

Taylor Creek Public School's 'Nourish to Flourish' Story

ABOUT US:

Taylor Creek Public School

Taylor Creek is a part of the *Model Schools for Inner Cities* program that is fundamentally rooted in a strength-based approach aimed at increasing access and opportunities for all students. When students, teachers, families, and communities work collaboratively to create positive change, student achievement, well-being, and engagement are increased.

Taylor Creek is ranked 52 out of 470+ schools across the Toronto District School Board, which measures high in external challenges that impact student achievement. Taylor Creek is located adjacent to a low-income housing community called Cataraqui (ka-ta-rack-ee). This neighborhood is filled with a diverse population from different parts of the world who seek opportunities for betterment. Our parent community is humming with parents and caregivers who are ready and willing to support our students and their success. As grateful as we are for our community members, we, as the school administration, cannot ignore the many barriers that our students and their families face every day. Nutrition is a significant barrier to our students' access to education. Many families in our school community are food insecure and we do our best to bridge the gap in need, but the resources we currently have access to are not enough to fulfill the needs of our students to ensure that they are fed, alert, secure, and successful.

Taylor Creek operates a Student Nutrition Program where a small portion of a balanced meal is provided to students daily. This may look like a grain (eg., crackers) paired with protein (eg., snack-size cheese), and some fibre (eg., hummus). The budget allocated to the student nutrition program is not robust enough to cover the cost of the significant needs of food insecurity that occur within the school community. Currently, to close some of the noticeable gaps in food insecurity needs in the school community, a partnership with The Children's Breakfast Club was established to run a daily morning meal program that is subsidized where families only pay \$5 per student per month. This breakfast program serves an average of 40 students daily, but about 60 students have registered for the program. This breakfast program supports getting students to school on time and energized with a nutritious meal at the start of the school day. A menu is prepared each month for the breakfast club program. Meals are easy to prepare using a portable griddle and conventional oven which are a combination of foods such as grilled cheese, french toast, scrambled eggs, pancakes, fresh fruit, and orange juice or 2% milk.

The lunch hour has long since been a challenge that we seek to tackle. Admin and school staff have noticed that students often come to the office asking for food because their families are not always able to provide a meal for them to eat during lunch. At first, the food items reserved for the snack program were taken to provide students with something to eat. The design of the school further places limitations on how we can support students and provide nutritional programming, as the school does not include an industrial kitchen to prepare meals in large batches. The staffroom kitchen which includes a conventional oven, conventional dishwasher, conventional oven with stove top microwave, and due to the large number of students who request a lunch regularly, the principal approved using some of the school budget to purchase small, easy-to-prepare meals such as cup noodles and Kraft Dinner in a cup. As the months have passed, the need to provide students with lunch has persisted, and on some days it was overwhelming! The school budget cannot sustain this approach to supporting students and staff, and spending a significant amount of time during their lunch to help prepare the supplemental meals using only an electric kettle and a microwave in the main office.

The goal of our nutrition programs is intended to provide our students with a balanced meal, have an opportunity to remain on school property, improve students' attendance, relieve some financial burden on students' families, have energy to be alert throughout the school day in order to academically achieve, and give volunteer opportunities to our parent community.

Breakfast Club Program

In Partnership with

In partnership with The Children's Breakfast Club, we have established a daily Breakfast Club program at Taylor Creek PS where students have the opportunity to enjoy a balanced meal at school before the instructional day begins.

A portion of the Nourish to Flourish grant funds to support the establishment of this program by purchasing the equipment required to get things up and running.

This program has supported working families so that they are able to drop off their child(ren) at school earlier in the day which eases some of the strains on their daily routines. Before the program, we have had parents seek ways to permit their children to arrive at school well-before staff are on duty outside in the school yard. With the Breakfast Club, it provided a structured, nurturing, and supervised space for students to get their day started by sharing a meal with peers, connecting with caring adults, and gain the energy required to be ready for learning.

