



KLFS
Strategic Plan

2018-2020

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Message from Board Chair and General Manager

This summer, we approached our 15th year of operation. With the completion of our existing strategic plan, the Kawartha Lakes Food Source (KLFS) Board of Directors embarked on a new strategic planning process to position our important organization for future success.

Our Board is a dedicated group of community volunteers that has accepted the responsibility for the governance and stewardship of KLFS. As the only food distribution centre in the City of Kawartha Lakes, we support those who feed our hungry, work to raise public awareness, and partner with local not-for-profit organizations on projects that benefit us all. For us, planning is time of renewal. So, we seized the opportunity to reimagine KLFS's role and purpose under its new leadership.

From the outset, our Board believed it was essential for us to gather input directly from our partners and stakeholders. Our strategic plan must reflect the needs of our community. We also saw strategic planning as an opportunity to strengthen ties and raise awareness. With this in mind, we engaged KLFS member food banks, community leaders in the field, community partner agencies, volunteers, staff and donors. We asked the pertinent questions: How are we doing? What do we do well? What could we improve upon? What challenges do we face together? Does the community, and our partners, need to know more about KLFS and what we do? How can we better collaborate?

The goal was to develop a three-year strategic plan based upon real engagement. We also assessed our own organization's capacities and opportunities. Finally, as a Board and management team, we mapped out five new strategic directions to guide us in the years ahead.

We are proud of the outcome of this planning process and are excited about our future — one that will see KLFS more deeply engaged in meeting the needs of our members and community. We thank everyone who took the time to participate, share ideas and give suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Fisher', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Mark Fisher, Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Heather Kirby'.

Heather Kirby, General Manager

Executive Summary

Following an engaging planning process, the Board of Directors of Kawartha Lakes Food Source has established the following five strategic directions:

- 1. Strengthened Partnerships and Collaborations**
- 2. An Organization with Capacity**
- 3. Enhanced Strategic Communications**
- 4. Leading Through Advocacy and Engagement**
- 5. A Financially Stable Organization**

These strategic directions will serve to focus our work over the next three years. They are driven by our mission and values, and speak directly to the challenges and opportunities before us.

This is a plan that positions KLFS to look forward in a strong, sustainable manner, to bring community partners together under a united vision for a hunger-free Kawartha Lakes region.

Our strategy is to maintain our firm and unwavering commitment to supporting those who feed our hungry. Our new directions are generous in spirit, rooted firmly in serving the needs of our community. KLFS has a bright future.

About Kawartha Lakes Food Source

Brief History and Current State

Kawartha Lakes Food Source (KLFS) was founded in 2002 after research by local Rotary members revealed a patchwork system of food aid by churches and social agencies. Having one organization devoted to collecting and distributing food allowed for front-line workers to focus on clients instead of stocking shelves. The organization started with one staff member and a few volunteers. It moved locations, from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Kawartha Lakes to their current home in 2012, where the team has grown to include five staff and over 70 active volunteers.

Monthly, KLFS serves 34 members – including nine food banks and 21 schools – which in turn provide food to 5,500 individuals. Available bulk food is distributed to food banks in accordance with the number of clients served, while schools each receive the same amount. Food bank locations include Coboconk, Little Britain, Omemee, Centre of Hope, Woodville, the Fenelon Falls Salvation Army, and Dunsford.

Of those receiving food from the members, one-third are on social assistance, one-third are on provincial disability support, nine percent are on a pension, and around 40 percent are children.

KLFS is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, each of whom is actively engaged in the community.

As a not-for-profit organization, funding for KLFS comes from fundraising events, individual donations, service clubs and organizations, food drives and foundations and grants. KLFS receives 80 percent of its offerings from reclamation – viable, unsold food from grocery stores – and 20 percent from local gardens, by purchase (milk, eggs and fruit), and from food drives, individual donations and third-party events.

Overview of the Planning Process

As KLFS approached its 15th year of operation, the Board of Directors commissioned a member and community engagement process to evaluate the organization's historical performance, partnerships, and relationships. To effectively draw in stakeholder input, ensure confidentiality of responses and encourage all opinions and views, the Board engaged the services of an independent firm through a tendering process to facilitate the engagement process. The process took place in April and May, 2017.

