

History of the NDG Food Depot

In 1986 there was no centralized place in NDG where people living with a less than adequate amount of income could go for help to feed their families. Churches in the area found themselves overwhelmed by requests for emergency food aid. Concerned citizens met with church representatives and members of the NDG Community Council to come up with a solution. The result was the original Food Depot, a project run under the NDG Community Council. Its first home was in the basement of the former St. Augustin's church (now River's Edge Church)

A couple of years later, due to a small problem with furry, four legged beasts at the church, the Food Depot was forced to move for the summer into a little chalet in Girouard Park. In the fall of 1989 a new location was found on NDG Avenue, where the Food Depot remained until it found its current home on Oxford Ave. in 1992.

In its first year of operation, the Food Depot provided emergency food baskets 5,477 times. In 2008 we distributed food baskets over 28,000 times. Originally set up as an emergency effort to respond to the economic crisis of the 1980's, the Food Depot has unfortunately seen a dramatic increase in demand over the years. We have seen a drastic rise in generational poverty and an increase in chronic dependence on emergency food.

In order to address the systemic causes of hunger and poverty, the Food Depot began implementing complementary programming such as a comprehensive referral and information service, cooking and smart shopping classes, volunteer training, pre-employability programs, cooking and computer programs for seniors and home delivery for those with reduced mobility.

In 2003 The NDG Food Depot became an autonomous organization with its own charitable status.

In April 2003, with funding received from the "Direction de la santé publique" (DSP), the NDG Coalition for Food Security (Table de concertation sur la sécurité alimentaire de NDG) started work leading to the creation in September of that year of the first Good Food Box (GFB) in Montreal. The Food Depot was part of that coalition, and in fact the Depot premises were used for packing and coordinating the GFB.

The GFB has made it easier for people with low incomes to get fresh produce at lower prices. This program provides affordable, convenient, and high quality fruit and vegetable boxes through drop-off points in NDG. Potential buyers are attracted from local community groups (especially those working with people on low incomes). We buy our produce from small-scale family farmers in Quebec as much as possible, thereby making good food more affordable and supporting local agriculture

In April 2006, the NDG Food Depot was formally given full responsibility for the GFB in NDG. This allowed the Depot to seek (and obtain) Centraide funding for the GFB.

Due to its great success in NDG, the GFB evolved in March 2009 to operate at the regional level under Moisson Montreal. We continue to manage the GFB for the NDG area and encourage our clients to join this program as soon as they can afford to do so. We are currently exploring the feasibility of developing a bulk food buying group.

The NDG Food Depot is currently in a capacity building phase. Staff and Board are working diligently to implement innovative programming so that we can facilitate a shift from "food bank user" to "engaged and valued citizen". We believe that all members of society have something valuable to contribute. As such, we aim to create an environment that provides meaningful opportunities for engagement and personal transformation. We see food as a powerful vehicle that can bring people together to forge innovative solutions to societal inequalities.