

The Story of The Seed:

Mapping University-Community Partnership & The Creation of a Community Food Hub

May 28, 2014

PREPARED FOR

The Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship & Research Shop, University of Guelph

The Seed Community Food Hub Committee

PREPARED BY

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With contributions from the CFICE workshop participants



Background and Purpose

Since 2009, the University of Guelph's Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship, particularly the Research Shop has been working with a variety of community partners in Guelph-Wellington to address the issue of community food security. This collaboration has involved a number of community engaged research projects, as well as the development and implementation of recommendations based on research results. While work initially focused on addressing challenges and gaps within Guelph-Wellington's emergency food provision system, an iterative cycle of community-based research, knowledge mobilization, and action has shifted that focus, and the main goal of the current collaboration is to support the development of a community food hub in Guelph-Wellington through continued university-community partnership (CFICE CFS Hub Work Plan, 2013).

The two main partners in this work are the Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship's Research Shop at the University of Guelph, and The Seed Community Food Hub Committee, a working group of the Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination. Members of The Seed committee represent a variety of local organizations and institutions, including Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, the Guelph Community Health Centre, the Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition, Upper Grand District School Board, the University of Guelph, the City of Guelph, the County of Wellington, as well as other local initiatives and round tables working in the area of food security (See Appendix A for current list of member organizations).

To support the future development of The Seed Community Food Hub, and to reflect on the value of community-university partnering, the partners acknowledged a need to document and reflect on the evolution of the initiative thus far. A *shared* narrative of the project can help the partners identify what has worked, how challenges arose and were addressed, and where to focus efforts and resources now as they grow The Seed.

Mapping University-Community Partnership and the Creation of a Community Food Hub: A Participatory Workshop

Funding for this work was provided through a SSHRC partnership grant-funded project, Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE), with additional funds provided by the Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship (ICES). A particularly important objective of this work was to identify how campus-community engagement in Guelph-Wellington (primarily through partnership with the Research Shop) has contributed in the past, and can most effectively contribute in the future, to improved community food security.

To answer these questions, the partnership engaged Taylor Newberry Consulting to assist in the design and facilitation of a participatory workshop to map the development of the collaboration and The Seed. Key players involved in the early development of The Seed (The Seed committee members, ICES and Research Shop staff and students, and other key community contributors), were invited to map out key moments, people, resources, and relationships that brought the initiative to where it is today.

A total of 10 individuals participated in the workshop on January 15, 2014 (See Appendix B for list of participants). Participants were facilitated through a collaborative exercise of building a timeline mapping the chronological development of food security work in Guelph Wellington, The Seed and the partnership with the Research Shop. A number of reflection questions were used to guide the development of the timeline (See Appendix C) and to solicit insights on the impact of particular events, actors, and relationships. Following the workshop, the constructed timeline and notes from the session were synthesized and analyzed by the facilitator to develop a draft story arc, intended for further development and editing by the workshop participants. The intended result is

a shared story, documenting the history of The Seed and the university-community partnership between The Seed and the Research Shop. Because the process is intended to support future planning and opportunities for continued partnership between The Seed and the Research Shop, the story highlights key questions the partners grappled with throughout the story, and key achievements and turning points that propelled the partners forward in their work or changed the course of development. These insights can be used by the partners to plan for the future by offering a clearer understanding of the factors that have contributed to challenges and to their success thus.

Chapter 1: Coming Together

2009 - 2011

The period from early 2009 to approximately January 2011, was marked by a spurt in the development – or formalization - of new community collaborations and partnerships around anti-poverty strategies and local food issues in Guelph and Wellington. What we now know as “The Seed” grew out of this web of relationships between community leaders, organizations, and institutions that came together with shared priorities around improving the local food system and improving conditions for people living in poverty.

Individuals and organizations in Guelph and Wellington have been working to improve food access and food security for many years.

Guelph has a rich history of work, scholarship, governance and leadership related to food and agriculture. The Seed, therefore, has roots extending through this deep history. However, the story of The Seed, as it exists today, can be most directly traced back to 2009.

2009 marked the launch of the Guelph-Wellington Food Round Table, “a network of committed stakeholders from Guelph and Wellington County who support the development of a thriving regional food system that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable”

(<http://www.gwfrt.com>). The Food Round Table

grew out of the efforts of key champions, including Andrew Seagram (Upper Grand District School Board) and Sonia Waraich (Family and Children’s Services of Guelph and Wellington County), to bring community stakeholders together to identify ways to improve our local emergency food system. During this inaugural year of the Food Round Table, issue-specific working groups were established, including a Food Access Working Group.

