



Social Planning Council Oxford
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Trends in Oxford County

Food Security

The Social Planning Council strives to improve the well-being of all residents of Oxford County through research, community development, community mobilization, and advocacy

MAY 2013

Food Security

Food Security is defined by the World Health Organization as being present, “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” The definition extends to include both physical and economic access to food that meets people’s dietary needs as well as their food preferences.¹

Food Security has three components:

- Food availability: sufficient quantities of food consistently available
- Food access: sufficient resources to obtain nutritious foods
- Food use: appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, and access to adequate water and sanitation

Food Banks Canada reported that the use of food banks grew by 2.4% in 2012, compared to 2011. This means that the use of food banks has increased by 31% since 2008, before the start of the 2008-2009 recession.

Similarly, the use of meal programs increased by 23% from 2011 to 2012, and is 27% higher than in 2008.²

The Ontario Association of Food Banks has indicated that food bank use is at an all time high—even higher than was seen during the 2008 recession. This year, for the first time in their lives, 17,190 Ontario households accessed food banks.³

The 2009-2010 Canadian Community Health Survey indicated that 9.3% of residents in Oxford County feel food insecure. This factsheet will highlight community trends and indicators that relate to food security in Oxford County.

The Cost of Healthy Eating in Oxford County

The Nutritious Food Basket is prepared by Public Health units across Ontario, to help monitor the cost and affordability of healthy eating. The cost of the Nutritious Food Basket is most often cited as the cost per week for an average family of four, known as the “reference family of four”, to buy the basic food items that allow them to eat healthy meals and meet their minimum nutrition recommendations. The reference family of four includes a man and woman, each 31-50 years of age, a male 14-18 years of age, and a female 4-8 years of age.⁴

From 2009 to 2012, Oxford County saw an increase of 13.2% in the cost of a nutritious food basket. This represents a significant increase in cost, which is not accounted for fully by inflation.⁵ This increase is especially challenging for those with low incomes.

Nutritious Food Basket Weekly Costs

“Reference family of four” (Man 31-50 years, Woman 31-50 years, Male 14-18 years, Female 4-8 years)

2009	2010	2011	2012
\$169.72	\$168.86	\$189.59	\$192.10

Source: Oxford County Public Health & Emergency Services, The Cost of the Nutritious Food Basket

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Food Security Agencies and Organizations in Oxford County

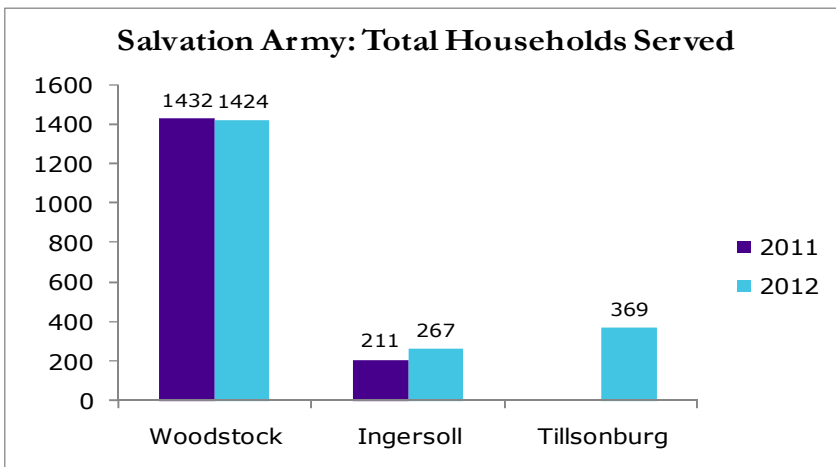
Several organizations provide programs that work to bring about increased food security for residents of the community.

Emergency Food Services

Emergency food services include food banks and food card programs that provide clients with supplies of food staples to help meet their basic dietary needs.

