



NOURISH
ANCHOR COHORT

2021 -
2023

GROWING HEALTH CARE CLIMATE LEADERSHIP FROM THE GROUND UP

London Anchor Team
Impact Report



St. Joseph's Health Care London
Reduces Food Waste & Improves
Patient Experience with Local
Ingredients & Enhanced Meal
Choice

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LONDON ANCHOR TEAM

The London Anchor Team's work is situated within the context of the Nourish Anchor Cohort, a two-year national innovation program that ran from 2021 - 2023. The goal of the Anchor Cohort was to support health systems across Canada to develop anchor leadership, signalling their commitment to harness the long-term presence, mission, and resources of health care institutions to anchor wellbeing in their communities through food. The Cohort brought together seven multidisciplinary place-based teams to work on 'portfolios of systems interventions' that activated community assets and explored innovative food for health solutions. The accomplishments outlined in this report reflect their efforts to nudge local and regional health systems toward meaningful transformation in order to promote better health for people and the planet.

St. Joseph's Health Care London is located in the city of London, Ontario. It is a leading academic health care centre dedicated to helping people live to their fullest by minimizing the effects of injury, disease, and disability through excellence in care, teaching, and research in a wide range of hospital, clinic, and long-term and community based settings. It manages 1,004 beds, operates with a food budget of nearly \$15,000,000, serving over a million meals, annually. ReForest London, a local non-profit community organization and a partner in the Nourish work, promotes health, wellbeing, sustainability and environmental excellence across the city by co-creating resources, services, and programs.

The London Anchor Team sees the potential of turning a traditional approach to food in hospitals upside down. Instead of the sole focus on typical criteria such as cost, clinical requirement, and operational parameters, they are exploring how to integrate more sustainable practices such as local procurement, preparation on site, and reducing and repurposing food overages. They also strive to increasingly implement a holistic perspective, acknowledging that food is medicine and viewing land as an important stakeholder in decision-making. Their vision is to provide food that "nourishes patients, body, mind, and spirit."



Deana D'Ambrosio and Michelle Stranges from the London Anchor Team (right) take part in a traditional cooking experience alongside other Cohort members. Summer 2022.

TACKLING WICKED PROBLEMS THROUGH FOOD FOR HEALTH LEVERS

Each team in the Anchor Cohort named a 'Wicked Problem' that they looked to address during their time in the Cohort. Wicked problems were identified through a process of problem space mapping, stakeholder engagement, and surfacing the historical roots of how problems came to be.

London Anchor Team's Wicked Problem

Health care food services operations have a negative impact on the environment due to the creation of food and packaging waste, landfill waste, non-local procurement, and other unsustainable practices.

The London Anchor Team identified 16 priority Food for Health Levers to action in their work. The Food for Health Levers were developed by Nourish to frame powerful ways of impacting climate, equity, and community wellbeing through food in health care. These leverage points help us make connections between our food, health, social, and ecological systems and reach their greatest potential when working in concert.



INNOVATION IN ACTION

During the Anchor Cohort, the team employed a collaborative, experimental approach to developing and testing smaller scale ideas at the program and policy levels in four key areas:

1. Enhancing procurement values by increasing purchasing of local ingredients
2. Reducing food waste by implementing a room service style option for meal selection, and ensuring composting of organic waste across all sites
3. Reducing single-use items going to landfill, such as food packaging waste, other disposable plastics, and shoe coverings for staff
4. Exploring onsite growing by establishing a garden on hospital grounds to produce vegetables and herbs for food services to enhance patient and resident meals



Team members from St. Joseph's and ReForest London enjoy a walk through the forest while strategizing on their work. Fall 2022.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

The London Anchor Team established a diverse portfolio of **14 mutually reinforcing interventions** that emerged from **85** initial ideas identified during the planning phase. These include:

Two initiatives:

- An **onsite garden pilot** to grow fresh vegetables and herbs for hospital residents, as well as create opportunities for mental health inpatients to participate in the growing and harvesting of the produce.
- A **disposables reduction project** which explored the effectiveness, patient satisfaction, and cost savings from switching from single-use plastic packaging to compostable or reusable materials.