2009 also marked the development of the Guelph-Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination (hereafter referred to as the PTF). The PTF was developed, in part, as a response to a compelling call for action on local poverty issues, voiced at a symposium organized by United Way of Guelph and Wellington. The first meeting of the PTF was held in May 2009. The Task Force, at the time, was chaired by June Hofland (Guelph Councillor) and Ron McKinnon (Community Resource Centre), coordinated by Randalin Ellery (United Way), and members included leaders and senior staff representing 16-20 local organizations. The PTF developed a framework for action and working groups to lead action on specific issues. Leaders from the newly established local Food Round

Key question(s) during this time

- Who do we need at the table? What are the needs and issues we need to address (in broad terms)?

Key achievement(s) during this time

- Establishing the Food Round Table, and subsequently the Food Access Working Group
- Establishing the Guelph Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination

Key turning point(s)

- Identifying the need for research to help clarify the needs and issues
- Securing capacity (relationships, funding/resources) for dedicated research on local food security issues through the Research Shop

Table became actively involved with the PTF throughout 2009-2010. During this time, through recognition of shared priorities and the value in aligning efforts and leveraging the capacity of both memberships, the Food Access Working Group (FAWG) became an aligned action group of the PTF.

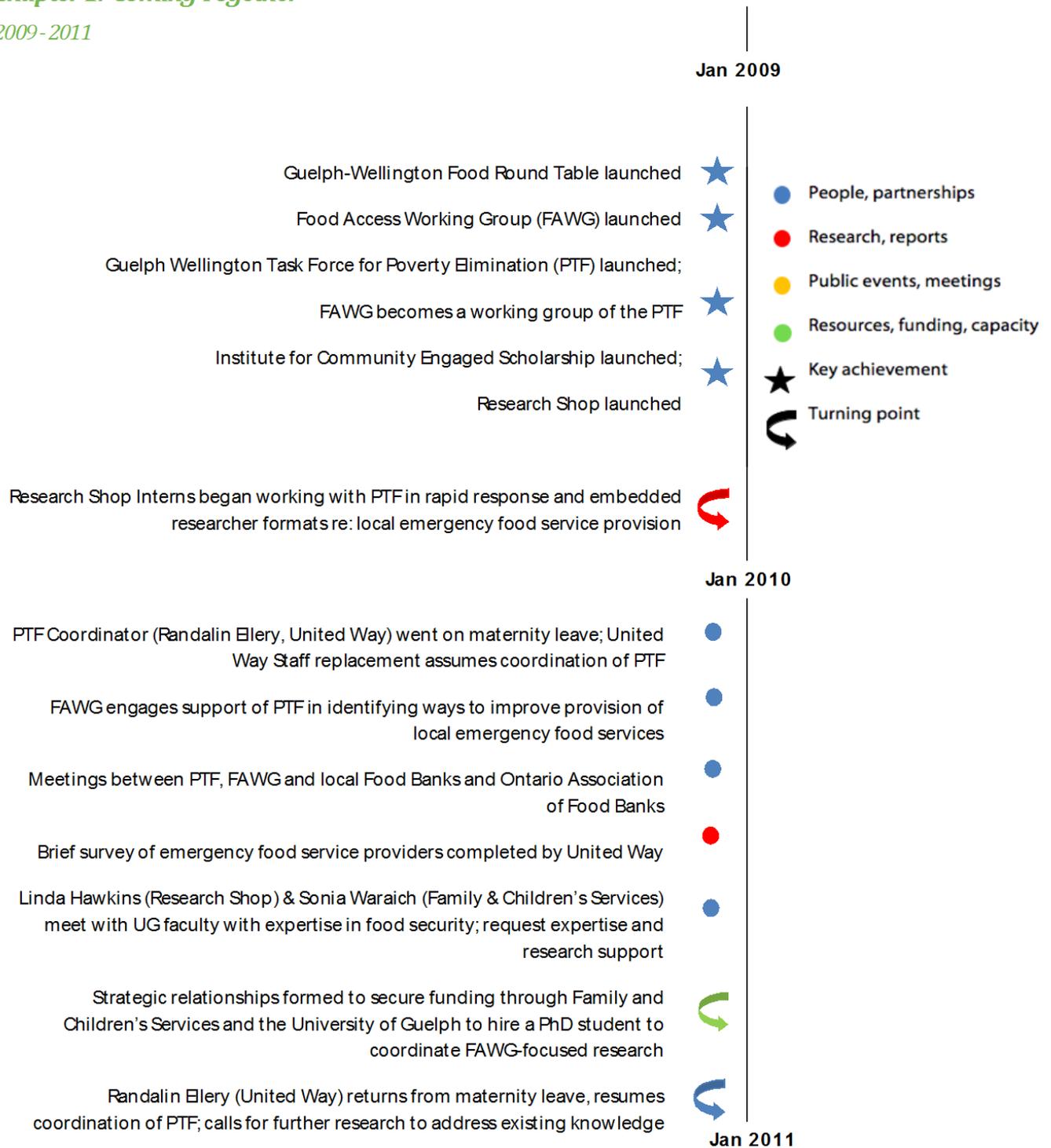
It was also in 2009, when the University of Guelph created a new Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship (ICES) to foster “collaborative and mutually beneficial community-university research partnerships” (<http://www.theresearchshop.ca>) and The Research Shop, the community-facing entity of ICES, intended to leverage graduate student expertise to meet community defined research needs. Under the direction of Linda Hawkins, some of the inaugural projects of The Research Shop involved supporting the research needs of the new PTF and the FAWG. These included a rapid scan of existing local food pantries, training community members living in poverty to do research on local service gaps, and funding to support an embedded research - an in-situ student intern - to rapidly respond to emerging research questions of the PTF.

