

# **Food Hubs and Food Centres: The Stop Community Food Centre Model**

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# Introducing The Stop

- A “thriving community food centre that is a hub of activity related to food, where people come together to solve a variety of “problems” related to food.”
- Started in the mid-1970s as a food bank; gradually extended its food-related programming (“multi-service food centre”)

Metcalfe Foundation (2010). In Every Community a Place for Food: The Role of the Community Food Centre in Building a Local, Sustainable, and Just Food System, Metcalfe Food Solutions Series. Available online:  
[http://www.metcalffoundation.com/downloads/Metcalfe\\_Food\\_Solutions\\_In\\_Every\\_Community\\_a\\_Place\\_for\\_Food.pdf](http://www.metcalffoundation.com/downloads/Metcalfe_Food_Solutions_In_Every_Community_a_Place_for_Food.pdf)

“Communities, both urban and rural, need a place where people can gather and experience food and its many transformative possibilities and where conversations about local, sustainable food issues and policies can take place. In downtown Toronto, that conversation might focus on social assistance rates, urban food production, emergency food programs, and the need for more accessible markets and more comprehensive school nutrition programs. In a smaller community, these conversations might include local farming issues, kitchen incubators to make value-added processing possible, the formation of Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) projects, or marketing co-operatives that support local farmers.” (page 15)

# Stop Programs and Activities

- emergency food programs (food bank, drop-in)
- community kitchens
- community gardens
- food skills workshops
- advocacy and community development initiatives
- low-cost market (with outdoor wood-fired oven)
- the Green Barn - sustainable food production and education centre

# The Green Barn

- part of a redeveloped heritage building
- includes greenhouse (powered geothermally; demonstrations and seedling production), kitchen, demonstration gardens, classroom, market site
- food systems education program for local Grade 5 students
- after-school program for 9- to 12-year-olds that emphasizes hands-on cooking and gardening

# **The Stop's Core Principles**

- 1. Meet People's Immediate Needs, and Meet Them Where They Are.**
- 2. Good Food is an Investment in Good Health**
- 3. Provide a Welcoming and Respectful Environment**
- 4. Remake Ourselves: Build Knowledge and Skills to Grow, Prepare, and Advocate for Good Food**
- 5. Work to Remake the Food System**
- 6. Build Infrastructure and a Critical Mass for Food Programming**
- 7. Take Advantage of the Inspirational Power of Food to Make Friends and Raise Money**

“The solution we propose is not to call for cheaper food, but rather to increase incomes to allow everyone to purchase food at its real cost. In the meantime...The Stop effectively injects a “subsidy” into food distribution supported by the charitable donations it receives. This subsidy is targeted at everything from the emergency food distribution that substitutes for adequate social programs, to paying for meals and accessible food distribution mechanisms that support local food economies, to food skills programs that can ultimately affect government health care budgets. This subsidy acts as a substitution (obviously severely limited in scale) for the work that ultimately should be supported by the state. The Stop continues to push for the investments that would put responsibility for this subsidy back into government hands.” (page 19)