

Eating locally to impact the future

By Colleen Cathcart,

Now we are in the third month of 2018, some of you may have followed through with your New Year's resolution, or for some, it may have taken the back burner to life.

There is no shame in that, because I am here to convince you to try something new that will help you and your family in the long-term.

I would like everyone to take what I am about to propose as a challenge rather than a long-term commitment. This challenge may be easier than any other resolution you have tried because your daily life is exactly the same; all you are switching up is where you purchase food.

You may have heard of the 100-mile diet, which requires you to use and eat any goods that are created and produced within 100 miles of your house. My challenge is a little simpler. I ask that you buy foods that are locally produced. Therefore, the products you are buying are directly from the farm rather than chain supermarkets.

A good way to go about this is to try a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. These programs vary. Most provide all your summer vegetables, while others combine efforts with local producers to supply baked goods, bread, eggs, even meats and fruits for you. Some advantages for farmers of running a CSA program are guaranteed income security against unpredictable weather and market uncertainties. You benefit by receiving locally grown, often organic produce that is selected for flavour and freshness.

Some of you may be thinking, well I do shop at the farmers markets, and that is a fantastic start. But in Bolton, they only run during the summer. Most CSAs can supply you with fresh foods during the summer, and some run throughout the entire year.

To participate in a CSA, you need to provide a payment and sign a CSA agreement with the farm. In return they will supply fresh-quality, locally-grown foods for you to pick up every week. The good news is that Bolton has their very own CSA, run by Mount Wolfe Farm located between Bolton and Palgrave.

It is worth trying a CSA because you know where your food is coming from, that it is fresh all year round, it's environmentally conscious, and farms often welcome you to volunteer in cultivating crops. Mount Wolfe Farm offers a workshare program where you contribute time on the farm in exchange for reduced payment, as well as a pastured chicken share, which can be combined or purchased separately from their CSA.

CSAs are especially important to the urban ecosystem of Bolton and the environment because they do not require long distance transportation across seas and borders to reach your dinner table. It will reduce your environmental footprint while supporting local farmers and a greener future. CSA ensure quality healthy food for your family, and teaches your children where food comes from. Knowledge is power and in this case, a healthier future. Will you accept the challenge?

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