

Our Community Pantry is pleased to have the opportunity to share our story with you.

The Rotary Club of Spruce Grove Community Partners Society is a registered charity that exists to better our community by supporting causes that uphold [Rotary ideals](#) and contribute to lasting change. Our Community Pantry is supported by the Community Partners Society.

Our Community Pantry provides lunches to children at school. This action supports our goal to improve the food security of children and aligns with our belief that education and good health are essential for children to reach their full potential.

Too many children in our community attend school hungry, often arriving without having breakfast and without lunch. When children are hungry they struggle to learn, and their overall health is compromised.

As our goal is to improve the food security of children and youth we are thrilled to share the following news with you:

\$400,000 School Food Grant helps local students

The Rotary Club of Spruce Grove's Community Partners Society proudly announces that Our Community Pantry is the recipient of \$400,000 in federal funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Our managing partner is The Breakfast Club of Canada.

These funds will support the growth of Our Community Pantry by funding the purchase of a delivery van and professional production kitchen equipment. This state of the art kitchen equipment along with their own location will enable the Pantry to increase lunch production from 900 to 5000 weekly school lunches within 2 years. This increased volume will also include a transition from the "brown bag" lunches delivered today, to lunches that include warm soups and stews, fresh buns and breads, salads and our **special cookies** and "**fruit delight**".

Beyond this first stage of growth, the Pantry will also leverage this professional production kitchen to teach children and youth how to make their own lunch and how to prepare meals at home. In a professional production kitchen, these students will have the opportunity to learn a variety of culinary techniques, such as knife skills, cooking methods, food safety, and sanitation practices, and will work with a wide range of ingredients and equipment. Culinary environments often require teamwork to plan and execute menus, and manage kitchen operations, which helps develop students' creativity and problem-solving skills.

Are we bold enough to envision this professional production kitchen feeding the entrepreneurial spirit of youth and young adults? Involving youth in the operations of the pantry will provide the opportunity to acquire inventory management and business management skills. Preparing our youth for work and further educational opportunities.

Federal Funding Source

We'd like to acknowledge that the federal funding received was a component of the \$62.9-million dollar National School Food Program announcement in Budget 2024, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is providing the Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF), which mobilizes up to \$42.7 million to support production-focused projects that improve community food security and resilience through the purchase and installation of infrastructure to increase access to local, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food.

Also announced in Budget 2024, the National School Food Program will provide one billion dollars over the next 5 years to feed hundreds of thousands of children across Canada. The Program is a safety net for vulnerable children who are most impacted by the lack of access to food. This funding will provide up to 400,000 additional children per year across Canada access to nutritious food at school.

Our Community Pantry History and Statistics



After seeing children eat food from a trash can in a park, two Spruce Grove Rotarians vowed “*not in my community*” and made it their goal to improve the food security of children and their families. That day in the park was the beginning of what is now “Our Community Pantry” (*the Pantry*).

Our Community Pantry's first kitchen was in St. Augustine's Anglican Church in 2019 and since then the Pantry has worked out of 4 other locations. Each new location provided more space and capacity to try and meet the always growing need to feed more children. We are grateful for the support of the many churches that have provided us space.

Our Community Pantry is operated 100% by Rotarians and Friends of Rotary volunteers. It is the Rotary way to care for children, as the saying goes “It takes a village to raise a child”. It is also important to understand that today we have too many children who go hungry in our village.

| Production of 68 volunteers over the past three years | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Calendar Year | School lunches | Prepared meals for agencies | Rescued food for family meal program | Additional meals and lunches | Volunteer hours |
| 2022 | 15,058 | 4,190 | 29,761 lbs | 1,639 | 5,557 |
| 2023 | 21,430 | 2,442 | 12,600 lbs | 1,200 | 5,710 |
| 2024 | 26,389 | 6,048 | 6,770 lbs | 120 | 5,952 |
| Total | 62,877 | 12,680 | 40,131 lbs | 2,959 | 17,219 |

Our Future – We need you!

The grant criteria provides funding for kitchen equipment and a delivery van but does not fund costs associated with acquiring a space to house the new kitchen or the operational costs of that space. These funds must come from other sources, and to fulfill the grant funding obligation the new Pantry kitchen must be fully operational by March 31, 2026.

We currently feed students in 21 schools, 10 in Spruce Grove, 5 in Stony Plain and 6 in Parkland County.

We are coming to community partners like you to bring awareness to the current children's food insecurity crisis in all of our communities, and to ask for you to consider what you can do to help.

Do our plans for supporting children in our community resonate with you? If yes, please email us and let's start a conversation: ocp@sgrotarycps.org