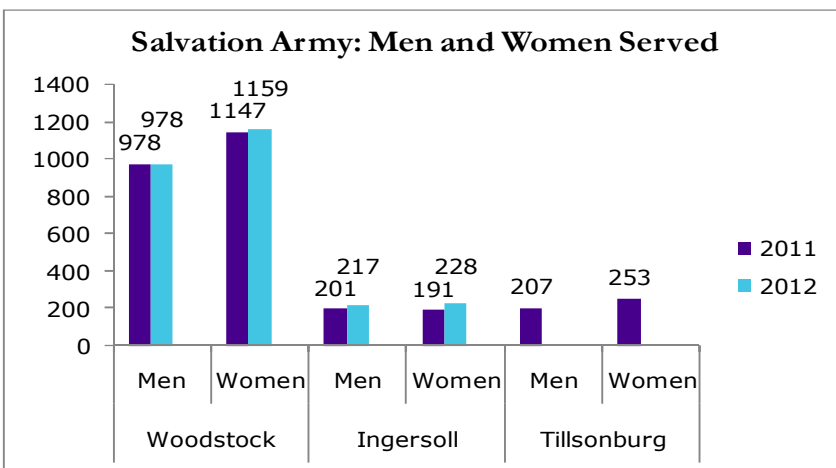
Salvation Army

Oxford County has three Salvation Army's: Woodstock (including Norwich), Tillsonburg, and Ingersoll. The Salvation Army provides emergency food hampers to assist individuals in immediate need. Each Salvation Army also runs a variety of other programs, including: bread program (Woodstock), fruit and vegetable box (\$15/box, available monthly in Woodstock), and a Christmas hamper program.



Source: Salvation Army Woodstock, Ingersoll, and Tillsonburg, Personal Communication, 2013

Note: Woodstock numbers do not include the Christmas hamper program

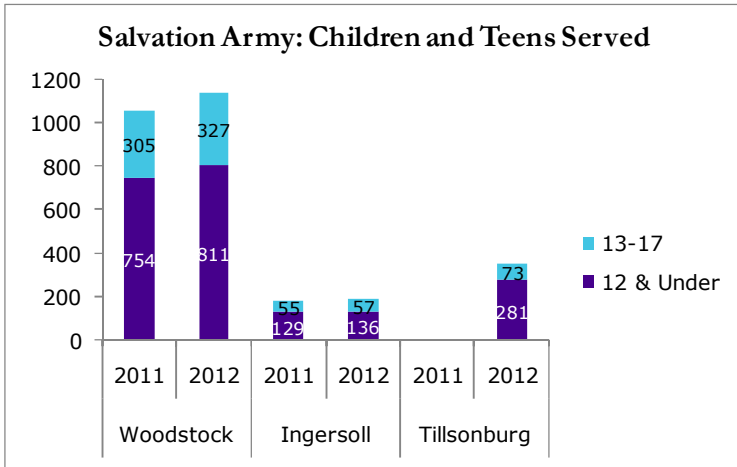


Source: Salvation Army Woodstock, Ingersoll, and Tillsonburg, Personal Communication, 2013

Note: Woodstock numbers do not include the Christmas hamper program

- 33% of the total households served by the Woodstock Salvation Army in 2012 were new cases
- 21% of the total households served by the Ingersoll Salvation Army in 2012 were new cases
- In Woodstock, 23% of women and 33% of men served were identified as single in 2012
- In Ingersoll, 17% of women and 30% of men served were identified as single in 2012
- In Tillsonburg, 25% of women and 34% of men served were identified as single in 2012

Norwich data is included with the Woodstock Salvation Army. It is estimated that the Woodstock Salvation Army serves 25-28 families each month in Norwich Township.



In 2012, of the total number of people served:

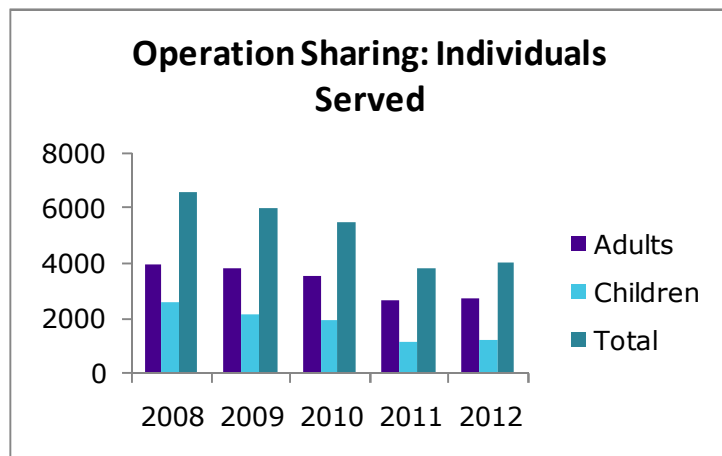
- 35% were under the age of 18 in Woodstock (total people= 3275)
- 30% were under the age of 18 in Ingersoll (total people= 638)
- 37% were under the age of 18 in Tillsonburg (total people= 947)

Source: Salvation Army Woodstock, Ingersoll, and Tillsonburg, Personal Communication, 2013

Note: Woodstock numbers do not include the Christmas hamper program

Operation Sharing: Food for Friends

Operation Sharing has locations in both Woodstock and Ingersoll. They offer emergency food assistance through their program Food for Friends, which provides individuals with specially designed food cards, in pre-determined denominations. Once food cards have been provided to an individual, that person has the option of choosing their own food at participating grocery stores. The program acts as an alternative or a supplement to the food bank, and gives access to fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy products. The Ingersoll location also includes a fruit and vegetable cooperative.



