



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Mind the Gap: Building Momentum

Community Food Security Summit | Session 2 | May 4, 2026 | Selkirk, MB

On May 4, 2026, the Selkirk and District Community Foundation gathered the room a second time. The evening opened with a fireside chat between two practitioners and a presentation from Harvest Manitoba, before the room moved into a World Café format. Session 2 widened the circle to include community members not connected to any organization, and the question shifted from *what is broken* to *what do we already have, what do we still need, and who is willing to carry this forward*.

## Listening Before Doing • Fireside Chat and Harvest Manitoba

### Fireside Chat

**Tristan Dreilich** · Manitoba Harm Reduction Network

- Engagement of the people you serve as the heart of the practice
- Practical steps any organization can take: peer advisory groups, board seats, lived-experience staff, continuous feedback

**Heather Fontaine** · Ruth Hooker Memorial School

- Hidden barriers: transportation, shame, hours of operation, not knowing where to start
- The dignity tax of being asked to prove circumstances over and over, at every door

### Harvest Manitoba

**Meaghan Erbus** · VP, Networking & Advocacy

- Advocacy with elected officials is part of the work, not a side activity
- Regions where food security is strongest are the regions where organizations know each other and refer with confidence
- Provincial trends: food bank use is up across Manitoba and continues to climb; the Selkirk numbers are not an outlier
- Harvest Voices — a working model for lived-experience advisory at scale

16

people and organizations named to carry this work forward

10

concrete actions suggested for the next phase of work

3

rounds of World Cafe; centred on Rounds 1 and 3

## 1. What We Bring

### Reach and Relationships

- Networking and trust across the Interlake — built over years
- Volunteers with lived experience of using the food bank: relatable and credible
- Cross-organizational partnerships already in motion: Community Living, Friendship Centre, IERHA, Knox, START, Harvest

### What We Know How to Do

- Organizing programs, planning routes, stretching dollars
- Finding deals (Flash Foods) and helping clients navigate ID and MPI requirements
- Knowledge about gardening — and the willingness to teach it

## How We Show Up

- Listening, not assuming what someone needs
- Strong advocacy and willingness to push for change
- Patience, reliability, follow-through
- No bias, no discrimination in who gets served

## Capacity That Is Sometimes Hidden

- Retired community members with time, vehicles, and energy
- Time to go with clients, not just hand them a referral
- Connection of services to people: warm handoffs, daily

## 2. What We Need

### A Shared Map of Who Does What

- A directory of services with hours, eligibility, and contacts
- A community resource map
- Documentation of when things are offered ("on Sundays you can get food here")

### Working Together

- A facilitator to bring groups together — named as a job, not a wish
- A shared communication tool — Slack named explicitly
- A standing Food Security Committee or Advisory Committee

### Reaching the People the System Misses

- Services outside Monday to Friday, 9 to 5
- Off-hours and emergency food access
- Filling summer gaps for youth when schools close
- Transportation to the Food Bank — and food to people who cannot come in

### What the Work Runs On

- More funding, increased wages for staff, more granting dollars
- Educate local government officials on what is actually needed

## 3. Who Carries This Forward

### Named at the Table

- A standing Food Security Committee
- Attendees signed up at back wall to lead:
  - Youth for Christ
  - Rotary Club of Selkirk
  - Selkirk Community Renewal Corporation
  - Big Hearts Hampers
  - East Beaches Social Scene
  - Selkirk Food Bank
  - Lord Selkirk School Division
  - Selkirk Senior Resource Council
  - Selkirk Lions Club
  - ODB Soup Kitchen
  - Harvest MB

### What Carries It Forward

- Intentionality: the decision to keep showing up
- Relationships, named as the thing that makes structure work
- Doing — multiple tables underlined the same word: action, not deliberation

### What the Room Also Said

*"Food is love." "People are just surviving." "Being a shit disturber is an act of love."*

Quotes captured from participants' flipcharts and sticky notes.