



Local Food Strategy Development Begins

September 16, 2013 – Community, business, and municipal government leaders gathered on Thursday evening to celebrate the launch of the Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy. The meet-and-greet event was an opportunity for community participants to connect and discuss next steps in creating the Food Strategy, which will be developed over the coming year.

“We’re very excited to begin the formal development of the Food Strategy,” said Kendal Donahue – Coordinator, Thunder Bay and Area Food Strategy. “In Thunder Bay and the surrounding area, we’re facing many issues with our local food system. Developing a Food Strategy is the first step in addressing these issues, and ensuring everybody has access to quality, affordable and local food.”

The event was held at the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, and featured a juice bar from The Growing Season, mini expo of inspirational local food initiatives, catering by Nikos Mantis’ Localmotion Food Truck, live music, and a special address by Steering Committee Co-chairs Councillor Rebecca Johnson (City of Thunder Bay) and Councillor Bernie Kamphof (Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge).

The Food Strategy will be organized around the seven pillars of a sustainable food system:

- Healthy school food environments
- Forest and freshwater foods
- Food access
- Production and new farm mentorship
- Distribution and processing
- Institutional procurement
- Urban agriculture.

The pillars were selected by community leadership at the 2013 Food Summit held in March.

The development of the Strategy will involve community leaders from various sectors including educators, anti-poverty advocates, farmers, students, business owners, health care professionals, planners, and City Council members. The project’s Administrative Committee includes representatives of the City of Thunder Bay, Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge, the Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture, the Food Action Network, the Northwestern Ontario Women’s Centre, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and EcoSuperior.

Thunder Bay is one of sixty-four local and regional municipalities in Canada that are undertaking initiatives to improve their local food system. The Food Strategy will be drafted over the winter months and will be presented to City Council in June, 2013.