Results from these research projects – among other brief scans completed by local partners - provided some relevant local evidence to validate the broad issues that the PTF and FAWG planned to focus their efforts on. However, the group recognized that gaps in their understanding of the specific needs in the local emergency food system still existed. They needed more focused, in-depth research to clarify the specific food access needs locally in order to chart a clear plan for action. The group also continued to grapple with questions about who was missing at the table. Were the right people involved in order to move forward? Which stakeholder voices had not been part of the discussion but were needed in order to make meaningful, sustainable change in the local emergency food system?

Working through these questions, key players in the PTF and FAWG reached out to additional important community stakeholders and potential champions, supporters, and investors to help resource additional research. Meetings conducted in late 2010 by Linda Hawkins (The Research Shop) and Sonia Waraich (Family and Children’s Services) with University of Guelph faculty with expertise in food systems’ issues resulted in the eventual referral of highly qualified students and researchers with food security expertise. In late 2010, strategic relationships were formed to secure funding from Family and Children’s Services and the University of Guelph, to hire a PhD student to coordinate research focused on the FAWG’s needs. At the same time, the Research Shop enrolled 10 students from across multiple disciplines to undertake food security projects in Guelph Wellington, serving multiple collaborations and agencies beyond but complimentary to the immediate focus of FAWG.

Chapter 1: Coming Together

2009-2011



Chapter 2: Growing Together

2011 – 2013

This important chapter in the development of The Seed was marked by strengthening relationships and clarifying roles internally and within the partnership, learning from community stakeholders, and beginning to build plans for action informed by community needs.

In early 2011, the Research Shop developed a student intern table focused on food security issues. The Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship also hired then PhD candidate Erin Nelson to conduct research that would support the work of the FAWG, partly linking to a graduate course in community engaged scholarship. (NB: Erin Nelson eventually became the coordinator of the student intern table on food security that incorporated other community driven research in food security in late 2011. Erin, after completing her PhD, completed a postdoctoral fellowship with the Research Shop from April 2012- Dec 2013 focusing on the work of the FAWG and local food security issues).

In early 2011, Lisa Needham of Wellington-Dufferin Public Health (WDPH) became formally engaged with the PTF/FAWG through connections built by Sonia Waraich (Family and Child Services) and as result of a portfolio change in Public Health with increased focus on food security issues. This relationship led to additional funding through WDPH to support the work of the FAWG.

With many key community stakeholders now engaged in the work, there was a sense of surmounting energy and urgency for action – and more immediately, for research findings that could inform action plans. A team of student interns from the Research Shop led by Erin Nelson in consultation with ICES staff, conducted research with local emergency food service providers to clarify needs through Spring and early Summer of 2011. In July, 2011, a draft report was produced with a set of recommendations and

Key question(s) during this time

- What, specifically, are the needs and issues we need to address?
- How should we address these issues – and who should make these recommendations?
- What are our roles? How do we work together?