With this project completed, the Board sought assistance from the same firm to conduct the additional steps necessary to create a multi-year strategic plan. The second phase of the process occurred in October and November 2017.

Planning Context

Food Insecurity

Across Ontario, 335,944 individuals access food banks each month – one-third of those helped are children under the age of 18. The majority of food insecure households are working poor, and the number of single person households using food banks has grown by over 21 percent since 2008 (Hunger Report 2016, Ontario Association of Food Banks).

In the City of Kawartha Lakes, there is a continual increase in new food bank users in various population segments, such as seniors and those with disabilities. In August 2017, 863 individuals were assisted, 35 percent of them children and youth. According to the HKPR District Health Unit, in Haliburton County, Northumberland County and the City of Kawartha Lakes, 13.5 percent of households are food insecure, 1.6 percent above the Ontario average. Poverty is the root cause of food insecurity – within this region, it costs \$882 per month for an average family of four to afford healthy food.

Basic Income Pilot

Lindsay was chosen as one of three communities for the Government of Ontario's basic income pilot, which launched in October 2017. The test project will run over three years, exploring whether an annual salary can help people in precarious work situations avoid poverty. The Ontario government has stated that they are hoping to sign up 2,000 participants in Lindsay, in addition to 2,000 in the two other regions (Hamilton/Brantford/Brant County and Thunder Bay).

Lindsay will soon begin enrolling individuals with low incomes or who are on social assistance. Single participants can receive up to \$16,989 annually, with up to \$24,027 for a couple, less 50 percent of any earned income.

Kawartha Lakes Food Source was involved in advocating for Lindsay as a test community, and is looking forward to seeing the impact it will have on vulnerable workers and improvements to their health and education outcomes and food security.

Geography

KLFS is located in the town of Lindsay and serves the entire City of Kawartha Lakes. Geography and transportation have been identified as challenges in the region, with a population of 75,423 across a catchment area of 3,084 km² (Canada 2016 Census). It was noted during the engagement process that the geography creates barriers for individuals seeking to access food banks and for volunteers,

particularly for those without access to reliable means of transportation. Public transportation is limited to the town of Lindsay, where three bus lines run from 7 AM to 7 PM, Monday to Saturday.

Stakeholder Engagement

Kawartha Lake Food Source saw meaningful stakeholder engagement as a critical step in the development of an inspiring and practical strategic plan. Before identifying the strategic priorities, the Board reached out to capture and engage the voices of the KLFS's community of stakeholders. Their feedback served to strengthen and shape the KLFS's future direction. In doing so, the KLFS is ensuring that this strategic plan is one that has a solid base, informed by experience, evidence, and the broadest-held perceptions.

The online survey and the in-person focus group sessions had two general purposes:

- To engage stakeholders by gathering input, ideas, suggestions and including them in the planning process directly and in a meaningful way
- To educate stakeholders about the work of KLFS and generally promote the mission and vision to the community (as a positive legacy of the planning process)

Who did KLFS reach out to, and how?

Online Survey

A survey was circulated to donors and volunteers, resulting in a total of 98 responses.

In-person Focus Groups

Focus groups were held on June 13, 2017.

- One session with KLFS members, including representatives from member food banks, volunteer leaders and paid coordinators, past KLFS Board Members, and past and current members of the Member Agency Advisory Group (MAAG)
- One community consultation session, including a wide range of community partner agencies and community leaders

Throughout the two sessions, it was clear that member organizations and partners are keen to support KLFS on its planning journey, and that they are eager to strengthen ties and do even better work to address food distribution needs, food security, and systemic issues around poverty in the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Both of the stakeholder engagement focus groups spoke to similar themes, the most consistent being collaboration with partners and member agencies, leadership, innovation, opportunities for risk taking, growth, best practices, strengthened organizational capacity and communication.

A summary of the stakeholder engagement can be found in Appendix C.

“Let’s celebrate KLFS’s ability to be sustainable, with limited resources, and their visionary leadership”

“We wouldn’t be able to do this work [breakfast club for kids] without KLFS.”

“KLFS is a well-run organization. They help me load my car, they “know us”, and it is good customer service when I come to collect our food.”

