



2023/24 IMPACT REPORT

Victorian Order of Nurses
Ontario Student Nutrition Program



Foreword

The 2023.24 school year was an eventful and historic one! In April of 2024, Canada joined the rest of the G7 nations and included a National School Food Program in the federal budget. This exciting milestone was celebrated widely by our team, and by partners regionally, provincially and nationally, as together we worked to build support for increased access to food for students.

The government's commitment to an investment of one billion dollars over five years was welcomed. Soon after in June, and with much anticipation, the federal government followed up with the introduction of Canada's National School Food Policy. The policy outlines a vision for children and youth in Canada to have access to nutritious food at school with inclusive, non-stigmatizing programs that strengthen connections with local food systems, the environment and culture.

Provincially, the Ontario government announced a one-time investment for the 2023.24 school year of an added \$5 million for the Student Nutrition Program and the First Nations Student Nutrition Program. The province also partnered with the Arrell Family Foundation, Breakfast Club of Canada, the Schad Foundation, the Grocery Foundation and Student Nutrition Ontario to launch the Healthy Students Brighter Ontario campaign, the first province-wide fundraising partnership of its kind.

These positive steps are helping to secure a brighter future for students. At the same time, we continue to see significant increases in demand for programming, while also facing significant decreases in capacity due to many factors, including the higher cost of food. One in three Canadian children are now at risk of going to school hungry.

Studies show that when kids eat well, they do better in school. And when kids do well, they are better set up for success. It is only with the coordinated efforts and ongoing support from Student Nutrition Ontario, The Coalition for Healthy School Food, our OSNP Community Partnership Committees, food suppliers and champions, partners in education and public health, policy and change makers, and our tremendously generous volunteers and donors that we have come this far and will continue to make real strides.

OSNP looks forward to continuing this journey with powerful collaboration that strengthens support, focuses on innovation, inclusion and diversity and ensure all students have access to nourishing food, so that children and youth have the fuel they need to succeed at school and beyond.

Thank you again to our caring and dedicated partners, donors and volunteers for helping us make a difference!

Ontario Student Nutrition Program (OSNP) Southwest Region

MISSION

To work with youth, educators, and community to provide universal school food access and promote a robust and inclusive school food culture that enhances student wellbeing and success

VISION

For all students to have access to nourishing food, providing the fuel they need to succeed at school and beyond



Our Structure



**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN,
COMMUNITY & SOCIAL
SERVICES**

- Distributes funding to lead agencies
- Establishes provincial policy standards and guidelines
- Helps build the capacity of lead agencies to support effective program delivery



STUDENT NUTRITION ONTARIO

- Supports lead agencies build communities across their networks
- Streamlines the distribution of funding and resources to all parties delivering Student Nutrition Programs on behalf of national and provincial partnerships



**LEAD AGENCY
VICTORIAN ORDER
OF NURSES**

- Administers funding to schools for programs
- Delivers fresh and affordable food to programs via the School Food Delivery Program
- Invests in evidence-based research on health and academic outcomes associated with programs
- Provides ongoing support for programs and assist with the start up of new programs