Key achievement(s) during this time

- Clarified roles and improved working relationships within the FAWG, and in the collaboration between the FAWG, the PTF, and the Research Shop
- Completion of three key reports from the Research Shop
 - 1) Identifying service provider perspectives on emergency food service issues
 - 2) Promising practices in eligibility guidelines for emergency food service providers
 - 3) Identifying service user perspectives emergency food service issues
- Ad Hoc Committee created and charged with responsibility for developing recommendations based on the two Research Shop reports; recommendations from both reports endorsed by the PTF
- Completion of report and subsequent workshop for service providers on guidelines for eligibility requirements for accessing food from Emergency Food Providers

Key turning point(s)

- Review process of the first Research Shop report (service provider perspectives; July 2011) was an important catalyst for clarifying the respective roles of the FAWG, the PTF, and the Research Shop.
- Endorsement of the recommendations drafted by the Ad Hoc Committee (based on the Research Shop reports)
- Decision that the Ad Hoc Committee would become a permanent working group to ensure action is taken on the recommendations (Spring 2013)

was shared with members of the FAWG and PTF for review. This draft report turned out to be an important catalyst for defining roles within the partnership.

First, the review process revealed some underlying confusion amongst the FAWG and PTF about expectations for contributing to the research and reporting process. Second, the FAWG, the PTF, and the research team shared a sense of uncertainty regarding the desire for and the legitimacy of student-generated recommendations for action based on the research, due to the student research team's understanding (at the time) of the nuances of - and the politics within - the community context and the ability of the FAWG and PTF to act. This included issues of historical conflict amongst various community actors, but also issues of workload in the ability of community collaborations to respond to actionable needs identified in the research. In December 2011, a revised version of the report was produced and presented to the PTF. Recommendations were removed and suggestion was made (and subsequently endorsed) to establish an Emergency Food Services Ad Hoc Committee that would develop a set of recommendations based on the research findings presented in the report. The development of recommendations was a politically sensitive issue. The committee decided that, to promote a fair and unbiased approach to action planning, that the Ad Hoc Committee should not include emergency food service providers, but should include individuals who were knowledgeable about local food access and security issues in both the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington.

The Steering Committee of the PTF nominated individuals for the Ad Hoc Committee and meetings commenced in February 2012. A series of meetings was planned over the Winter and Spring of 2012, intentionally allowing time to carefully define the roles and purpose of the group, and to consider the possible impacts of, and reactions to, the forthcoming recommendations within the current system of emergency food service providers and users. This process culminated in a recommendations report, which was endorsed by the PTF in June 2012.

The recommendations report spurred the development of two additional research reports by the Research Shop.

- The first report was produced later in 2012. This report identified promising practices regarding eligibility requirements for accessing emergency food services and outlined existing practices in use in Guelph-Wellington. The Research and Policy working group of the PTF then used the report as the basis for developing a set of guiding principles (re: eligibility requirements) for local use. Once endorsed by the PTF, the guiding principles were published and disseminated locally. A complementary toolkit was developed and a workshop was delivered to local service providers to support implementation of the guiding principles. Through this workshop, participating service providers shared feedback indicating that they too endorsed the principles and committed to facilitating implementation of the principles in their organizations.
- The second research project was focused on better understanding needs and perspectives of the users of emergency food services in order to inform a more detailed and robust set of recommendations for action.

Throughout this active period of research from Spring 2012 through February 2013, communication between the partners was more frequent and open, roles and expectations were clearer, and research process itself, was smoother and more organized than had been previously. The partners applied learnings from the first round of research to improve processes. In addition, the relationships between partners had strengthened over time – both in this content area of research and more generally in scoping and re-scoping of work in other content areas with the PTF. The community partners gained a greater degree of trust in the skills and expertise of the Research Shop students, while the Research Shop team gained a clearer understanding of expectations in terms of their roles, possibilities and responsibilities. It is important to note that the organizations involved in the partnership – the

Research Shop, the PTF (and the FAWG) –matured as individual organizations in their own right as the partnership matured. The development of one organization was inextricably linked and influenced by the development of the other, and the partnership they shared. All of the groups were in their infancy in 2009 when the partnerships were initially developed, and thus, over time, as their involvement in projects and activities increased, they continued to refine their own internal identity, vision, mission, capacity and infrastructure, and operational processes. While this research was being completed, FAWG continued to work on other food access related activities, and The Research Shop had undertaken approximately 70 community research projects.