Another wonderful result of this program has demonstrated that a select group of students have been able to improve and maintain consistent school attendance.

Back in January, we hosted a special breakfast event with former Toronto Raptors player Jamaal Magloire. He also handed out brand-new hats, scarves, and mittens to students. Jamaal gave an inspirational speech to our students about pursuing their dreams and prioritizing education.



fuel the future

Tim Hortons

Supported by Tim Horton's
Smile Cookie Campaign

WELCOME

Taylor Creek Breakfast Club

Breakfast: 8:00-8:30AM

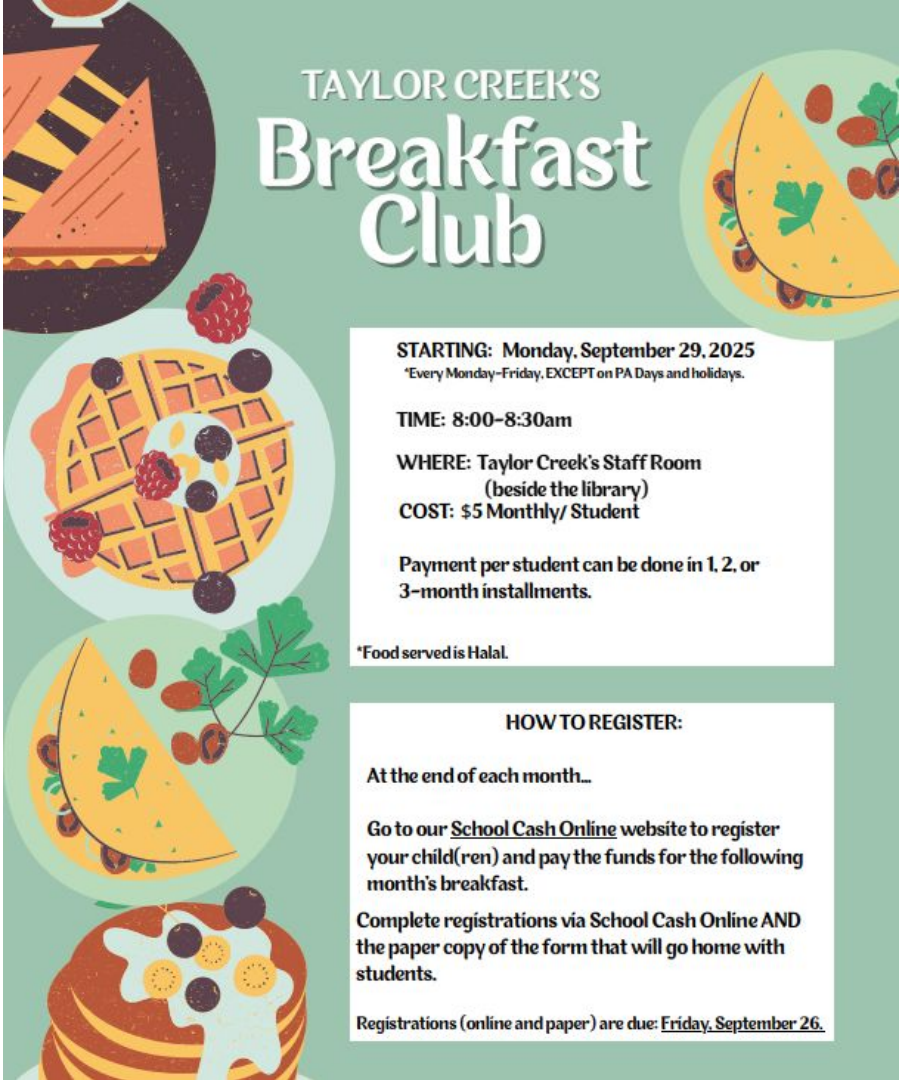
"We're helping children through healthy meals & positive experiences"



@childrensbreakfastclub

www.breakfastclubs.ca | 437.836.6222





TAYLOR CREEK'S Breakfast Club

STARTING: Monday, September 29, 2025

**Every Monday-Friday, EXCEPT on PA Days and holidays.*

TIME: 8:00-8:30am

**WHERE: Taylor Creek's Staff Room
(beside the library)**

COST: \$5 Monthly/ Student

**Payment per student can be done in 1, 2, or
3-month installments.**

**Food served is Halal.*

HOW TO REGISTER:

At the end of each month...

