

## Various HCIA projects working hand-in-hand to help create a vibrant community

Written By MARNI WALSH

Shirley Boxem, the Executive Director of Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA) says, "There are two active projects working hand in hand with much to tell."

Those projects, Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance and Volunteer Dufferin, Ms. Boxem says, are both working towards a more vibrant community.

"There is lots bubbling for HCIA," says Ms. Boxem of the non-profit organization which is primarily funded by Dufferin County and The Guelph, Wellington, Dufferin United Way.

Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance (HFFA,) which "fosters a food system that supports the health and well-being of our residents and food providers and contributes to a prosperous and equitable economy," is currently promoting the Winter Harvest Dinner Series. "Some fabulous Headwaters dining spots have stepped up to the 'plate' to sponsor a dinner in support of the Farm to School program," says the Director.

The primary objectives of HFFA are to grow a stronger local economy through the development of a local food system - that includes residents who have access to healthy food and have the skills needed to support healthy eating; a diverse and sustainable farming system; and local leaders who embrace the development of a local food system through development of supportive policies.

The Farm to School initiative pairs local farmers with Dufferin County, Caledon and Erin schools. In-class visits teach students various aspects of the local food system and farming life. Engaging activities for kindergarten to grade 6 include many curriculum links and full lesson plans.

"The local food scene is vibrant in Headwaters and 2020 will be even better," says Shirley Boxem.

She invites area residents to start the New Year off with support for the Farm to School program on Saturday, Jan. 25 at Pia's on Broadway; Thursday, Feb. 27 at the Terra Nova Public House; or Sunday, March 29 at the Millcroft Inn and Spa. Tickets may be purchased at [HFFA.ca](#) "to help make this the year even more kids get better acquainted with fresh local food," she says.

New Year's news from Volunteer Dufferin includes a tune up for its website that will make it even more supportive of local not-for-profit organizations, Ms. Boxem told the Free Press. She says a Volunteer Dufferin survey is currently active on the HCIA site and that feedback will be used to help make improvements. There is one survey for volunteers and another for organizations that require volunteers. To participate visit [VolunteerDufferin.ca](#).

Since the launch of the new Volunteer Dufferin website in 2017, Ms. Boxem says, "We have grown from 30 to 112 member organizations - a very significant increase - with 1,381 volunteers having completed a profile."