- In April 2010, the Food for Friends program changed from giving food cards out every four weeks to every six weeks
- In 2012, a total of 4000 individuals accessed the program
- In 2012, 1230 children and 2770 adults accessed the program
- Of the individuals who accessed the program in 2012, 263 were new clients

Source: Operation Sharing, Personal Communication, 2013

Tavistock Assistance Program

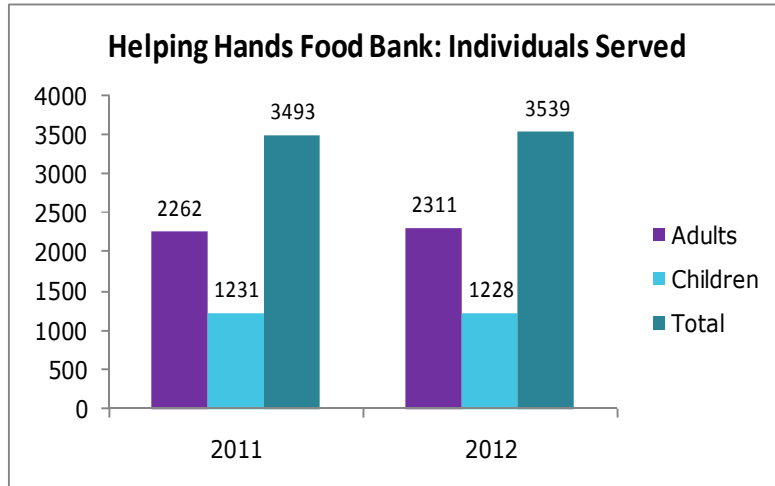
T.A.P. is a community support system designed to ensure that individuals in the community have access to food, clothing, financial services, emergency response, access to social service programs and other necessities. Assistance is provided to residents within the Highway 59 corridor, Tavistock, Hickson, Shakespeare, and surrounding rural areas.

T.A.P. had an increase of 56% in individuals assisted from 2011 (total= 86) to 2012 (total=134).⁶

Source: Tavistock Assistance Program, Personal Communication, 2013

Tillsonburg Helping Hands Food Bank

The Helping Hands Food Bank provides food items once a month and in emergency situations for individuals living in Tillsonburg and the surrounding area. Food is distributed on Wednesday's from 12:30-3:30pm.



- There was a slight increase in the number of individuals served at the Helping Hands Food Bank between 2011 and 2012
- In 2012, 35% of the individuals who received assistance were children

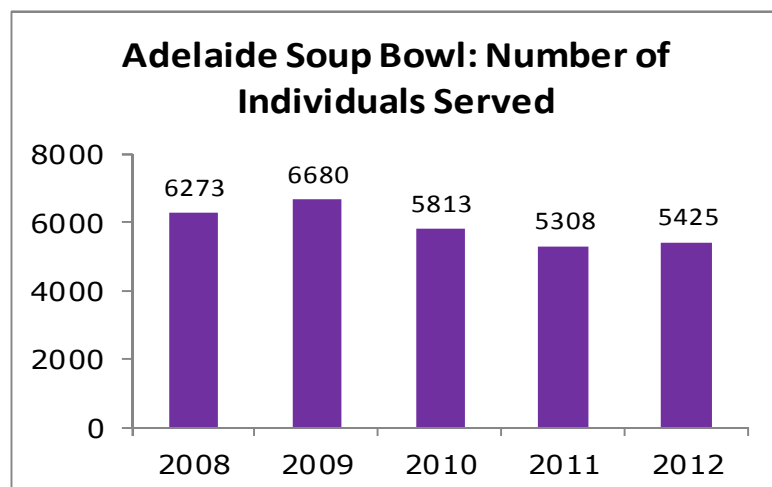
Source: Tillsonburg Helping Hands Food Bank, Personal Communication, 2013

Community Meal Programs

Community meal programs offer prepared food to those who may not have any other means of accessing or preparing a complete cooked meal.