Five shifts in systems and policies:

- **Regular waste audits** to track changes in waste resulting from menu changes
- A **production timing process review** to assist staff to better forecast food items and prepare food closer to when it is required
- A **patient preference form** to understand patients' food preferences upon admission, reducing the chance of waste
- A **room service choice web application** to enable daily selection of patients' food choices for the next day
- A **food miles project and review** of local procurement spend to understand local food sources, which led to a new Request for Information (RFI) process to invite local farmers to assess and offer options for health care



OUTCOMES & IMPACT



An **increase of 18%** of total waste diverted from landfill to compost



An **increase of 11 %** of food budget procured from local sources



95% patient satisfaction with room service model for menu selection



Reduced plastic disposable container waste by **9%** so far - exceeding the initial goal of **5%** - by shifting to reusable or compostable packaging



Decreased costs by using reusable materials. For example: **87% costs savings** from **\$16,000 to \$2,000/year** by using reusable vs. single-use booties.



Production of an **initial yield of 90 kgs** of fresh vegetables and herbs in 2022 with anticipated production to be **over 250kg of fresh vegetables and herbs/year** – in partnership with Urban Roots London and Mental Health inpatients contributing to the garden as a therapeutic activity.

LOOKING FORWARD

The London Anchor Team is moving forward with sustainability and equity remaining a top priority and focus. They plan to continue their room service offering, waste auditing, and patient experience tracking, and to expand opportunities to reduce single-use disposable items. They also intend to continue the pilot garden project next year., expand it, and add more permanent infrastructure for watering the garden and storing tools. Patients and residents will continue to be involved in the garden as part of their therapy to see what other systems changes could come from it.



The London Anchor Team 'breaks ground' on hospital land in preparation for establishing a garden onsite. Summer 2021

Want to learn more? Reach out to the London Anchor Team about their work, or contact Nourish if you're inspired to lead change in your own community.

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LONDON ANCHOR TEAM SNAPSHOT

St. Joseph's Health Care London

Includes acute/ambulatory care, complex care and veterans care, long-term care, rehabilitation and specialized geriatrics, and specialized mental health care.

Participating Sites:

- St. Joseph's Hospital
- Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care
- Parkwood Institute
- Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care



**1004 beds across
all sites**

ReForest London - Westminster Ponds Centre

Non-profit organization acting as a hub to promote health, wellbeing, sustainability, and environmental excellence across London by co-creating resources, services, and impactful programming.

Urban Roots London
Non-profit community organization that revitalizes underused land in the city of London for agriculture by Growing Fresh, Healthy, Connected Communities.