OSNP's Southwest Region

2023/24 SCHOOL YEAR TOTALS

21,778,575+

Meals/Snacks served in 2023/24

125,307+

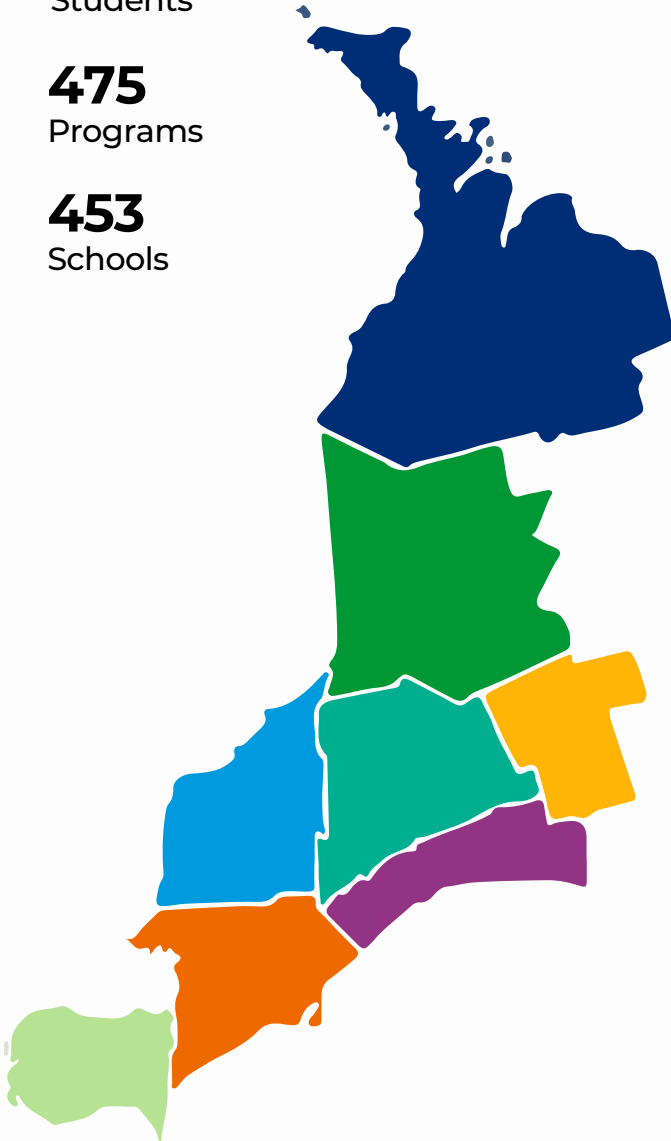
Students

475

Programs

453

Schools



GREY-BRUCE

61 Schools

19,486+ Students

3,573,367+ Snacks/meals served

HURON-PERTH

60 Schools

10,341+ Students

1,884,803+ Snacks/meals served

LONDON-MIDDLESEX

89 Schools

26,056+ Students

4,605,218+ Snacks/meals served

OXFORD

38 Schools

11,321+ Students

1,732,231+ Snacks/meals served

SARNIA-LAMBTON

46 Schools

10,283+ Students

1,753,768+ Snacks/meals served

ELGIN

29 Schools

8,228+ Students

1,493,519+ Snacks/meals served

CHATHAM-KENT

36 Schools

10,583+ Students

1,972,427+ Snacks/meals served

WINDSOR-ESSEX

94 Schools

29,009+ Students

4,753,242+ Snacks/meals served

Donor Spotlight

FirstOntario CREDIT UNION

FIRST ONTARIO CREDIT UNION

Since 2014, First Ontario Credit Union has provided almost \$2 million dollars to student nutrition programs in Ontario as part of their commitment to supporting youth health and wellness. In addition, their 'Blue Wave' team of corporate volunteers have helped to prepare and deliver nourishing snacks to elementary school students. During the 2023.24 school year, First Ontario gifted OSNP Southwest \$31,628 to support school food in the communities of Woodstock, Ingersoll, Norwich, Tillsonburg, and in their newest location; Chatham-Kent.

Because First Ontario invests their profits locally, their goal is to focus their sponsorship dollars as much as possible on providing universal access to locally produced foods. By taking a home-grown approach they aim to connect resources to supporting local farmers and providing locally grown food to children in our community when possible.

"First Ontario Credit Union is about more than just providing financial services. We believe in working with like-minded organizations to create strong communities and support meaningful change. Since 2014, student nutrition programs have been an important part of how we can make a difference to ensure students across our network have access to healthy food and snacks while learning and to help them be their best," said Christine Susa, Director of Community Impact for First Ontario.



ONTARIO PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

The Ontario Produce Marketing Association (OPMA) connects people and information, from field to plate. Again this year, OPMA partnered with OSNP Southwest to provide over \$8300 of Ontario grown produce, transported fresh and direct as part of OSNP's School Food Delivery Program.

OPMA works to build stakeholder and industry engagement, create partnerships, encourage healthy living and promote awareness and continuous learning. As part of those values, OPMA also worked with OSNP to connect students to local farmers.

