

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The SEED is an organization dedicated to providing healthy food to people of all income levels in the City of Guelph, recognizing that over 20,000 people in Guelph-Wellington do not have access to healthy food. Their objective is to build a circular food system “fueled by the community and filled with dignity.” The SEED aims to drive this system change through social enterprise (particularly the employment of young people), community involvement, collaboration with other community organizations, building good food into the health care system and advocating for improved government policy. Recognizing the community food security needs and the climate and environmental impacts of wasted food, The SEED created several initiatives addressing this intersection.

INTERSECTIONAL PROGRAMMING

In partnership with the University of Guelph’s entrepreneurship program, The SEED created the Upcycle Kitchen. This initiative aims to collaborate with local farmers, suppliers, and businesses to minimize food waste and create delicious and nutritious products and meals after discovering that a significant amount of food from distributors was being discarded for imperfect appearance despite its nutritional integrity and quality. The SEED also employs out-of-work youth through the Upcycle Kitchen, providing valuable training and experience. The first products created in the Upcycle kitchen were ketchup made from deformed tomatoes and bread from spent grain provided by a local brewery. To increase access for those in food need, the products produced by the Upcycle kitchen are sold at pay-what-you-can prices alongside the other food on their website. Ultimately, The SEED hopes to see Upcycle Kitchen products on retail shelves and delivered to student nutrition programs. As the Upcycle Kitchen relies on donated food, there is unpredictability in its supply. To manage these inconsistencies, The SEED freezes food until all ingredients arrive or provides excess produce to The SEED’s food distribution programs.

The SEED also has a Community Food Warehouse that stores and distributes fresh produce. Most produced is received from Second Harvest, an organization that collects food deemed “unfit” for grocery stores. As a “food rescuer,” Second Harvest collects a surplus of edible and usable food from businesses and redistributes this food across their network of organizations and communities, including The SEED. The Community Food Warehouse then redistributes to local food banks and school programs in the Guelph-Wellington area. Through the Warehouse, food that would normally end up in a landfill is diverted into the homes of Guelph-Wellington.

The SEED is involved in advocacy for food systems change and is the founder of Our Food Future. This initiative promotes and advocates for circularity in the food sector for the sake of the planet and people. Collaborating across organizations in the Guelph-Wellington area, Our Food Future aims to support the first circular food system in the area.