Adelaide Soup Bowl: Woodstock

The Adelaide Soup Bowl is a lunch program offering free hot meal lunches. It is sponsored by Operation Sharing and 40 churches. From October to May, meals are offered Monday to Friday, from 12:00-12:45pm. From June to September, meals are offered Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 12:00-12:45pm at the First Baptist Church in Woodstock.



- There was a slight increase in the number of individuals served at the Adelaide Soup Bowl between 2011 and 2012
- In 2012, 2940 men, 2471 women, and 46 children were served meals

Source: Adelaide Soup Bowl, Personal Communication, 2013

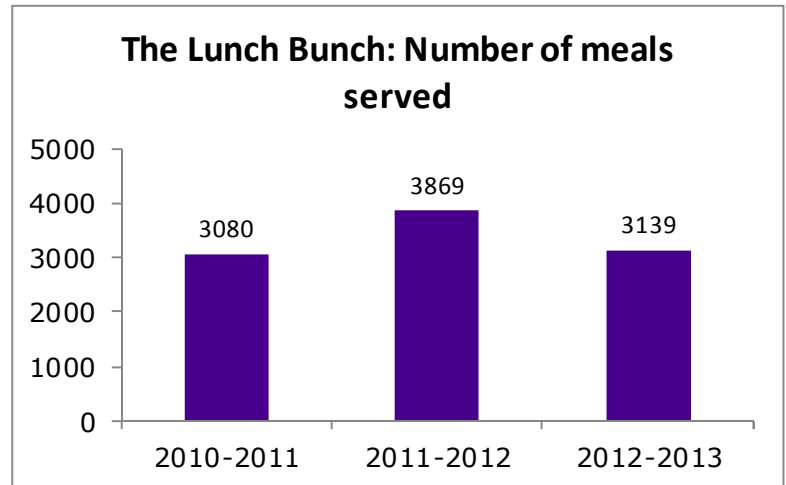
Angel Breakfast: Woodstock

The Angel Breakfast is available at Dundas Street United Church in Woodstock from November 1 to March 31 at 7:30am on Saturday mornings. The program reports that they saw an average of 70 individuals each Saturday in both their 2011-2012 and 2013-2013 seasons.

Source: Angel Breakfast, Personal Communication, 2013

Lunch Bunch: Ingersoll

The Lunch Bunch has been hosted by the St. James Anglican Church in Ingersoll since 2000. The meal is available to adults, as well as kids who are bused from local schools. Hot meals are served on Wednesdays from October to May each year. Doors open at 11:00am and adults are served from 11:30am-12:30pm.



Source: The Lunch Bunch, Personal Communication, 2013

Note: 2012-2013 numbers do not include the month of May 2013

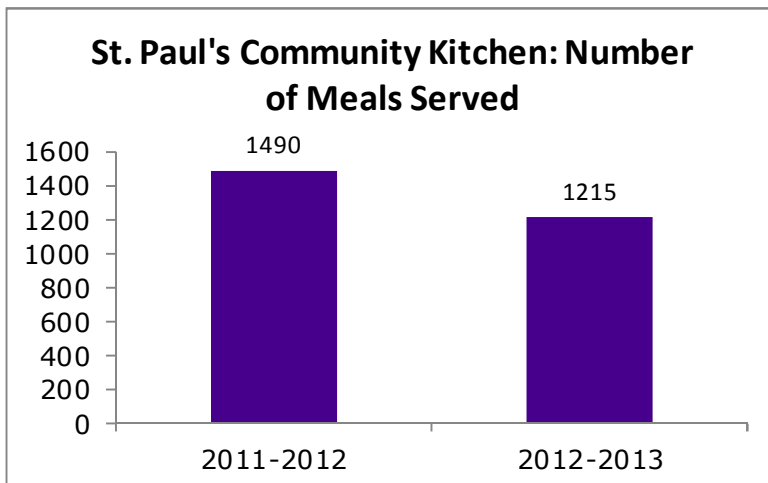
Lunch with Us: Ingersoll

Lunch with Us runs from September to the end of May, on Mondays and Fridays from 11:30am-2:00pm at the First Baptist Church in Ingersoll. It is a new program in Ingersoll, starting in January of 2013. The program sees approximately 10-15 people each day. It is anticipated that these numbers will grow as the program becomes more established.

Source: Lunch With Us, Personal Communication, 2013

St. Paul's United Church Community Kitchen: Tillsonburg

St. Paul's United Church hosts a hot meal program on Saturdays, from 11:30am-1:00pm. The kitchen also prepares large batches of soup to send frozen soup home with people.