**Go to our [School Cash Online](#) website to register
your child(ren) and pay the funds for the following
month's breakfast.**

**Complete registrations via School Cash Online AND
the paper copy of the form that will go home with
students.**

Registrations (online and paper) are due: Friday, September 26.



“I like to come to breakfast club in the morning because they make food that I like to eat every day and the food makes me happy about school.”

- Daniel F. (Grade 3)





Hands-On Nutritional Programming

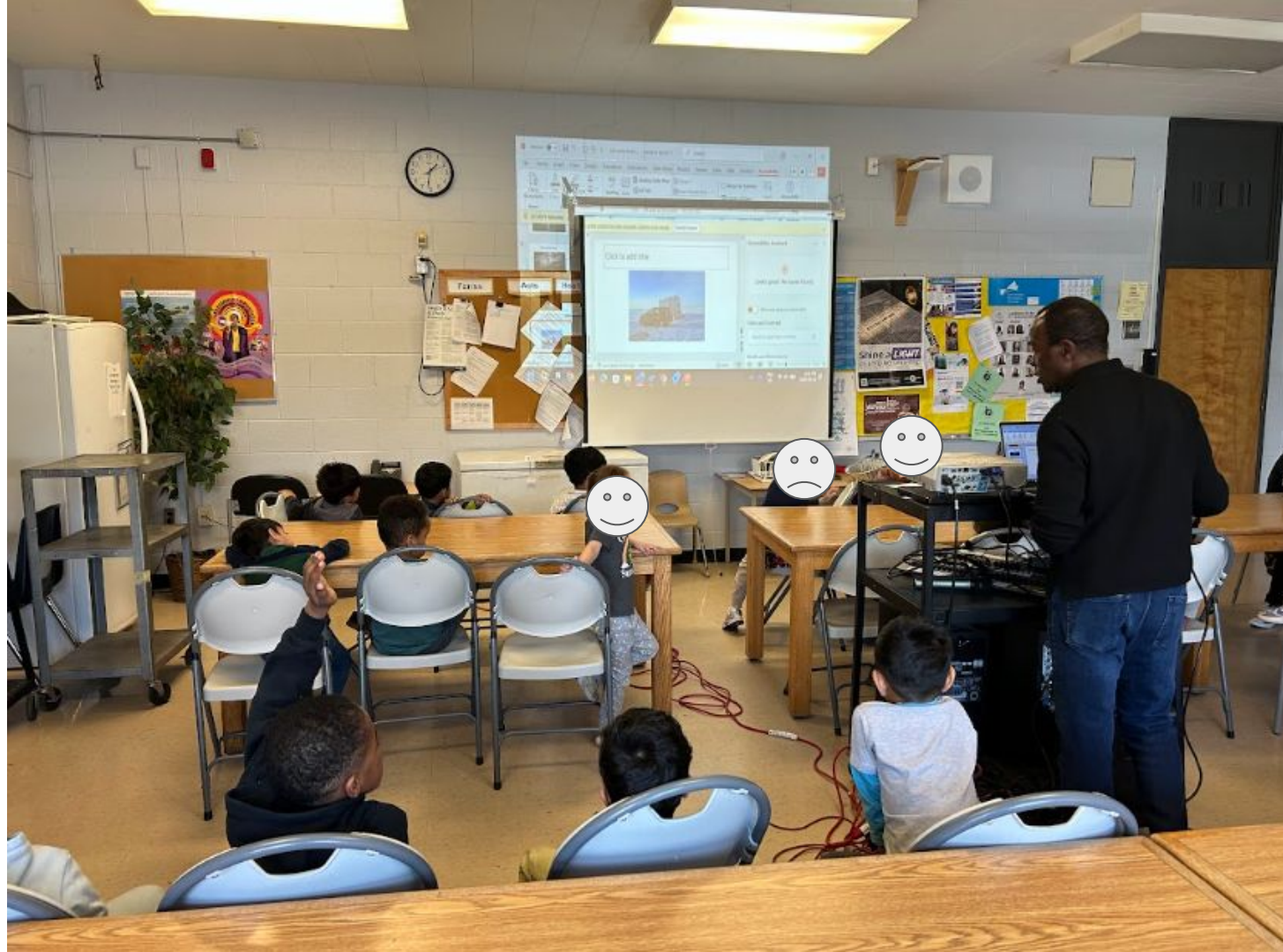
In partnership with one of TDSB's Nutrition Liaison Officer, Durward Anthony, we have been able to establish a hands-on nutrition program.