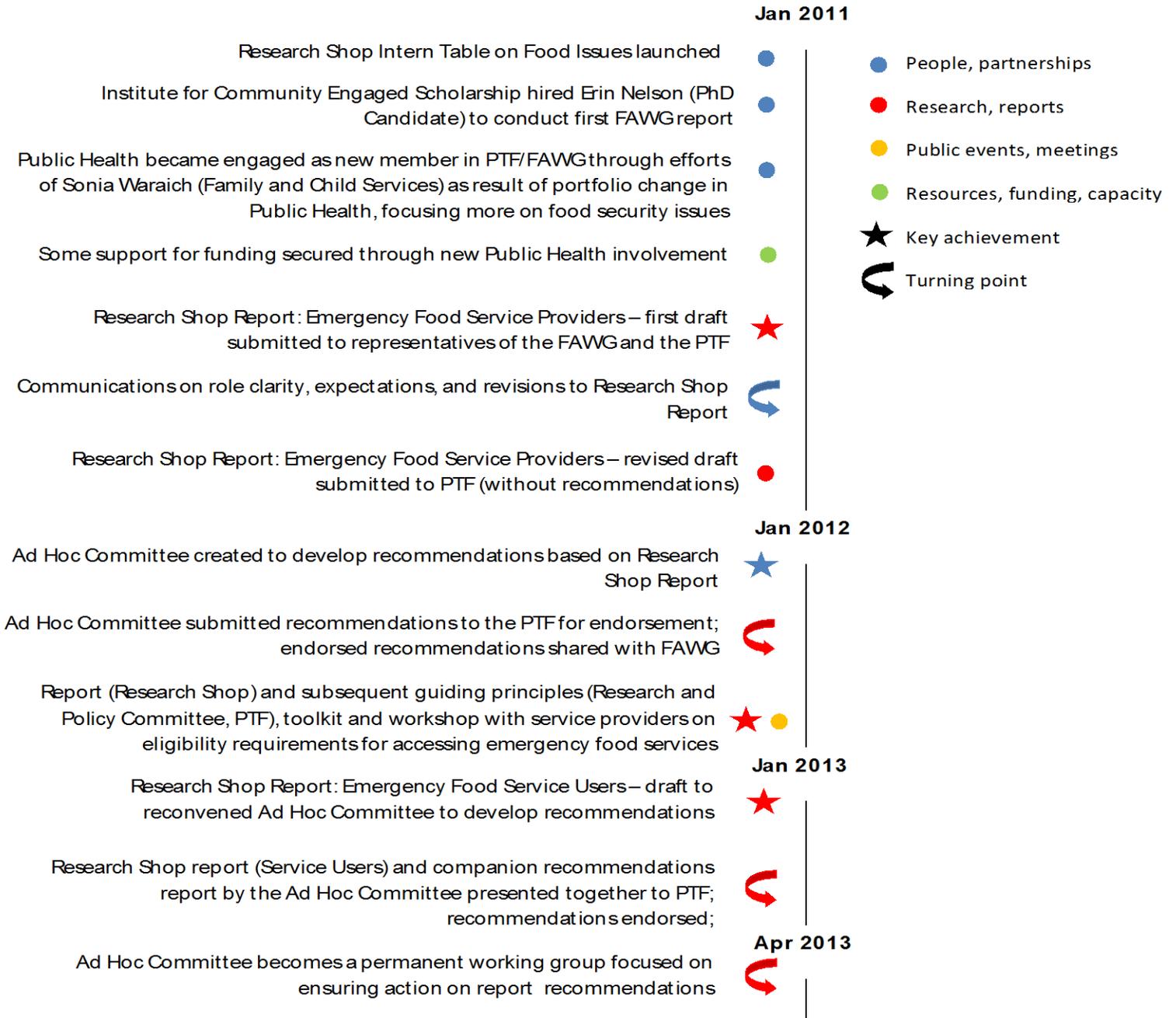
The Emergency Food Services Ad Hoc Committee reconvened in February 2013 to review the Research Shop report on service user perspectives and, using the process developed for the service provider report in 2011/2012, developed a set of recommendations informed by the evidence. In Spring 2013, the Research Shop's report and the Ad Hoc Committee's companion recommendation report were presented together, as a package, to the PTF for review and endorsement. Notably, an important recommendation in the report was for the development of a local community food hub. The recommendations were endorsed by the PTF and at this time, the Ad Hoc Committee moved to become a permanent working group of the PTF, responsible for coordinating action and implementation of their recommendations.