The students at Mount Carmel Blytheswood Public School in Leamington were treated to a fun and informative visit from nearby Highline Mushrooms, where they discussed the growing process, gardening tips and participated in a hands-on demonstration.

OSNP is grateful for the generosity of partners like OPMA who help us connect students and schools to more local food and farmers.



Our Programs

Across the Southwest Region, school food programs provide additional nourishment and positive spaces at school for over 125,000 students. We believe in a universal program, meaning one open to all students. There is no 'typical' hungry child and there are numerous reasons why children may be hungry at school other than household food insecurity.

In Ontario, Student Nutrition Programs operate on a cost shared model, that includes government seed funding. OSNP and schools work with third party funders, community donors, private foundations and partners to secure the remaining funds and resources required to prepare and serve nourishing snacks and meals to students.

We understand that a 'one size fits all' approach does not work and we recognize that programs need to be flexible in order to meet the diverse needs of their students. With that in mind, we encourage schools to

adopt our gold standard framework. Based on a combination of documented best practices, the review of international programs, input from subject matter experts, and following the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services guidelines, OSNP's gold standard framework allows for program uniqueness while also promoting a high-quality program standard in the areas of nutrition, food safety, program planning and sustainability, equity and inclusion, engagement strategies, food literacy and health promotion.

Student nutrition programs extend beyond filling hungry bellies, they can incorporate educational objectives, community building, leadership opportunities and linkages with local food systems.

With the help of our partners and community we will continue to work together to help take pressure off of families and invest in the future of students, improving their health, education and well-being.



School food programs can increase consumption of nutritious foods, promote health equity, and help establish lifelong healthy eating behaviours*



School food programs can improve student behaviour and increase school attendance, completion, and scholastic achievement*



School food programs can be designed to strengthen sustainable food systems and create opportunities for local farmers and economies*



Food & Logistics

OSNP's direct delivery program was designed to combat challenges that arose in the COVID-19 pandemic and expansion of this model since its inception in 2020 has only strengthened it.

With the support of United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County and the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF), OSNP initiated two projects; one in Windsor and one in Chatham-Kent. Both projects worked to increase access to nourishing food and expand capacity building for the school food delivery program. The Windsor project, a partnership with UHC – Hub of Opportunities, also helped with enhanced access and capacity building for summer meals.

The support from the Community Services Recovery Fund enabled OSNP to build on our procurement strategy, expand our supplier network, create an updated menu of items that are well received by schools, and establish a product enhancement lead on our Food and Logistics team. Foundational equipment provided as part of the projects included large and small appliances, allowing participating schools more options when preparing foods, as well as increased safe storage to accept both perishable and non-perishable deliveries.

Leveraging new and existing partnerships with local farmers and suppliers continues to grow OSNP's School Food Delivery Program, enabling cost efficiencies, increasing the integration of local product, and providing opportunities to stimulate regional food production and economic development. The weekly deliveries of fresh produce and protein items were a hit with students, helping them attend school well nourished and ready to learn.

“We have witnessed the positive impact of the extra snack items, specifically whole grain and protein options, provided through School Food Delivery Program this school year. These nutritious snacks have not only contributed to maintaining a focused and energized learning environment but have also improved overall student well-being. Students appear more engaged in their learning, and we appreciate the effort to prioritize their health and academic success. The OSNP program has been instrumental in fostering a positive and nourishing atmosphere within our school community.”

- Vice Principal, GECSB

“Our students are beyond grateful for the extra protein and whole grain products that have been sent. In a time where budgets are super tight and funds are dwindling, this helped get us through and ensured students had solid nutrition that stayed with them throughout the day.”

- Guidance Counsellor, WECSB

Great Big Crunch



The Great Big Crunch is the annual celebration of local food and farmers ending in the synchronized CRUNCH of an Ontario grown apple (or other crunchy produce item). This past October, Canadian Olympic athlete and gold medalist Damian Warner helped lead the Great Big Crunch at Sir John A MacDonald School in London, where he spoke to the students about what crunchy foods help keep him fueled. Thousands of students, teachers, athletes, farmers, partners and dignitaries across the region CRUNCHED again this year and participated in nutrition related activities throughout the day highlighting the importance of farmers, suppliers and school food programs.

