

APRIL 2020  
Nadja Luckau

Strange times to be writing a President's Report for the Local Food Initiative, but here we go:

The LFI started its work ten years ago with one community garden! The Downtown community garden was established in co-operation with the Revelstoke United Church at their downtown location. Back then the LFI was a committee of the North Columbia Environmental Society. Over the years we added many more programs and events. Some of our programs were more successful than others, let me give you an overview of the programs we ran in 2019 and tell you which year we started running them:

### **Programs of 2019**

#### Started in 2010

Downtown Community Garden

#### Started in 2012

Garden Guru Series

Harvest Hootenanny (a celebration local food that was known as Midsummer Night's Green in previous years)

#### Started in 2013

Farm to Table Program  
Garden and Art Tour

#### Started in 2014

Little Sprouts

#### Started in 2015

Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre Community Garden

Food Processing Equipment Rentals

#### Started in 2016

Growing Friends

Seed Library/Seed Swap (even though we hosted the first seed swap in 2012)

#### Started in 2017

LFI Market

Farm Tours

Revelstoke Bee See

To this day at board meetings we don't always take ourselves too seriously. I invite you to think about above list for a minute - and keep in mind that that list is by no means exhaustive: The LFI has been doing very important work and has done so for quite some time.

## Program Highlights of 2019

Harvest Hootenanny replaced the Midsummer Nights Green fundraiser and turned into a fantastic success: Our two coordinators and over 15 volunteers (chef Josh Whyte being only one of them!!) put countless hours into creating a celebration of local food to remember and the community helped us to raise over \$5000 of profit for the LFI.

The two community gardens saw very successful growing seasons. Kelsey Gasparini ran a tight and fun ship at the RVAC and volunteers kept showing up to the weekly weeder session until the end of the season. Sarah Darval and Jodi Kay introduced pre-schoolers to gardening at the downtown location and saw lots of produce go home with the participating families.

The Garden and Art Tour made national news in 2019, a feature we have not achieved very often!

Farm to Table continued to be run by Jesse Johnston Hill and 176 school children (in grades 4 and 10) learned about the role local food production can play in mitigating climate change. This program once again offered hands on learning opportunity to the kids during outings to the local grocery stores, the winter market and Terra Firma Farms.

Our rental equipment continued to be a super popular program. Community members can rent kitchen equipment at a very low cost to preserve their harvests: items like cherry pitters, dehydrators and a pressure cooker can be rented by the day. In fact this program is a big generator of memberships, as members can rent the equipment at a preferred rate.

Students of grades 4 and 5 of Arrow Heights Elementary School were able to grow produce and flowers at Mt. Cartier Court while fostering intergenerational relationships with the residents at the extended care facility. This program is named Growing Friends.

The Seed Library continued to be hosted by the Okanagan Regional Library and has a great supporter in local librarian Lucie Bergeron. She makes sure the seed library is placed front and centre at the right times of the year and she keeps a keen eye on our seeds.

Kate Borucz insured the LFI market continued to be an overwhelming success. In July and August we are bursting at the seams. It is also a program unlike most other LFI programs in that it has an advisory committee made up of not only LFI folks community, business and vendor members as well.

The Farm Tours, in 2019 organized by Sophie Petherbridge, bring local residents to our farms and show them how it is done! In 2019 Sarah Eriksson open her garden and shared her fermenting tips with the tour.

Aside from above programs we supported workshops like Ron Glave's *Intro to Beekeeping*, we showed the movie *Local 30* outdoors at Integrated Apparel, we had a booth at the Expo organized by students as part of the *Fridays for Future* movement and went into the school for the RSS Environmental Expo. We organize the *Revvy Local Food Week*, are a vendor at

*Souपालicious* and keep the public informed with whats going on in the world of local food through our newsletter.

Let me introduce you to the people behind the scene:

## **The fabulous LFI Board**

### **Secretary**

Melissa Hemphill has been around since the beginnings and considers herself a lifer. She is who keeps us informed of what is going on in the world of food security, is a liaison to countless other community groups and stake holders and she keeps us on track by creating our meeting agendas.