During this important chapter in the maturation of what would later become The Seed a great deal of momentum was building towards improving food access and security through the efforts of other community groups, organizations, and collaborations. To note just a few:

- The City of Guelph launched a community gardens pilot project,
- The Guelph-Wellington Food Roundtable created a local Food Charter, and the Research Shop had developed new partnerships to support local food initiatives (e.g., work with the Guelph Community Health Centre on their Good Food Box program,
- Convening community dialogue on the City's Official Plan (supporting land use for community gardens and other food systems issues),
- Work on the knowledge mobilisation strategy for the Food Charter,
- Research with Farmstart, and
- Support for the "Farm to Fork" initiative developed by University of Guelph faculty member, Dan Gillis and community member, Danny Williamson.

With community dialogue and momentum building, armed with a set of recommendations for action and a working group dedicated to implementation, in the Spring of 2013, the PTF committee that soon came to be known as "The Seed" - was ripe for action.

Chapter 2: Growing Together
2011-2013



Chapter 3: “The Seed” - Ripe for Action

2013 - Present

With a new set of evidence-informed recommendations to guide their work, the working group, now known as The Seed Community Food Hub Committee, is preparing for action.

In Spring 2013, the newly minted working group committed to coordinating action on the recommendations for emergency food services attended a community event hosted by Innovation Guelph. At this meeting, the team informally launched the idea of The Seed Community Food Hub to other community members, idea makers, and potential funders/investors. The idea generated a great deal of support from attendees. This marked the first public, although unofficial, launch of The Seed.

In June 2013, The Seed committee hosted a public event featuring Nick Saul, of the Stop Community Food Centre, to educate the public about the community food centre model and evidence of its impact on improving emergency food systems. Over 150 people participated in the event.

Since the event, The Seed Committee has continued to examine different models of community food centres (e.g., The Local in Stratford, ON), as well as other frameworks, to inform their action plans. They have also continued to present their plans for a community food hub (alongside their other recommendations) to community groups,

organizations, and potential funders and investors to generate awareness, interest, and to continue to build resources and capacity for implementation. Continual community engagement has been, and will continue to be a priority moving forward, as a means of ensuring that a broad spectrum of community voices informs the work, and that the community as a whole has a sense of real ownership over the project.

These outreach efforts as well as formal grant applications have been successful in gaining some additional support and funding for the initiative. In particular, the Seed secured funding and support to hold a professionally facilitated workshop in January 2014 that combined a) training in group facilitation (“Open Space” facilitation approach) for committee members and other participants with b) facilitated community engagement in action planning (using the “Open Space” approach) specifically focused on the development of a local community food

Key question(s) during this time

- How do we move forward now (specifically) in implementing the recommendations we’ve developed? Who else do we need to engage?
- How can we continue to resource the implementation of The Seed Community Food Hub and other recommendations? What additional sources of funding can we access?
- What are the ongoing research needs for The Seed? How can the Research Shop continue to support the development of The Seed?

