



GUELPH SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS GROUP

building collaborative community. one story at a time

(story: 23) Collaboration Works – Backyard Bounty, The Guelph Food Bank, Terra View Homes & (Insert Your Business Here!) Help Feed Those in Need

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Guelph is home to some mind-blowing cross-sectoral community collaborations. A prime example: our **recently-published story** of **McNeil Consumer Healthcare** investing in local non-profit **Trees for Guelph** who, in turn, have been co-ordinating tree planting initiatives for (primarily) local school children since 1990. The result: **McNeil** has managed to reduce its carbon footprint by investing in **Trees for Guelph** initiatives; **Trees for Guelph** has – with **McNeil's** financial investment of \$15,000-20,000 annually – been able to work toward the **City of Guelph** goal of a 40% canopy by 2020; school kids are introduced to nature and environmental stewardship at an early age through the planting initiatives; and our community is made healthier, more beautiful, and more environmentally and economically sustainable through increased canopy coverage!

Since its inception in 1990, **Trees for Guelph** has co-ordinated the planting of over 130,000 trees within city limits! Now that's collaboration!

Collaboration Works – Backyard Bounty, The Guelph Food Bank, Terra View Homes & (Insert Your Business Here!)

Today's post focuses on another phenomenal local cross-sectoral community collaboration – one in which local social enterprise **Backyard Bounty**, local non-profit the **Guelph Food Bank**, and local green builder **Terra View Homes** have put in place a partnership that, **with just one more engaged partner that finds corporate social responsibility an important part of corporate identity**, will produce and feed fresh organic produce to thirty people in need this season!

The collaboration all began when Robert Orland, founder of Backyard Bounty – Ontario's premier urban farming social enterprise that's been growing and serving nutritious, local, organic veggies to Guelphites since 2009 – saw the real need to provide clients of the Guelph Food Bank with local fresh organic food. Robert's solution: to shift Backyard Bounty's focus from that of a CSA urban farm to a local grower devoted solely to providing the Guelph Food Bank with fresh produce.

When asked why he decided to shift Backyard Bounty's focus toward feeding the hungry, Robert muses: *'Food is essential to life. The better the quality, the better the life. Clients of the **Guelph Food Bank** deserve more than processed and packaged stuffs. With the support of our sponsors, we provide them with fresh, locally- and organically-grown food. Such vegetables are dense with nutrition and feed the mind as well as fill stomachs.'*

And so plans were laid – and challenges were identified. Specifically: (1) securing at least a half acre of land upon (and potentially more) which Backyard Bounty could grow enough food to feed at least thirty people, and (2) securing a sponsorship from a local business (or several local businesses) that would fund the program – *thereby feeding those in need!*

Securing the land became a reality when local builders Andrew Lambden and David Brix of Terra View Homes stepped forward. Instantly taken with Robert's emerging collaboration with the food bank and all too keen to lend a helping hand, Terra View Homes arranged with Robert to have a plot of yet-to-be-developed Terra View land on the north end of town used as the Backyard Bounty plot. Lambden remarks: *'We are excited to be part of this initiative that will help those in need from within our community in such an important way.'*

What an ingenious idea – converting part of a hay field into farmland to grow vegetables!

The second challenge – **securing sponsorship to fund the program** – will be the last link to this success story. Last year, a local sponsor stepped up and funded the entire season – *resulting in dozens of locals in need receiving fresh local organic produce through the growing season!*

*This year, you can be part of this success story. Your business and a handful of others who also see this glorious homegrown initiative as something that's good for all of us and really helps the citizens of Guelph. With every sponsorship, **Backyard Bounty** feeds an additional thirty people!*

Funding the Backyard Bounty / Guelph Food Bank partnership (with Terra View a key player in this collaboration) would be a phenomenal exercise in corporate social responsibility. More than this, though, it would affect people's lives in an intimate way – *promoting health and wellbeing, and keeping those in need fed with nutritious fresh food grown locally by experienced organic farmers.*

When a local business steps up to the plate to help complete this local collaboration, it'll add the exclamation mark to this fantastic local story!

For more info, visit www.backyardbounty.ca

Photo caption: Terra View Homes' Dave Brix with the Guelph Food Bank's Tracy Marchesich & Backyard Bounty's Robert Orland, at the proposed site for the Backyard Bounty plot.

*written by chris tiessen, project manager **guelph sustainable solutions group***

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