**Serving the City of London &
Surrounding Counties with a
population ~508,000**

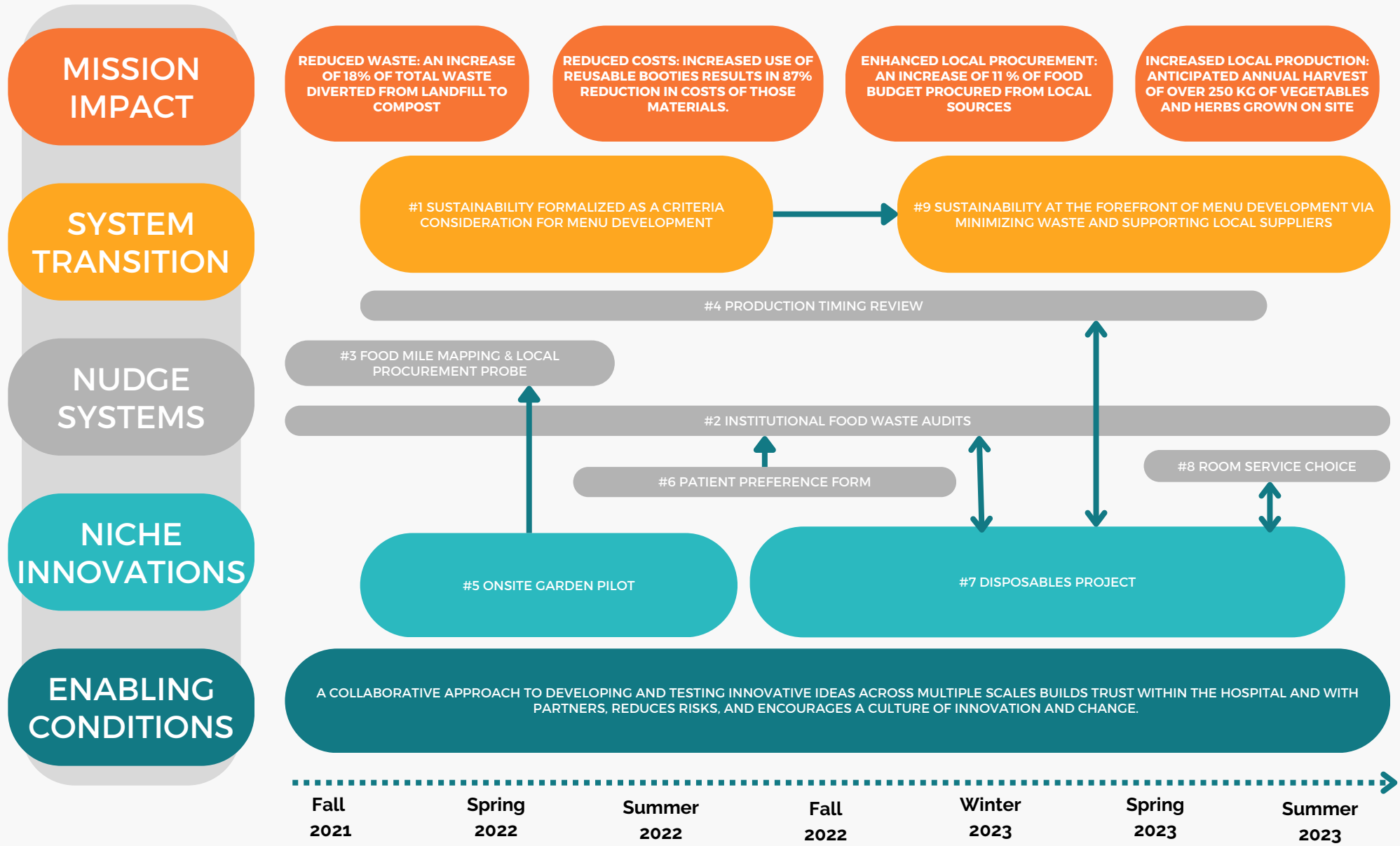


**St. Joseph's
Food Budget:
\$14,700,000/year**



**Anchor team interventions
affect over 1 million (1,099,380)
meals per year when sites are at
full capacity**

DETAILED INTERVENTIONS & OUTCOMES



Reference Number & Date	Title	Key Outcomes	Significance	Contributions
1. Spring 2022	Sustainability Formalized as a Criteria Consideration for Menu Development	Sustainability was formalized as a key criteria consideration for menu development, including updates to definitions and priorities for the Food & Nutrition Services Systems Team to reduce food and packaging waste and prioritize local procurement for healthy people and planet.	This action made an explicit commitment around organizational priorities to guide thinking and action. Along with input and support of the Food and Nutrition Services Quality Committee, there was a formal shift in emphasis to sustainability as a key factor in decision-making.	The London Anchor Team drove this process together with the Food and Nutrition Services Systems Team, who manage procurement and menu.
2. Spring 2021 - Ongoing	Institutional Food Waste Audits	An ever-evolving process of waste audits - including a four-day study to determine baseline waste at all institutional sites - and areas for improvement. Now includes tracking waste deviation and an 'Organics Dashboard.'	Informs Department of areas of wastage - including associated economic and environmental costs - and informs a variety of changes in menu planning (e.g., no longer automatically providing juice with lunch and dinner unless requested).	The London Anchor Team played a central role in establishing commitment to completing the audits, and worked closely with Quality Improvement colleagues to develop and refine audit content fields and data.
3. Fall 2021	Food Mile Mapping & Local Procurement Probe	The Food and Nutrition Services Purchasing Team - with assistance from post-secondary students - mapped how far procured food is traveling as well as local options for procurement. This led to a Request for Information from local farmers to help determine the options for increased local purchasing as well as the purchasing practices of other Ontario hospitals.	Determined that 44% of food purchased is coming from outside of Canada, and that 80,000 kg of CO2 per year is generated by food traveling to St. Joseph's. This reinforces the case for more local purchasing and encourages institutions to do more than seasonal purchasing.	The London Anchor Team led the mapping process as well as the research on the Request for Information and practices of other hospitals in Ontario.
4. Spring	Production	Revised pull sheets to pull forecasted	This information allows the Food	The London Anchor