– Focus Group Participants

Board Strategic Planning Retreat

The Board of Directors met on October 23rd, 2017 for a strategic planning retreat. Through a series of presentations and facilitated discussions, the strategic issues, data, financial picture, and overall environmental situation were identified. The key issues were mapped along with the opportunities and challenges that needed to be addressed in the new strategic plan.

The Board was then able to distill the information collected from the focus groups and from the self-administered online survey and apply this to the earlier evidence. Together, themes emerged.

Finally, the day culminated in the unanimous agreement for five strategic directions.

Our Strategic Directions

Kawartha Lakes Food Source is committing to a three-year strategic plan. As such, the directions are broad and oriented to the future. This allows the organization to respond and adapt as circumstances change over the coming years. The directions offer a framework for the development of annual operational plans with measurable goals and objectives. These annual plans (not included as part of this document) will make the strategic directions operational.

The following are the five identified directions:

1. Strengthened Partnerships and Collaborations
2. An Organization with Capacity
3. Enhanced Strategic Communications
4. Leading Through Advocacy and Engagement
5. A Financially Stable Organization

1. Strengthened Partnerships and Collaborations

We believe our community partnerships are our greatest strength. We are committed to building and nurturing these relationships in an intentional, measured and consistent manner. By working in collaboration, we increase and widen our impact across Kawartha Lakes region.

Our Commitments

Over the next three years, we commit to “Strengthened Partnerships and Collaborations” by:

- Identifying and developing new, creative relationships with community organizations and networks, building opportunities for collaboration through shared programming and fund development
- Strengthening existing relationships through ongoing, open and transparent communications, to build trust and ensure accountability
- Engaging in an ongoing review of partnerships, annually auditing, ranking and sorting to ensure the most effective use of time and resources
- Increasing our community engagement and presence in public discussions on matters concerning food distribution and security, poverty, and other related issues.

2. An Organization with Capacity

With new leadership, KLFS has an opportunity to evaluate and build its capacity, to ensure quality service to member organizations and the wider community. We will explore means of sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness within our operations.

Our Commitments

Over the next three years, we commit to becoming “An Organization with Capacity” by:

- Developing effective and efficient governance policies and systems, properly planning for board and organizational succession, and reviewing and improving committee structures and work plans
- Exploring new organizational models for KLFS, with an innovative and progressive perspective
- Continuing to nurture a dedicated volunteer base, with proper training and recognition to increase recruitment and retention
- Building capacity in member organizations with concrete benefits and opportunities to learn from one another, and implement standardized practices
- Developing risk management policies and mitigation strategies, including an annual business continuity plan

3. Enhanced Strategic Communications

Strengthening communications – both internally and externally – is a priority. We are committed to building upon our great focus for the future and the work that we do by ensuring the public, our members, and our funders have a strong, clear understanding and comprehensive awareness of the important work KLFS is doing.

Our Commitments

Over the next three years, we commit to “Enhanced Strategic Communications” by:

- Creating an annual Strategic Communications Plan to support the organization’s communications goals and objectives, including a formalized and updated brand and marketing strategy and strategic fundraising communications
- Developing strong, effective messaging, orientation and training on standards and approved best practices to ensure consistency in how processes are being executed across the food bank system. We will further strengthen this messaging by bringing the voice of the client into service planning, delivery and evaluation.
- Engaging the community through ongoing communications and outreach to ensure a comprehensive, clear understanding about the role of KLFS and the value it brings to the community. We will find innovative ways to tell our story, such as awareness campaigns or “roadshows” through the City of Kawartha Lakes
- Maintaining a positive workplace culture through strong internal communications between staff, volunteers, advisory groups and Board members

4. Leading Through Advocacy and Engagement

Building on our 15-year history of helping minimize hunger in the community, KLFS will strategically engage in advocacy for our members and their clients. We will move ahead with purpose, and assume a leadership role whenever possible. Moving beyond a single focus on food security, we will work with partners to help shape and advocate for the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Our Commitments

Over the next three years, we commit to “Leading Through Advocacy and Engagement” by:

- Driving change across the food bank system by setting, managing, and promoting quality standards of service
- Working in partnership with member food banks to alleviate stigma for clients
- Developing a multi-year strategy for advocacy, identifying and narrowing down opportunities so as to build consensus and focus efforts
- Engaging with current and upcoming projects in the region, including the basic income guarantee

5. A Financially Stable Organization

Securing sustainable sources of funding is an imperative recognized by the Board and community partners. Diversified revenue streams and a strong, strategic approach to fundraising will allow the organization to engage in innovative planning and expand operations beyond the status quo, to serve more people, more often. The community values the critical service KLFS provides; this support must be translated into funding commitments through a variety of mechanisms.

