



# SEEDS FOR CHANGE



## The Concept

Challenging your community to develop new food growing spaces is an exciting way to engage new and existing gardeners in the joy of growing their own food.

Seeds For Change and partners launched the 2,015 Campaign in 2012 to help build momentum and foster alignment for the grow-your-own movement in York Region. With the development of a York Region Food Charter and the impending provincial Local Food Act, demand is high from individuals and organizations in York Region for food growing spaces. While there has been support by municipalities to develop community gardens, demand for food growing spaces does not meet supply. The 2,015 Campaign is about inspiring people in food growing through innovative means such as in containers, on their balcony and by joining community gardens.

Although our focus is engaging York Region residents and businesses in food growing by supporting the development of 2,015 new food growing spaces in York Region by 2015, we want to share our experiences with this Campaign to assist other groups who have the desire to build similar 'grow-your-own' movements in their communities.

This is a working document, and we'll be updating it regularly to share our learning and best practices with you.



For more information about this Campaign, please contact Lynne Koss of Seeds For Change at [lynne@seedsforchange.org](mailto:lynne@seedsforchange.org).

### The How to!



#### **Step 1: Establish a Steering Committee**

As with any community movement, the first step of action is to form a Campaign Steering Committee. We know situations and circumstances change so turnover in a Steering Committee is inevitable, but remember you're building a movement and you need committed people to make it happen and to avoid frustration and too many hiccups along the way. Keep in mind that the Campaign Steering Committee may not be the best way to engage everyone who is interested in this project, and there will be lots of opportunities for interested people to get involved in various aspects of the Campaign.

We advise that a Steering Committee meets regularly (once a month) to build momentum, accountability and to see progress. It can be difficult to get everyone physically together, so you can always use free online platforms such as Skype ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)), Calliflower ([www.calliflower.com](http://www.calliflower.com)) or Ready Talk ([www.readytalk.com](http://www.readytalk.com)) to ensure that everyone's voice and ears are present for meetings. You likely know what size of Steering Committee works best for you, but a team of 5-7 people is a great size to have a diversity of skill sets and to fairly distribute actions.

With a Campaign of this scale, there are many different directions and priority areas you could take as a Steering Committee, and there may be demands for fundraising, communications, and technical garden support. Taking into account the scale and scope of your project, you may want to consider having both a Steering Committee to offer direction for the Campaign, and subcommittees who will work on specific tasks (fundraising, marketing, technical support) of the Campaign.

### ***Develop a Vision***

Once the Steering Committee starts to meet regularly, **develop a vision** for your campaign.

For anyone familiar with community gardens and food growing, you will know that there are multiple benefits to food growing. These benefits include:

- ⑤ Increased access to fresh produce
- ⑤ Cost savings from growing instead of buying
- ⑤ Development of new green spaces
- ⑤ Social relationship formed through communal food growing
- ⑤ Studies and research have shown that when children and youth are involved in growing fruits and vegetables, they are more likely to enjoy and consume the recommended servings of fresh produce each day.

Every group establishing their own Campaign has their reasons for doing it – whether it is to encourage the community landscape to be cleaned, promote community engagement or promote healthy foods. You need to define your primary objective for your Campaign as it will guide how you market and promote your Campaign moving forward. Seeds For Change's vision for the 2,015 Campaign is the desire to inspire residents to grow food in York Region's suburban landscape. York Region is a large region, rapidly developing, and as the landscape is changing, there is a great desire for food growing spaces on balconies, in schoolyards, in front yards and back yards, and at

local businesses. Seeds For Change’s 2015 Campaign provides individuals and groups with the information to start to use what space they have for food growing – regardless of how big or small that space is.



## **Step 2: Establish a Digital Media Presence for your Campaign**

To share information about the Campaign and to widen participation, digital media presence is a crucial component of your marketing and implementation strategy. A digital media presence in the form of a website and social media accounts will:

- ⑤ Offer a forum for food growing projects to register their space(s)
- ⑤ Be a platform to share projects through photos and project descriptions
- ⑤ Allow you to use google fusion tables to map registered food growing spaces
- ⑤ Offer you a platform to blog about the campaign
- ⑤ Allow you to share news and media articles about your ‘2015 Campaign’
- ⑤ Offer a forum to share information about accessing resources for your project, training events and volunteer opportunities

In addition to a website, a social media presence (Facebook, Twitter) is a great way to keep people up-to-date about the Campaign, advertise events, and reach out to new individuals and demographics such as youth.



## **Step 3: Promote the Campaign**

To get people inspired and food growing, you need to build excitement and enthusiasm for the Campaign as soon as possible. Announce the Campaign with a media launch event. Media attention for the Campaign can continue with competitions and by celebrating milestones such as the 1000<sup>th</sup> plot.

While promoting the Campaign you need to build an enabling environment by being attune to what tools and resources residents need to help encourage them to join the Campaign. This enabling environment may include technical considerations and incentives to encourage participation.