From October 2012 to March 2013:

- The highest total number of meals served in a month was December 2012, which had 5 Saturdays. In that month, 272 hot meals were served
- January 2013 served on average, 57 meals each Saturday, the highest average of the season

Source: St. Paul's United Church Community Kitchen, Personal Communication, 2013

Society Saint Vincent de Paul—Friendship Table: Tillsonburg

The Friendship Table operates from Thanksgiving to the end of April each year, serving hot meals on Wednesday nights from 5:00pm-7:00pm. They have also been delivering groceries to individuals and families year round for the past 18 months. Initially, there was approximately 7-14 grocery deliveries each month. Currently, there are close to 40 grocery deliveries each month.

The Friendship Table reports that in 2011, on average, 60 meals were served each Wednesday, compared with 80 meals in 2012. In 2012, 2033 hot meals were served, and groceries were delivered to 110 families.

Source: The Friendship Table, Personal Communication, 2013

Supports for Youth

School Nutrition Program

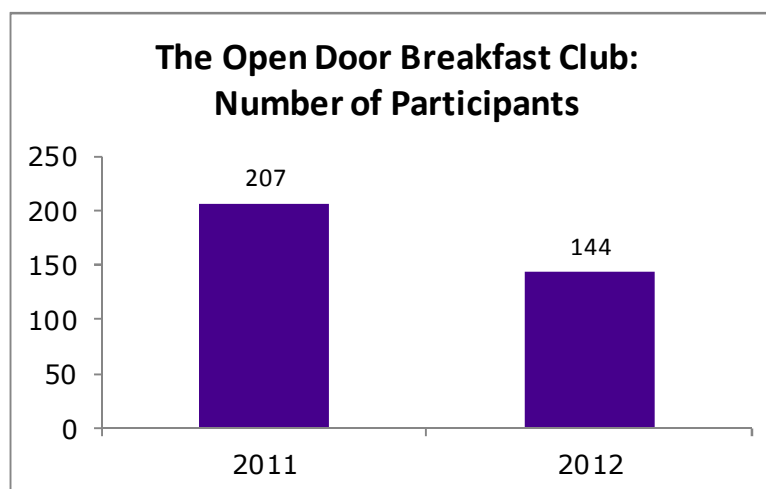
The school nutrition program is run by the Oxford County Public Health unit in order to support improved learning abilities, decreased absenteeism and disruptive classroom behaviour, and to provide a positive start to the day and chance to learn healthy eating habits. The program works with schools and volunteers to set up and maintain breakfast and snack programs. The school nutrition programs impact the physical, cognitive, behavioural, and academic needs of children and youth in Oxford County.

When the program started in 2001, there was one program. Currently, 37 of 43 schools in Oxford County have a nutrition program. High schools provide breakfast programs, where elementary schools include a morning or afternoon nutrition break. Many of the schools are also running secondary programs independently. A total of 9,500 students access these school nutrition programs, and 1,175, 000 meals, that include at least three food groups, are served in a single school year. It is reported that the need for nutrition programs is increasing in elementary schools.

Source: Oxford County Public Health & Emergency Services, Personal Communication, 2013

The Open Door Breakfast Club

Children's Aid Society of Oxford County runs a weekly breakfast club in Woodstock, at their James Street location, from Monday to Friday during the school year. It is a family oriented program, designed to serve both children and their families.



Source: Children's Aid Society of Oxford County, Personal Communication, 2013

Supports for Seniors

Meals on Wheels

Oxford County has three separate Meals on Wheels programs: VON Oxford, Ingersoll Services for Seniors, and the Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre. These services are available to assist older adults in living independently in their homes, and those recovering from illness or surgery.

VON Oxford serves Woodstock hot meals Monday to Friday, and Tavistock hot meals Tuesdays and Thursdays. Frozen meals are delivered bi-weekly to Woodstock and some rural areas.

Ingersoll Services for Seniors delivers hot meals in Ingersoll Monday to Thursday, and frozen meals can be delivered to Ingersoll and area. The number of meals delivered has been steadily increasing since 2009.

The Multi-Service Centre serves hot or frozen meals in Tillsonburg and Norwich.