In this nutritional programming, students in different grade groups (grades 1 and grade 6) are explicitly centered around Three Sisters Soup which offers a beautiful blend of dietary education, agricultural science, and cultural history. The "Three Sisters" refers to corn (maize), beans, and squash—the three main agricultural crops of various Indigenous peoples in North America (particularly the Iroquois/Haudenosaunee). When planted together, they thrive companionably; when eaten together, they provide a complete nutritional profile. On a practical level, Three Sisters Soup is an ideal teaching recipe for a school kitchen or classroom setting. The accessible learning of this program offers students an entry point to teach students that corn, beans, and squash are affordable, readily available, and can be sourced fresh, frozen, or canned, making the lesson adaptable to any school budget or season. The companion planting strategy of the Three Sisters is an excellent way to teach sustainable agriculture and Indigenous science.

- The Corn grows tall and acts as a natural trellis for the climbing beans.
- The Beans climb the corn stalks and pull nitrogen from the air into the soil, naturally fertilizing the roots of all three plants.
- The Squash grows low to the ground, its large leaves acting as a "living mulch" that shades the soil, prevents weeds from growing, and retains moisture.

It's great to see students working together to prepare, distribute, and share a meal together!













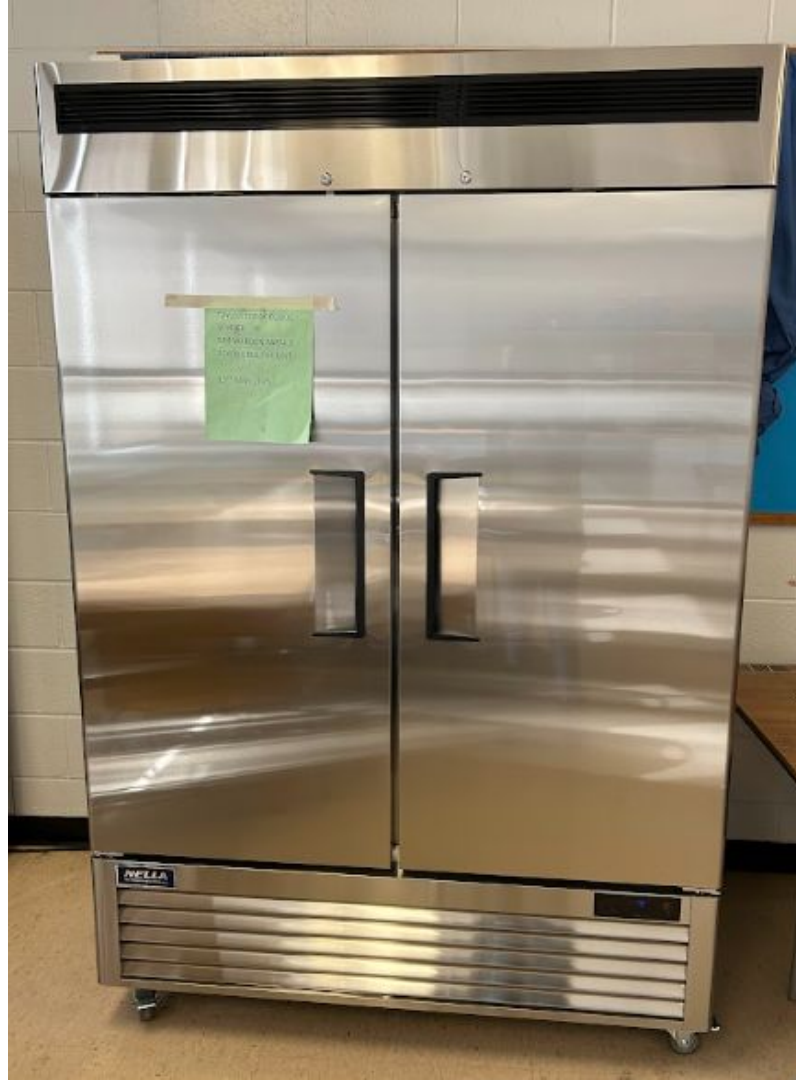


Hot Lunch Program Pilot

Proposal for the 3-year Hot Lunch & Nutrition Education Program (2026-2029) at Taylor Creek Public School, including the twice-weekly hot lunch, short curriculum-aligned nutrition component, 60 packaged (30 on each day) food supports, and supervised involvement of senior student leaders from UofT. The goal is to equitably supplement food needs to students experiencing food insecurity with a hot lunch program twice weekly with the support of 5N2 staff, 3rd and 4th year UofT students, and the Nutrition Liaison Officer who will collaborate with Taylor Creek PS admin and teachers to deliver an Ontario curriculum based nutritional program in classrooms in primary grades with the goal of creating opportunities for students to better understand nutrition and how to make healthier food choices with foods that are culturally relevant and accessible to them. The vision is to take steps towards building a school food program. With parent and outside organizational support, we strive to have every student engaged in nutrition-related programming which will develop and support their ability to identify and prepare a healthy, well-balanced, and culturally relevant meal.