Our Commitments

Over the next three years, we commit to a “Financially Stable Organization” by:

- Seeking creative partnerships with other agencies to apply for joint funding, taking advantage of government and foundation priorities for collaborative projects
- Creating, implementing and annually reviewing a multi-year fundraising strategy, with annual goals and targets, to build on the goodwill KLFS enjoys with local donors and community members
- Exploring opportunities for diversified revenue streams through grant applications, fundraising, donations and planned giving
- Developing brand and messaging support for fund development
- Ensuring the organization has the required resources, capacity and skillsets to meet fund development goals and targets

Next Steps

Our new strategic directions provide KLFS with focus and a clear framework to drive change and progress. The strategic directions will form the basis for annual operational planning, with goals and objectives, measurements against targets, and tactics and tools for execution. The strategic directions will be communicated internally and externally, and will drive progress as KLFS continues to grow and change in response to the needs of the community.

Conclusion

The Board of Directors and management are both proud of KLFS's successes to date and excited about the future. Our new strategic directions will help to keep us focused on improving everything we do for members and the people in our region.

We thank all those who lent their voices by contributing ideas, suggestions and feedback. We have listened.

The Board of Directors looks forward to reporting on our progress over time and to a strong track record of performance over the next three years.

Appendix A: Mission and Vision

Vision Statement:

Reduce hunger in the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Mission Statement:

Kawartha Lakes Food Source is a community effort to reduce hunger in the City of Kawartha Lakes by:

1. Maintaining a central warehouse to supply food to organizations that provide food to individuals in need,
2. Raising public awareness, and
3. Working in concert with other local not-for-profit organizations.

Values Statement

The work we do, product we deliver and services we provide reflect the values of our organization:

- Accountability
- Effectiveness
- Responsiveness
- Respect
- Support
- Collaboration

Appendix B: Board of Directors and Senior Staff

Board of Director:

- Mark Fisher, Chair & Food Acquisition Liaison
- Dennis Geelan, Vice Chair
- Matt Haire, Treasurer
- Charlie Currie, Secretary
- Cathie Morrissey, MAAG Liaison
- Sharon Woodhouse, MAAG Liaison
- Trevor Hutchinson, Fundraising Co-chair
- Catherine Danbrook, Rotary Representative & Past Chair
- Garry Burns, Rotary Representative
- Jessica Williams
- Kelly Novis

Senior Staff:

- Heather Kirby, General Manager

Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement Summary

The following is a summary of the themes from the two stakeholder engagement focus groups:

- **Collaborate:** engage with member agencies and community partners more consistently. Increase activity at community planning tables.
- **Lead:** drive change across the Food Bank system to reduce duplication and variation. Set and measure quality standards of service. Offer members concrete benefits and opportunities to learn from one another. With Members, co-create standardized delivery and distribution systems that work for all Members—and be sure to incorporate the talents and limitations of volunteers in this planning.
- **Innovate:** seek out new, creative partnerships across the catchment area. Look to farmers and businesses, to non-profits and government. Be visible and engaged beyond Lindsay. Simplify and streamline membership requirements and processes.
- **Take risks:** add members through different delivery methods and unconventional partnerships.
- **Grow:** Serve more people, more often. Communicate what you need from partners in order to do this successfully. Advance fundraising, sponsorship, donor attraction, volunteer recruitment, and partner engagement. Confront transportation gaps, distribution barriers, and access issues.
- **Implement Best Practices:** learn from Food Banks across Ontario and beyond and bring their ideas to CKL.
- **Strengthen Organizational Capacity:** review, streamline, and improve policies and systems. Continue to measure and publish your results and the impact you make in the community.
- **Communicate:** ramp up branding and marketing. Ensure that the vision, and what you (and the Member Food Banks) offer is communicated often and clearly.