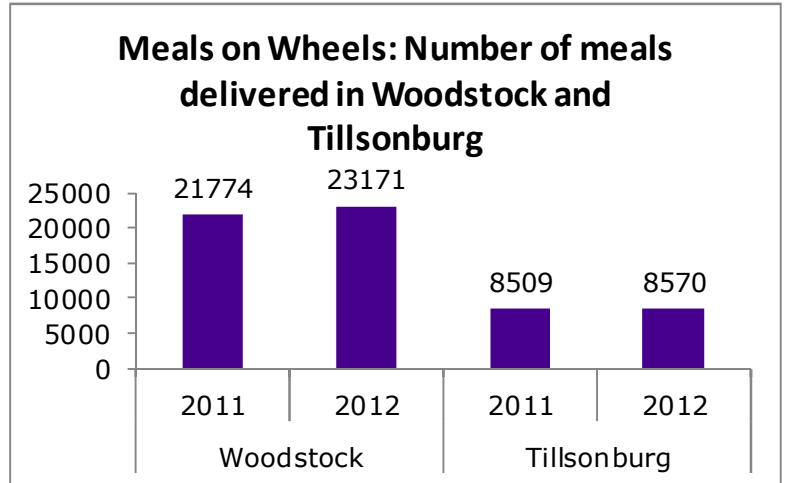
Each of these service providers indicates that the main limitation to delivering meals outside of town is that volunteers are generally not willing to drive the distance, particularly with gas prices rising. A rural meals on wheels program would likely require a guarantee of funding.

In 2012:

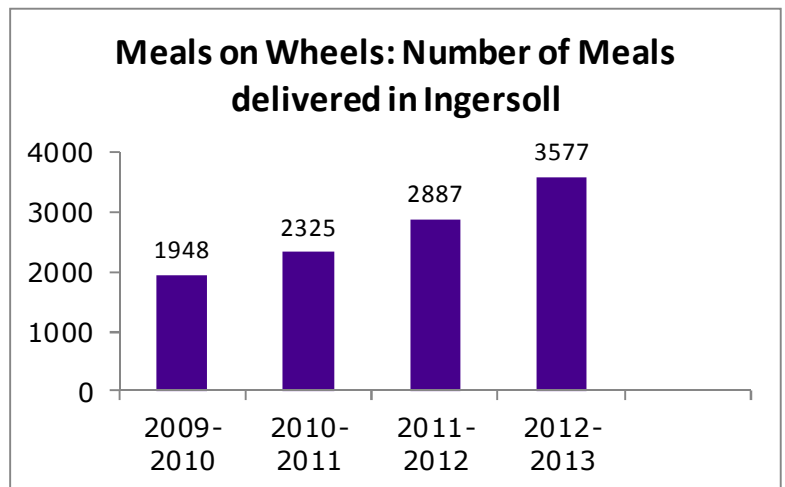
- 138 clients were served in the Tillsonburg and Norwich area
- 169 clients were served in the Woodstock and Tavistock area

From 2012 to 2013:

- 134 clients were served in the Ingersoll area



Source: Meals on Wheels, Personal Communication,



Source: Meals on Wheels, Personal Communication,

Community Dining

Ingersoll Services for Seniors also offers a monthly DINERS Club for 10 months of the year. The program rotates location (various churches, legion, Ingersoll Services for Seniors Centre) based on an established schedule, and numbers average between 35-45 participants per month. Additionally, a noon meal is offered every Wednesday at the centre, with number of participants fluctuating between 20-60 individuals.

Source: Ingersoll Services for Seniors, Personal Communication, 2013

After the Bell: Drumbo

The Drumbo Opportunity Centre offers the After the Bell Program during the school year, Monday to Friday starting at 3:30pm. The program is available to anyone aged four or older, and provides participants a nutritional snack, as well as crafts, games, computer time, outside activities, and homework help. Chaperones are available to assist children in walking from the school to the Centre.

The program reported that in 2012, they had a group of approximately 11 children participate in the program daily.

Source: Drumbo Opportunity Centre, Personal Communication, 2013

Community Gardens

During 2012, there was one community garden in Tillsonburg, with a total of 20 plots. It is estimated that the number of community members who participate in the gardening, or make use of the space for walking, enjoying lunch, and other leisure activities is in the hundreds.

Source: Tillsonburg & District Multi-Service Centre, Personal Communication, 2013

