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qajuqturvik community food centre
centre communautaire d'alimentation qajuqturvik
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2021-22 Annual Report



As we near the end of another year, we have the opportunity to reflect on where we are now. This year, like the last few years, has been a year of great change and uncertainty. Since the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic and its variants, a major water crisis in Iqaluit, as well as ongoing and intermittent boil water advisories throughout the territory, the resilience of Nunavummiut is palpable as always. With worsening economic pressures raising inflation and the cost of living continuing to rise nationwide, Nunavummiut remain at the forefront of this struggle. As a result of these economic and environmental changes, this year QCFC has seen some of the highest numbers of meals delivered than we have ever seen before, which should be ringing alarm bells nationwide.

We have witnessed how the water crisis impacted the community we serve and have seen the correlation between access to water and access to food. Such pressures on the territory's water infrastructure will continue to impact food accessibility as our infrastructure ages and the climate changes. With this awareness, our advocacy as an organization has become at times urgent and critical out of necessity.

As always, our advocacy has informed our programming and this is where we have also seen some great strides as an organization this year. One such stride has been the roll out of the pay-what-you-can Inuliqtait Food Box, the newest addition to our programming. Through partnership with a network of hunters across the territory who are providing a variety of fresh *inuksiuti*, the Inuliqtait Food Box is proving to be an innovative way to increase access to culturally appropriate and affordable foods for our community and to strengthen food sovereignty and environmental sustainability across the territory.

Along similar lines, a model for salaried hunters has been explored this year through the completion of a feasibility study conducted by the MaRs Institute and QCFC. This study has indicated some hopeful models for funding salaried hunter programs that would not

only support food security but provide much needed environmental stewardship – something everyone at QCFC would be excited to see in the future and understands as critical to supporting Nunavut's food systems.

This year has proven to be pivotal for QCFC in more ways than one, as we have welcomed a fantastic new Executive Director to our team, Rachel Blais. Rachel has joined our team and hit the ground running with a passionate foresight and skill that has allowed us to achieve long held organizational goals. We are lucky to have her join our team and I look forward to seeing the organization's new growth under her guidance. We are all grateful for your hard work.

I want to further extend my deep gratitude for the Qajuqturvik staff who have continued to show up for the community in ways that are meaningful beyond measure and for creating a space full of potential and growth that continues to inspire me personally. With an eye to the future, we of course can anticipate more challenges and surprises in the coming years but with the support of the dedicated staff that path forward remains hopeful. For this, I thank each one of you.

I would also like to express gratitude for the participation of my fellow board members, whose engagement is vital to the successful operation of QCFC. I hope that we are able to continue our work together as we attempt to steer this ship in a principled and wise way through the sometimes rough waters that board membership tends to bring. The time you have dedicated to the organization is valued and vital and I look forward to continuing our work together.

Qujannamiik,

Beth Kotierk
President

450+ clean water deliveries made during the Iqaluit water crisis

30,000 meals served

4 Girls' Science Camp sessions held

2,400+ produce and 300 country food boxes distributed

170 community members assisted through our Peer Advocacy Program

94%
reported that the Piruqtuviniit Food Box was an important source of fruits and vegetables for their households

6,000+ kg country food purchased

food skills

Once public health restrictions eased in the territory, we held our weekly after-school **Kids' Cooking Club** and **FoodFit** programs for youth. The **Pre-Employment Training Program** was held twice and provided under- and unemployed Iqalummiut with opportunities to gain professional cooking skills and find meaningful employment. Each cohort celebrated their graduation by preparing and serving a country food feast for the community.

"He is more knowledgeable about healthy choices and no longer picky about fresh veggies. He was so proud of each dish he brought home."
- Parent of Kids' Cooking Club participant



food access



The **Community Meal** continued to be our most-accessed program this year. Over **30,000 meals** were served – and many of them were finally enjoyed in our dining room after many months of lockdown and public health restrictions. Our kitchen went through substantial renovations, improving functionality and creating a more open, welcoming atmosphere.

We also started including more country food in our programs. Throughout the year, **30%** of meals served included country food like seal, muskox, caribou, and Arctic char. In total, over **6,000 kgs** of country food was purchased from hunters across Nunavut.

Almost 2,500 **Piruytuviniiit Food Boxes** (formerly Healthy Food Box) were distributed to the community on a **pay-what-you-can** basis. Using a similar framework and working directly with hunters across Nunavut, we started distributing the **Inuliqtait Food Box** – a variety box of country foods also available to Iqalummiut on a pay-what-you-can basis. By the end of the year, an average of **40 boxes** were distributed bi-weekly, half of which were specifically distributed to families in Iqaluit experiencing chronic food insecurity.

advocacy

The creation of a dedicated **peer advocacy office** marked a milestone that we have been working towards for many years. Community members now have a private and safe space to access peer advocacy services, allowing our Peer Advocacy Coordinator to strengthen relationships and find new ways to provide support. We held two sessions of the **Inuit Women's Circle** for Inuit women to make connections with each other and learn traditional skills, like mitt making and beading.

In the fall, we offered our first on-the-land program for youth. Twelve teenage girls went whale hunting, learned to butcher seal, and made their own uluit during the **Girls' Science Camp**. Around this time we also held an **All-Candidates' Forum**, where all 12 local candidates running in the 2021 territorial election shared how they intended to address important issues, such as poverty, infrastructure gaps, and education.



Supporting the local food system and advocating for policy change to support hunters was a major theme for QCFC this year.

We conducted a **feasibility study** into providing hunters with a consistent salary through a social impact bond. We also worked closely with partner organizations to expand a network of hunters to provide consistent access to country food regardless of season or transportation disruptions.

Between the COVID-19 pandemic, Iqaluit water crisis, and rising inflation rates, Qajuqturvik had a steady presence with local and national **media** throughout the year. We spoke on issues like crumbling infrastructure in the North, support for hunters, mental health resources, climate change, ineffectual government policy, and rising poverty rates. In the absence of an anti-poverty advocacy organization in Nunavut, Qajuqturvik continues to advocate for policy that will create lasting and meaningful change for all Nunavummiut.





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