Nutrition Program Equipment

With the grant, we were able to purchase equipment to support our nutrition programming such as our snack and breakfast programs. The commercial refrigerator has supported how we drastically reduce food waste **since our** school nutrition programs often deal with bulk perishable from weekly deliveries. Without proper storage, fresh items spoil quickly. Now, we have more room to keeping fruits, vegetables, and dairy at the optimal temperature ensures they stay fresh longer.



Cultural Garden

To support our nutrition programming, the grant has supported our school in establishing a school cultural garden—a space dedicated to growing crops, herbs, and flowers that reflect the diverse backgrounds of the student body and community—is an incredible educational tool. It goes far beyond a standard vegetable patch, acting as a living classroom for history, science, and community building. Though we have only begun to plant seeds this spring, the cultural garden, the seeds purchased were with the intention of fostering inclusivity and representation. For students from diverse or cultural backgrounds, seeing crops from their heritage grown and valued at school are profoundly empowering. The classroom connections to the garden have provides a platform for students to share ancestral knowledge, recipes, and traditions with the wider school community. Our cultural garden seamlessly connects multiple school subjects through hands-on learning.

- **History & Social Studies:** Students can explore global migration patterns, trade routes (like the Silk Road or the Columbian Exchange), and how specific crops shaped civilizations.
- **Science & Geography:** It teaches agricultural biodiversity, climate zones, and how plants adapt to different environments around the world.
- **Language Arts:** It serves as a creative springboard for journaling, learning crop names in different languages, and interviewing community elders.

When students grow their own food, they are much more likely to try it. In the later stages of the cultural food garden the food literacy introduces culturally diverse vegetables and herbs while expanding students' horizons beyond what they already are familiar with. Students continue to learn where food comes from, the effort required to grow it, and the importance of sustainable farming practices across different cultures.