### **Treasurer**

Kristin Olsen took over the dreaded treasurer position in 2019 and has done a wonderful job of diving into the LFI financials. As we have matured as an organization we have been able to hire a bookkeeper and lessen the workload of the treasurer. We hope that this will encourage our treasurer to not get burned!

### **Director of Fundraising and Marketing**

Rosie Denton, former Midsummer Nights Green coordinator, joined the board in 2019 and has been a great addition. She took over the fundraising and marketing committee. She worked on our marketing strategy in 2019 and we appreciate her for being organized and she offers valuable and well-thought out input to our discussions.

### **Director at Large**

Genevieve Leonard was appointed to the board in January of 2020 and has been an integral part of our board. She has brought her marketing and project management skills to the table and we are thankful for her perspective and input.

### **President**

That's me, Nadja Luckau. I am also a lifer and have been around and involved since about 2012. I was supposed to sign off today as I was heading for a long walk in Spain, but alas plans are changing fast these days and I will continue to steer this ship for a while longer.

### **Board Members who resigned in 2019**

Carlie Ball and Kari Martin both had babies in 2019. These duties obviously took priority over board work and they have had to step down from their position. We are looking forward to having them work with us in the future again.

### **Coordinator/Executive Director**

Hannah Whitney started out 2019 as our coordinator and kept us on track with her thoughtfulness and dedication. She has since taken over the Food Recovery Program Coordinator position and does an amazing job there.

Jodi Kay came back from her maternity leave later in 2019 and has been a phenomenal coordinator to the LFI. So much so that we gave her more financial oversight and gave her the title she deserves: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. Her thoughtfulness and dedication are outstanding and she has taken on so much of the board work load, that we really don't have to do all that much. Plus she bakes a mean sourdough bread, which is a welcome addition to any special meetings where she organizes food for us!

My original thoughts for this years president's report was to figure out the actual age of the LFI. You know, dog years are different to human years, and I believe the same is true for non-profits. We are 10 human years old, but I would like to propose that non-profit to human years stand in a ratio of 4 to 1, putting us right into our midlife.

Particularly in the last two years we have come such a long way and we have matured as an organization: We made it through our teenage years: I remember presenting at an AGM a few years ago, where we did not have a financial report and were flying by the seat of our pants; we weathered our rebellious early 20s creating a new farmers market, in what was one of the bigger dividers in recent Revelstoke history; we moved into the smooth sailing that the 30s bring: local residents come to us for advice as we have been around the block once or twice. We do not get stressed so easily anymore and can act and react from a solid and grounded foundation and in the last few years we have managed to become confident and happy with who we are (strong vision and mission statement) and we have strong systems in place (a paid, part time book keeper, policies and procedures in place...). So I think we are in solid midlife, speaking in human terms.

But that first draft happened before a global pandemic changed our daily lives and most of our plans went down the drain, so I had to abandon above idea and address the LFI and COVID 19. Here we go:

It was with heavy heart that at our special board meeting in mid March we decided to terminate some contracts for programs that we won't be able to run in times of a pandemic. We had to draft an emergency budget, as we are not sure at this point if the funding we usually rely on will come through, and have to operate on our reserve fund. During our special meeting we realized quite quickly what our important programs are that we feel we have to run:

- The community gardens at the Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre and at the United Church
- The Garden Guru series (this year focusing on early season online teaching/instruction)
- The farmers market

Offering a space for residents to grow food as well as teach them what to do with this food as well as offering a weekly market to make fresh produce and food available to the community are the fundamentals.

These programs were fundamental to us 10 years ago when our journey started (even though we were not actively involved in the market at that time). They are fundamental - and it turns out increasingly popular - in the present. And I believe from the bottom of my heart that they will be just as essential in 10 years from now - no matter what changes the current crisis brings to our lives.

I am confident that the LFI has grown and built its own capacities over the last 10 years (remember this equals 40 human years!) to a point where we are able to support Revelstokians through these difficult times. It is my utmost hope that the food system will emerge out of this crisis for the better and that more people than ever will understand the importance of a localized food system and the people at the heart of this system.

Food is essential.

Yours truly,

Nadja Luckau

President of the Local Food Initiative and firm believer in a local future.