

Iqaluit, Nunavut

A photograph showing a large animal carcass, likely a pig, lying on a wooden surface. The animal's body is open, revealing internal organs and significant blood loss. A person's hand is visible near the wound, suggesting an investigation or autopsy. The scene is outdoors on a wooden deck.



A daily lunch service operates 7 days a week and serves about 80 people a day. The program is open to everyone and the centre has made a concerted effort to ensure that the service is destigmatized from being a place for those in need to a space for everyone interested in a good meal. An underlying premise is that poor eating habits are common to every social group. The attendance levels have not changed over the past two years of operation so this can be taken to be the approximate level of chronic need/interest. Meal service has also changed in attempts to offer a high nutritional value meal, that includes country food as well as to give guests exposure to different food choices. For example, salads are a part of every meal offering and have grown substantially in popularity. The training program has two distinct components: an after-school cooking program for youth, an employment-directed training program for adults.

The after-school cooking program is offered to elementary level students (grades 4-6) twice a week. The program accommodates about 10 students in these sessions. They receive instruction in food preparation, basic cooking skills, food and workplace safety and healthy eating. The popularity of this program led to the inclusion of a drop-in cooking club open to everybody. This takes place once a week.

QAJUQTURVIK FOOD CENTRE

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The employment-directed paid training component is offered 5 days a week over a 3-month period. Generally, 6-10 people are trained in these sessions. The training component allows the centre to take on catering jobs that help to subsidize the program and for the students to gain experience through the provision of the daily food service. Training includes instruction in food preparation, basic cooking skills, food and workplace safety (WHMIS and food safety certificate), healthy eating, cooking on a budget, recipe development and meal planning. This program has been shown to be very successful with about half of the participants going on to employment in the food industry.

The centre is looking to expand this opportunity to participants from outside of Iqaluit. They have secured the use of a house for the next three years to facilitate people from other communities to take advantage of this opportunity. The Qajuqturvik Food Centre has a very strong reputation in Iqaluit and wants to support food security efforts in smaller communities.

The program hosts periodic events both to support community activities and as a way of promoting the program. They have received a lot of media notice and positive support. It hopes to build on this by also collecting data through participant surveys that shows the value of programs like this. Future goals for the program include an expanded evaluation approach, community outreach beyond Iqaluit, partnership with the local greenhouse and advocacy for more affordable food. For more information on this dynamic program visit their website www.qajuqturvik.ca.



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