**Healthy Kids Community Challenge Rexdale: Growing with Kids**

**THEME 3: CHOOSE TO BOOST VEGGIES & FRUIT**

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### BACKGROUND

Healthy Kids Community Challenge Rexdale’s Growing with Kids Initiative focused on teaching families, teachers and community leaders how to grow vegetables and herbs in their community spaces and in their homes. The initiative was through HKCC Rexdale’s third theme Choose to Boost Veggies and Fruit and was led by the Rexdale Community Health Centre. The theme primary goal of the theme was to encourage kids and families to eat healthier and to make vegetables and fruit apart of their everyday lives. In partnership with FoodShare Toronto, HKCC Rexdale supported community groups and individuals with four gardening opportunities: Outdoor Gardening, Balcony Gardening, Vermicomposting System and Tower Gardens; free of cost.

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### IMPLEMENTATION

Community Call-Out: HKCC Rexdale invited interested schools, community agencies and residents to apply for free resources to start or continue growing food in their community.

Outreach: HKCC Rexdale implemented a strategic community outreach plan then identified and contacted interested individuals in the community for training.

Training: FoodShare Toronto’s Field to Table School and Urban Agriculture team facilitated gardening workshops.

Resource & support: Community members received resources from HKCC as well as troubleshoot support from FoodShare.

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### OBJECTIVE

The intervention addressed various needs and barriers that were identified through the HKCC Rexdale community needs assessment.

- **Needs:** The community expressed that they needed ways to grow their own food and offset the cost of purchasing food.
- **Need:** Lack of skills and access to resources to grow their own food
- **Barriers:** Rexdale has a high concentration of high-rise communities and many residents lack an outdoor area to grow food
- **Barrier:** The high cost of fruit and vegetable makes it difficult for families to eat more fruit and vegetables.

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### RESULTS

- Participants who attended the programs workshop, learned how to grow their own food, develop programs and how to encourage children to eat more veggies and fruit.
- 80% of community leaders/educators and residents rated their training through growing with kids as excellent.
- The Growing with Kids initiative is being sustained through programs in schools and community organizations across Rexdale that were formed with the resources that was received through the initiative.

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### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

HKCC Rexdale was funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and hosted by Rexdale Community Health Centre. The Growing with Kids initiative was developed in consultation with the community residents and the Rexdale Food Access Committee. Humber Arboretum provided a free training space for group tower gardening opportunity and assisted with program promotion. Rexdale Community Hub assisted with community promotional and training space. HKCC Rexdale community network assisted with promoting the program and connected residents to the program. HKCC Rexdale and FoodShare students assisted with the program implementation. Workshop evaluations were conducted by RCHC staff in partnership with FoodShare.

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*In partnership with: [FoodShare](https://www.foodshare.org)*