### ***Technical Considerations***

Individuals or families may be hesitant to join the 2,015 Campaign due to inexperience with food growing. Physical and virtual trainings and workshops may be one avenue you can use to promote the campaign, while also educating those new to food growing.

Based on budget and timing, there are a number of options for workshops and trainings. These include:

- ⑤ Hands-on workshops at a garden site
- ⑤ A training blog where people registered with the campaign can meet virtually to ask questions and share information.
- ⑤ Create a youtube channel where you can post short training videos, etc. and promote them on you website and social media accounts

You can contact your local Master Gardeners and/or Horticultural Society to discuss opportunities for partnerships. Master Gardeners and/or volunteers from the Horticultural Society may be willing to lead hands-on workshops, or answer technical questions posted on your blog or social media outlets.

### ***Incentives to Encourage Participation***

You also may find it beneficial to have some incentives in place to encourage people to register their food growing space. This may include:

- ⑤ Partner with local businesses to be able to offer registered spaces a special discount code or



special offer (e.g. Those registered with the 2,015 Campaign receive 10% off at a specific retailer).

- ⑤ Develop a list of resources so if people are looking for free soil/compost, materials for do-it-yourself raised beds, etc. you can offer them information and contacts.

## Step 4: Ongoing Considerations

### *Funding*

It costs money to provide snacks at a Steering Committee meeting, design a website, hold trainings, and to have somebody maintain the social media accounts. While the budget for your Campaign will depend on how many people are involved, what you want to accomplish and how you want to accomplish it, there are a few different ways to gain funding for this initiative.

### *Fundraising*



Seeds For Change has forged a fundraising relationship with L'Arche Daybreak. L'Arche is an international organization. Based on a community model of living, L'Arche creates homes and day programs with people who have developmental disabilities. L'Arche offers programming and income-generation opportunities that provide meaningful skills for those who utilize L'Arche's facilities.

In partnership with Seeds For Change, L'Arche Richmond Hill is designing and making ceramic plant markers. Seeds For Change is selling these beautifully-crafter plant markers, with half of the profits going to L'Arche Richmond Hill and the other half to Seeds For Change.











There are opportunities for other organizations to take advantage of this fundraising opportunity. For details, contact Lynne Koss of Seeds For Change at [lynne@seedsforchangegardens.org](mailto:lynne@seedsforchangegardens.org).

### Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsoring the 2,015 Campaign is a great way you can get businesses, corporations and other organizations involved and invested in the ‘grow-your-own’ movement.

Sponsors benefit by:

- ⑤ Building brand awareness and recognition. The placement of sponsor’s logo on the website and promotional materials communicates value and support.
- ⑤ Targeted marketing to reach those touched by the same values
- ⑤ Community involvement
- ⑤ Recognition through media events

LEVELS	Platinum/ Community	Golden/ Harvest	Silver/ Plant	Bronze/ Sprout
<b># of Cash Sponsors Per Category</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
Your Logo on all promotional material Flyers/Calendars/Brochures/Newsletters Garden Signs				
Company name in 2 paid ads/newspaper articles				
Company name and logo on SFC website				
Link to your company on SFC website				
<b>Table &amp; Bench Sponsor - \$500</b> Sponsor’s corporate logo will be placed on a table and bench/stone for use by students, visitors and volunteers.	<b>Unlimited</b>			
<b>Adopt-A-Row Sponsor – \$300</b> A limited number of extra garden rows will be prepared for adoption by people or businesses within the community. A sponsoring business may choose to provide the maintenance on the adopted row.	<b>Unlimited</b>			
<b>Garden Tools Sponsor – \$100</b> This sponsorship provides tools for students and volunteers to use to maintain the garden. The garden tool sponsors will be recognized on a plaque on the garden tool shed.	<b>Unlimited</b>			

## ***Donations***

Local businesses and franchises are often very keen to get involved in the community they service, donating in-kind or financial resources for specific projects and/or events.

The contribution of in-kind or financial donations can be recognized through links and logos on the website, logos on promotional material and banners at events.

## ***Strengthening Relationships with Partners, Sponsors and Donors***

Recognizing the contribution a sponsorship or donation brings to the Campaign, a specific project or a specific event is crucial to building a reciprocal relationship, supporting the community, and acknowledging that partnerships and collaborations are essential to build new projects in the community.

You want to make sure to recognize the support of all donors through gestures that will promote and market the kind support.

Gestures to thank donors include:

- ⑤ Electronic promotion via facebook, twitter and a website link
- ⑤ Thank you letter from the gardeners receiving the support
- ⑤ Share some veggies and fruits from the garden with the donors
- ⑤ Honour the donors by naming a fruit tree or garden row after them.

Also remember that donors love to know that their time and resources have been used well. Keep donors up-to-date with your activities through a newsletter or photo update of the project. This will ensure that donors are aware of where their contribution went and it will continue to build the donors' confidence about your organization's ability to successfully do what they set out to do!



**This is a working document. As our campaign develops and progresses, we'll be updating this manual to share our experiences with you – offering advice on best practices, and sharing any failures with you.**