2022 - Ongoing	Timing Process Review	items closer to the time of production. In addition, production preparation was revised to be as close to the time of service as possible.	and Nutrition Services Department to prepare the appropriate type and amount of food.	Team led this initiative with support from Food and Nutrition Services Department supervisors.
5. Summer 2022 & 2023	Onsite Garden Pilot	Piloted the creation of an onsite garden which generated 90kg of food in its first year (2022) and created an opportunity for therapy for mental health inpatients. The pilot generated a great deal of learning on how to create and manage a garden, including how to establish a consistent water supply to the garden (not previously in existence).	The garden received positive support from patients, residents, volunteers, and staff and continued through Summer 2023.	The London Anchor Team coordinated the development and management of the garden in partnership with Urban Roots London.
6. Summer 2022 - Ongoing	Patient Preference Form	Upon Admission to the hospital, patients are asked to share their food and beverage preferences and then the data is used to inform menu planning.	A reduction in food wastage and a demonstration of a more welcoming patient experience.	The London Anchor Team helped to scale up the already-underway-practice to more sites.
7. Fall 2022 - Ongoing	Disposables Project	Found a variety of ways to serve items in a more environmentally friendly and patient-oriented way (e.g., sandwiches or muffins on a plate rather than in a plastic clam shell, compostable bowls, metal vs. plastic spoons). Other disposable products used in the department were also reviewed to be more sustainable (e.g. dish room booties). These outcomes were achieved through changing to compostable or reusable options.	Resulted in improved patient meal experience, reduction in costs (e.g., a drop from \$16,000 to \$2,000 for reusable booties), and reduced waste (e.g., 455,000 fewer clam shells used annually). Greater staff engagement and commitment in how items are served.	The London Anchor Team amplified previous work on this issue through tours and research into other hospitals' practices and by encouraging greater attention at St. Joseph's Health Care London.
8. Spring 2023 - Ongoing	Room Service Choice	Food and Nutrition Services implemented a meal selection web application. The staff member goes up to patient rooms to take their meal orders for the next day on a tablet and provides better customer service.	The aim of the initiative was to reduce food wastage and increase patient experience and satisfaction. The team saw 95% satisfaction with the pilot unit and there was a notable reduction in waste of high cost items. The team is adding more	The London Anchor Team is leading this initiative in cooperation with the Food and Nutrition Team, Clinical Units, and IT Department.

			units over the summer and fall.	
g. Summer 2023	Sustainability at the forefront of menu development via minimizing waste and supporting local suppliers	Sustainability is now at the forefront of the Food and Nutrition Department's decisions related to menus. For example, any effort to make a substitution in the menu requires addressing the criteria of how sustainable the change is, placing it prominently in the decision-making process.	This reflects a deeper shift in the paradigm of the hospital's approach to food as a driver for increased patient satisfaction, planetary health, and local economic development.	The London Anchor Team in key outcomes 1 to 8 has been a central reason for this shift in culture and commitment.



NOURISH

Nourish believes food is a powerful way to build health for both people and the planet, in addition to providing comfort and healing to patients, creating more resilient communities, and addressing climate change.

Starting from a community of practice, we have grown to a network of leaders, organizations, and communities, shifting the focus upstream to work preventatively through food in health care.

Through our work with cohorts of leaders and action learning programs, we equip innovative individuals and teams with the skills and momentum to empower bold leadership in climate action and health equity. We work across community, institutional, and policy scales to steward food for health innovation.

Join us!

NourishLeadership.ca