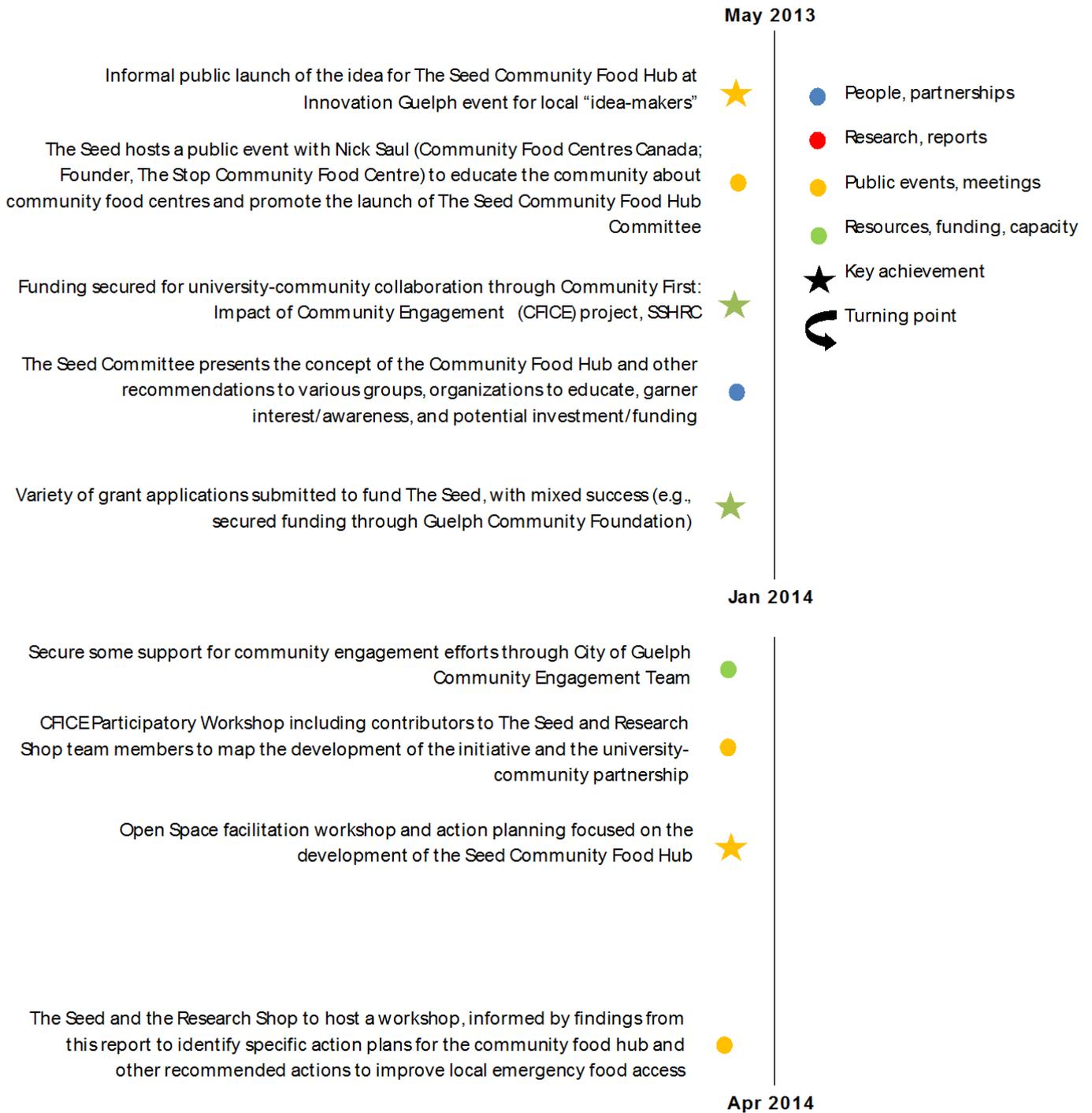
Key achievement(s) during this time

- Official naming and launch of The Seed Community Food Hub initiative and committee
- Additional funding and resources secured and used to build capacity for ongoing development of The Seed; e.g.,
 - o Funding from the Guelph Community Foundation
 - o Support from the City of Guelph’s Community Engagement Team in planning community engagement activities
 - o Funding for *Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement*, a SSHRC partnership grant-funded project to assess the impacts of the campus-community partnership on the initiative – used for the workshop that informed this report
 - o Support for Open Space Training Workshop and Community Meeting to build capacity for further action planning

hub. Efforts to secure funding and identify creative ways to resource the initiative will continue to be a key activity throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Additional funding was secured through SSHRC (focused on the impacts of community-university partnership on community food security) that supported the workshop that informed this report. This funding (Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement; CFICE) will also support a second workshop with community stakeholders (existing committee members, partners, and recently engaged stakeholders) to present the results of this report and direct more focused action planning for the development of the community food hub. Additional funding for this work has been provided on an ongoing and consistent basis from the Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences, in funding PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, masters level interns and staff time. Cost recovery for student wages is approximately 65%.

Chapter 3: “The Seed” - Ripe for Action
 2013–Present



Writing the Next Chapter

The participatory mapping workshop that informed this report was supported through funding secured in the most recent chapter in the development of The Seed (Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement, supported by SSHRC). This report – a document intended to be shaped by key contributors to, and collaborators of, The Seed– is intended to set the stage for the next chapter of the initiative. By establishing a shared account of how The Seed has grown, and what the key factors were that shaped its development to date, The Seed committee and partners can chart a clear path forward informed by lessons learned.