OSNP's Food and Logistics team procured and delivered nearly 20,000 pounds (over 63,000 Ontario apples) to schools and hosted a live countdown to the CRUNCH with participation and engagement from classrooms across the Southwest region! Thank you to all who took part in the annual festivities! We wished Damian Warner the best during the Paris 2024 Olympics.



"Throughout the years of working with the food program, I have gotten to see the changes it makes. We know of students who come to school, simply to get to eat. The food program encourages students to learn more about healthy eating and allows them to be able to focus once they have food in their bellies. Some students come to school with a backpack full of trouble, but the food offered to them puts smiles on their faces. Thank you so much!"

Principal, Huron-Perth

"We love having the fresh fruit and vegetable option for our students. Many students will now ask for the fresh options over pre-packaged foods"

School Coordinator, Lambton

Sharing Our Expertise

THE COALITION FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD

Member, National Steering Committee
Member, Ontario Chapter

SYSTEM WIDE PRINCIPALS' MEETINGS (Thames Valley District School Board and Greater Essex County District School Board)

April 2024

Presentations: 'Supportive Food
Environments at School'

THE COALITION FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD, ONTARIO CHAPTER: KNOWLEDGE SHARING WEBINAR

February 2024

Presentation: London-Middlesex Project –
Integrating Culturally Appropriate Menu
Items into SNPs, Fostering Inclusion and
Promoting Student Engagement

GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

January 2024

Selected to Appear Before the Ontario
Standing Committee on Finance and
Economic Affairs

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Student Nutrition Program Stakeholder
Engagement Sessions

OSNP INFORMATION WEBINARS

September 2023 – June 2024

Virtual learning sessions and resources
provided to participating schools focusing
on MCCSS Nutrition Guidelines and Best
Practices pertaining to risk management,
waste management, program support,
capacity building, student engagement
and experiential learning opportunities.

WESTERN UNIVERSITY AND BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

August 2023 – October 2024

OSNP SW was thrilled to provide a
meaningful learning opportunity for a
Brescia dietetic practicum student for an
8-week population health promotion
placement in partnership with Western
University and Brescia University College
School of Food and Nutritional Sciences.

COLLABORATIVE PILOT PROJECT WITH ST. CLAIR COLLEGE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DEPARTMENT

Partnership with St. Clair College, ProsperUs
and AgScape in Windsor and Essex County
to collaboratively co-develop and evaluate
the impact of a comprehensive lunch
program with the integration of food
literacy in neighbourhoods with increased
barriers to food access.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES (MCCSS) VISIT TO EASTDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

June 2024

MCCSS Program Supervisor visits Eastdale Public School in Woodstock, meeting with VON/OSNP team members and Eastdale school staff and students.

ARPAN KHANNA, MP OXFORD VISIT TO ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL (Woodstock)

March 2024

Discussion with Parent Council about support for School Food Programs



LISA THOMPSON, MPP HURON BRUCE, PREVIOUS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (current Minister of Rural Affairs)

December 2023

Discussion about food procurement, food literacy and the GROW Ontario Strategy

OSNP RECIPIENT OF GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD '2024 CHAMPION FOR EDUCATION AWARD'

May 2024

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, MICHIGAN SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM

Cross border partnership and knowledge exchange opportunities

February, 2024 Tour of School Food Programs in Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD)

March, 2024 OSNP hosts MISD

Consultants and Irek Kusmierczyk, MP Windsor-Tecumseh for tours of Windsor area school programs



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEES

OSNP Southwest works collaboratively with seven local Community Partnership Committees across the Southwest region that provide insight and advice for local programs and enhance program support and community capacity building.

Committees are comprised of local stakeholders including representatives from public health and education. We engage regularly with community leaders, professionals, and individuals with lived experience to assist with effective program design and delivery ensuring it is thoughtful, impactful and provides meaningful solutions to emerging challenges.

Help Us Make A Difference!

Your support ensures we can keep up with increased demand. To make a donation or to inquire about individual or corporate volunteering opportunities, please contact us.

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