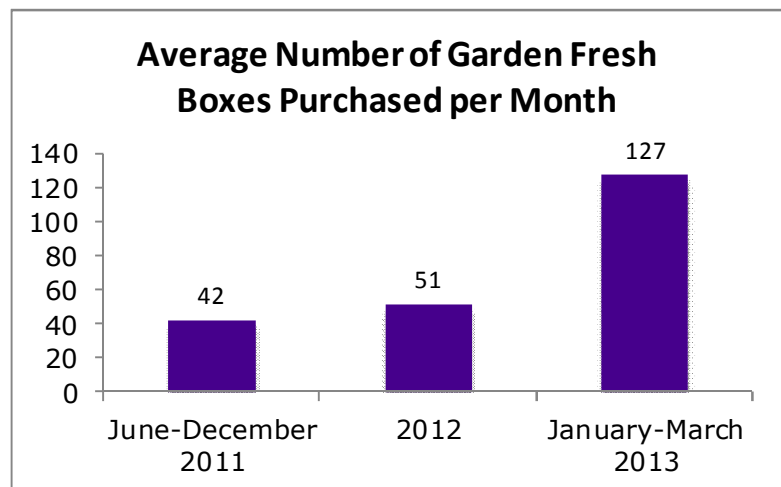
In Woodstock, the Salvation Army has one community garden that is overseen by Community Options for Justice. Due to its location, transportation is a limitation of community participation. However, all of the food bank clients receive the produce from the garden.

Source: Salvation Army Woodstock, Personal Communication, 2013

Garden Fresh Box

A not-for-profit project that started in the Town of Ingersoll and has grown to involve partners from around Oxford County, including Woodstock and District Developmental Services and the Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre, Town of Ingersoll, Ingersoll Community Foundation, and the Ingersoll Strategic Plan Revitalization group: Health and Environment Subcommittee.

Produce is purchased from local farmers (as much as possible), and bought in bulk at wholesale prices. Available once a month, the program offers two sizes of boxes (\$12 or \$17) and includes recipes for new and interesting dishes. Vouchers must be purchased by the 15th of each month, and pick-up locations are in Woodstock and Ingersoll on the last Tuesday of each month.



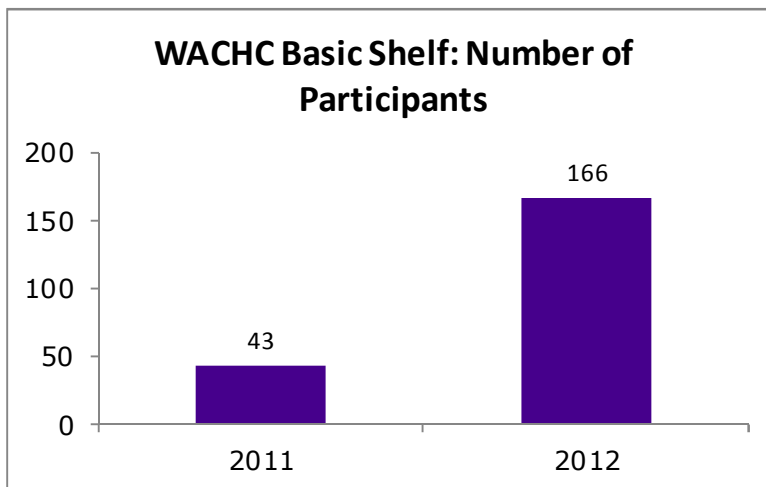
Source: Woodstock & Area Community Health Centre, Personal Communication, 2013

Capacity Building Programs

Capacity building programs are designed to provide individual participants with an opportunity to build and enhance existing knowledge and skills. There are several capacity building programs in Oxford County that address food security and issues related to food security.

Woodstock and Area Community Health Centre

In the summer of 2012, with the support of the South West LHIN, a public-private partnership made it possible for the WACHC to move to a larger, more functional space. This new facility has programming space, including a community kitchen, which has allowed for an increase in programs, ultimately increasing the number of community members who access services. An example of a new program this space facilitates is the Collective Kitchen program, an independent peer-led cooking team, where participants contribute to the menu, ingredient list, and cook together so that everyone goes home with homemade healthy meals.



In 2012, the WACHC ran 26 programs that addressed food security in some way. A total of 2,371 community members participated in these programs.

The increase in community members accessing programs is highlighted by the program Basic Shelf. This six week program teaches participants to basic cooking skills, healthy cooking on a tight budget, grocery shopping tips, and more. In 2012, 166 community members participated in Basic Shelf.

