loaded with fat, salt and or sugar. Some "healthier choices" are only slightly better than the baddies. With pressure mounting, we can vote with our coins and influence the contents of these ever-present machines.

Better school nutrition

In Dawson Creek Isabelle Friesen reports that the Aboriginal Council is working with local schools to urge improved nutrition for aboriginal children. She sees this as investing in the future.

Terrace gardens in bloom

We have 2 gardens a small one a one that is about an acre. The larger one is only about half done. I am working on getting a communal area with a fire pit and some larger beds for potatoes, beans, ect for the food bank. ~Paula Shimmel

PG Walkers Cross Canada

Two Prince George agencies have encouraged workplace wellness through virtual walks across Canada. At the Native Friendship Centre participants could earn points through all kinds of activities. Vowing to make it fun and easy, organizer Darlene McEwan made the whole Centre a team.

Across town, Northern Health's Health Nuts formed teams to work their way across Canada. Both projects made activity fun and natural.



A Salute to HEAL Heroes

On May 29th we celebrated HEAL Heroes who are making the north a healthier place to live. These are just snippets from an inspiring evening. A salute to them all!

David Phillips - active in island health & food initiatives; gourmet chef at his Masset B&B, Copper Beech House.

Cathleen Kneen, Sorrento - key player in Canadian food security for over 25 years.

Tova Dancevic, Fort Nelson - Community Nutritionist and community garden organizer.

Vanessa Houghton, 4th grader at Nukko Lake Elem. - designed a Good Food Box Web site.

Susan Patenaude, Prince George - community kitchen & garden organizer & a Food First founders.

Marcie Fofonoff, Chetwynd - organizes adventure-based, experiential training and helped start a fool school to gets kids moving.

Leslie Bell, librarian at 108 Mile House Elementary School - role model for the healthy eating and active living and one of the leaders in the school nutrition project.

Michelle Lessard, Quesnel - makes a difference in children's lives with her school meals program, where students in the alternative program prepare the food.

Rose Soneff, Williams Lake - spearheaded the successful nutrition project in four schools in District 27.

Emily Dick, Tl'etinqox - masterminds the network of 60 gardens and 60 greenhouses and 20 root cellars bringing food security to Anaham Reserve.

Community Linkages Program, Prince George - Melanie Angus says the Soup Bus served 9000 meals from December to May and wants to connect more to the community garden and Good Food Box.

The Cranbrook Hill Greenway Society, Prince George - with UNBC, First Nations groups and some corporations has developed a greenway that will eventually encircle Prince George.

Darlene McEwen has worked with Emma Faulkner at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre to launch community kitchens.

Irene Kopetski & Sara Cormier, Quesnel - make diabetes prevention programs & resources available to First Nations communities.

Loraina Stephen, Prince George - weaves healthy eating and active living through her professional and personal life as Community Nutritionist with Northern Health Authority and manager of nine provincial parks.

Joan Jensen, Prince George - Food First stalwart , the wizard who keeps track of HEAL's finances, and active living role model.

Dr. Lorna Medd, Chief Medical Health Officer, Northern Health - Godmother of Food Security in Prince George. Founding member of Food First of Northern BC and of the BC Food Systems Network. Works in marvelous and mysterious ways to find resources for food security activities – from inspiring a garden on the hospital, to supporting continued efforts for the establishment of a municipal food policy council.



If you've spotted a HEAL Hero...

Host a Heroes celebration in your community. HEAL will provide certificates, decals and seed money for the event. See box to the right for contact info.



Write, call, e-mail, fax or send snail mail & let us know how you are Planting the Seeds of HEALth



To join the growing network, contact HEAL:

Check out the Web site: <http://healbc.ca/>
Call (250) 296-4432; fax (250) 296-4429
E-mail Project Coordinator Cathryn Wellner: cwellner@healbc.ca
Or write: HEAL, Box 15 Miocene, Williams Lake, BC V2G 2P3

