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Dawson City

## **Zero Waste Food**

It all started with two young moms.

Cranbrook, BC Food Recovery is a zero waste organization that keeps edible food from being thrown away.

Information from their website states, "Cranbrook Food Recovery was inspired by the people in town who find ways to connect people and food. In June of 2019 we began collecting food that otherwise would have gone to the landfill. We connected that food with local organizations who have been running community programs. By September we were recovering food every day."

Zero food waste is very important to me. Not only because of the practical part of feeding hungry people but also as a gardener, I know how much work goes into growing food.

When I visit my family in Cranbrook, I enjoy volunteering for this organization. For instance, this winter I spent a few hours a week chopping vegetables in the Food Recovery kitchen. Bins and bins of peppers or broccoli and other veggies. I cut blemishes or rotten parts from the vegetables and then chopped up the good parts to be frozen.

The bad bits went to chickens and pigs.

Sounds pretty boring, eh?

I liked working with other people or sometimes listening to an audio book but mostly I liked being productive, helping the community. I felt less helpless in the big world of food waste and consumption. It felt good to volunteer in this way.

Prior to me chopping, the produce was collected from donating businesses and sorted.

Anything not fit for human consumption is passed on to the farmers.

Some other food items collected were: dented food cans, dairy and meat products close to expiry date and boxes and boxes of expiry dated bread.

Some of the statistics from the Cranbrook Food Recovery website are:

April 2022 to March 2023 the group saved 259,437 pounds of food from going to the local landfill;

donated 157,095 pounds of good food to local charities, including Salvation Army (where it is distributed to the wider community) and the local Food Bank;

donated 102,342 pounds of food to local farmers.

Food Recovery Cranbrook also established a kitchen that donated 119,011 meals to schools, the homeless shelter, seniors, etc.

Cranbrook is about the same population as Whitehorse.

The organizers of the Food Recovery said it took some time to convince large food businesses in the community to participate but eventually those businesses realized the value.

I for one support those grocery stores that support Food Recovery. (and encourage my family and friends to do so as well.)

On a world scale of Food waste, Pope Francis noted, "Food waste each year produces masses of greenhouse gases, while proper rationing would be enough to feed all the hungry." (Vatican News).

"We live in a world where we grow enough food to feed everyone, yet one-third of all food produced is wasted." – José Graziano da Silva

"In a world of seven billion people, set to grow to nine billion by 2050, wasting food makes no sense – economically, environmentally and ethically, aside from the cost implications, all the land, water, fertilisers and labour needed to grow that food is wasted – not to mention the generation of greenhouse gas emissions produced by food decomposing on landfill and the transport of food that is ultimately thrown away." – Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director

"Cutting food waste is a delicious way of saving money, helping to feed the world and protect the planet." – Tristram Stuart, English author and environmental campaigner.