The main questions the partnership intended to answer through this process were: *How has campus-community engagement in Guelph-Wellington (through partnership between The Seed and the Research Shop) contributed in the past, and how can it most effectively contribute in the future, to improved community food security?*

Through mapping the collaboration with the partners, it was clear that partnership with the Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship and Research Shop played a prominent role in the development of The Seed. The Research Shop resourced and delivered important local evidence and information that directly informed the recommendations and actions that have guided, and continue to guide, the work of The Seed Community Food Hub committee, and has actively taken the role of support for food security issues in Guelph Wellington and beyond.

Furthermore, the process of working through challenges in refining roles and expectations in their collaboration with the Research Shop was a catalyst for the PTF and the FAWG to clarify their respective roles, responsibilities, and intentions internally with regard to creating recommendations and implementing them. It became clear to the group that what they needed from the University partnership was not recommendations for action, but evidence and expertise to support and inform ideas for action, provided in a way that could be taken up by community actors. It was important to the community partners, that they were responsible for translating knowledge and insights from research into action, so that action plans *for the community* were created by the community.

The Research Shop has also contributed substantially to the development of The Seed by leveraging connections to funding opportunities (e.g., through the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences, through SSHRC) and other resources (e.g., faculty and student support for research, and outreach/promotion through community and conference presentations) that the committee would not have otherwise had access to.

How can campus-community engagement in Guelph-Wellington (through partnership between The Seed and the Research Shop) contribute most effectively to improved community food security in the future? The role of the Research Shop in the next chapter of the story of The Seed Community Food Hub is unclear. Research was the entry- and focal point for the campus-community collaboration. As The Seed moves forward towards implementing action plans, the immediate research needs of the initiative are not yet defined. There may be a continued role for university researchers to play in informing best practices in implementing community food strategies, or in evaluating the impact of the work as it progresses. Further, although the primary mandate of the Research Shop is to support graduate student community-university research, the broader Institute houses expertise in knowledge mobilization, brokering and leveraging of additional university resources and community engaged learning. These may be useful avenues to explore for further collaboration as The Seed may require support in program design, implementation, communication, promotion, and outreach.

Strong relationships and associations have been central to the birth and success of The Seed, and to the ongoing success of the community research partnerships held by the Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship. The

Seed was born out of relationships between diverse community groups and individuals who shared similar priorities. Challenges were in building shared trust and vision amongst some of the key community stakeholders, and between the community partners and the Research Shop. Time and investment in scoping projects, reviewing and adjusting key roles and contributions, and ongoing communication proved successful in increasing trust and capacity for jointly valued outcomes.

Appendix A: List of Seed Community Food Hub Committee

Member Organizations*

Chair: Sheila Cranmer-Byng, Interim PTF Coordinator

City of Guelph

County of Wellington

Guelph Community Health Centre

Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition

University of Guelph

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

* <http://gwpoverty.ca/committees/the-seed-community-food-hub-committee/>

Appendix B: List of Workshop Participants (January 15, 2014)

Petrina Aberdeen; Research Shop Intern

Frances Dietrich-O'Connor; Former Research Shop Intern; Human Environment Consultant, Shared Value Solutions

Warren Dodd; Project Manager, Research Shop

Randalin Ellery; Coordinator, Guelph & Wellington Poverty Elimination Task Force

Linda Hawkins; Director, ICES/ Research Shop

June Hofland; Councillor, City of Guelph

Christine McPhail; Research Shop Intern

Lisa Needham; Public Health Nutritionist, Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health

Erin Nelson; Former Research Shop Postdoctoral Fellow

Andrew Seagram Program Coordinator; Upper Grand District School Board

Appendix C: Guiding Facilitation Questions

1. Who are the key actors and stakeholders involved in this collaboration?
2. How have relationships among actors been established and how have they evolved over time?
3. What are key moments in the development of individual projects? The larger collaboration?
4. What are the key actions undertaken in individual projects? The larger collaboration?
5. What are key impacts and outcomes of individual projects? The larger collaboration?
6. How have the roles of different actors in the collaboration evolved over time?
7. What are the details regarding the development, implementation, and use of research?
8. What were some of the challenges that emerged over the course of the collaboration?
9. How were challenges addressed?
10. What are some of the key reasons for success?
11. What are some ideas about the future direction of the collaboration?