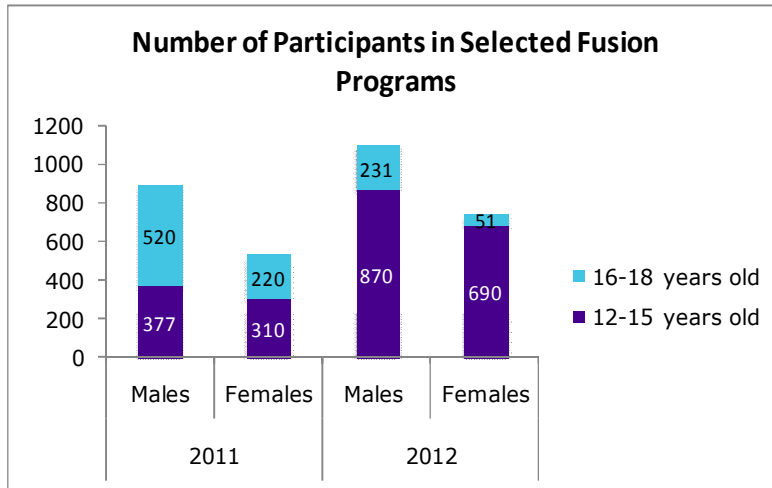
Source: Woodstock & Area Community Health Centre, Personal Communication, 2013

Other community groups offered at the WACHC include:

- Spice it Up, a salt-free spice workshop that teaches which spices taste good with what, how to mix them, how long they'll last, and how to do it cost-efficiently
- Heart Smart, a one hour workshop on how to live a heart-healthy lifestyle
- Youth Creations at the Station (YCATS), a free, after-school program that provides opportunities for youth to discover creative ways to express themselves, and includes a free snack
- Baby Food ABC's, an interactive workshop about making homemade baby food and the introduction of solids
- Healthy Measures, a workshop that teaches new ways to measure your health and take good care of yourself, including a non-dieting approach to healthy eating, healthy activity, positive body image and self-esteem, and more
- Real Men Can Cook, where the basic mechanics of cooking are taught, including learning new recipes
- Emotional Eating Group—Craving Change, to discover why you eat the way you do and learn how to change problematic eating habits
- And more...

Fusion Youth Activity and Technology Centre: Ingersoll

Fusion offers Brian's Bistro, Snack Shack, and the Nutrition program to youth aged 12-18 years. At Brian's Bistro and Snack Shack youth work collaboratively to develop and eat full course meal or snack.. The Nutrition program is a Life Skills Program that teaches youth healthy meal planning. Meals are cooked fresh and served to members in the youth café for only \$3 nightly. Each of these programs provides an opportunity to develop cooking skills, as well as providing access to healthy, affordable or free food.



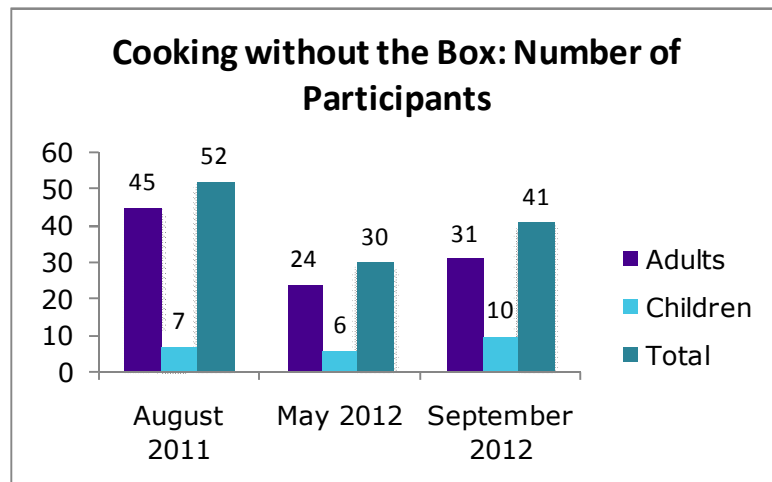
From 2011 to 2012:

- The number of male and female participants aged 12-15 years old increased
- The total number of program participants increased

Source: Fusion Youth Activity and Technology Centre, Personal Communication, 2013
Data reported is Brian's Bistro, Snack Shack, and the Nutrition program combined

Cooking without the Box: Tillsonburg

Cooking without the Box is a program that originated from the Tillsonburg Resource Network to increase skills in preparing non-processed or boxed food. It is a free, half-day, hands on course that includes inexpensive and nutritious ways to prepare food. Local chefs are involved and provide the recipes and cooking tips.



Source: Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre, Personal Communication, 2013

Participants come from a varied background:

- In August 2011, the majority of participants were receiving social assistance from the County
- In September 2012, the participants were mainly a lot of older, retired adults
- In May 2013, the participants had to either use the food bank or receive social assistance from the County



Social Planning Council Oxford

www.spcoxford.ca

35 Metcalf Street
Woodstock, ON
Canada N4S 3N5

Phone (519) 539-1111 Ext. 227

Fax (519) 539-9111

E-mail: info@spcoxford.ca

www.facebook.com/spcoxford

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