This past year has proven to be a busy one for Tastebuds, and thankfully the frigid weather did not slow down our programs! On January 10, Green Acres Elementary School students in Stoney Creek were part of the celebration of Tastebuds new partnership with the Egg Farmers of Ontario. Deirdre Pike, Tastebuds Manager, along with community partners, were happy to accept a cheque for $20,000 to help Student Nutrition Programs increase their egg servings. Harry Pelissero, General Manager for Egg Farmers of Ontario, and Scott Graham, Egg Farmer, joined Tastebuds at Green Acres, to talk to the children about interesting egg facts and egg nutrition. Programs that show an increase in egg purchases qualify for this funding, which can be ordered through Lococo’s and Market Fresh Produce.

This year marks the 5th year in partnership with the Hamilton Tiger Cats BeFit program! Ticats players engage students about nutrition, exercise, and healthy living. In return for hosting, each Student Nutrition Program will receive an equal portion of a donation of $7,500 made from the Ticats to Tastebuds! This year, the Ticats BeFit program held its launch at Hess Street Elementary School on February 25.

“What a treat it was for Hess to have the Ticats come to visit us again. We have been fortunate to have them as guests at our school several times and the kids always LOVE it. They get so excited when they hear that they are coming. The Ticats are fantastic role models for our students. They were enthusiastic and showed that they truly care about healthy living and students’ success in school and overall well-being. They are great at interacting with the students and getting them involved in the assembly and wanting to move forward with the healthy living theme of the morning. It was especially nice to have the Ticats handing out yogurt and granola bars to all the students as they were leaving.” - Sharron Ciannavei, Principal

“It was great when the Tiger-Cats challenged me to a push-up contest! I thought I was going to win!” – Ali Ali, student

“I honestly thought the Ticats were great with our students, especially Brian Bulcke who took time to sit down and talk with the young students.” - Kyle Creelman, Teacher

Tastebuds understands that volunteers are important allies in the effort to improve student nutrition. We will be hosting our 10th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Thursday, May 15, 2014, at Michelangelo’s (details on back page).

Interested in writing for The Quarterly Sprout? Contact (905) 522-1148, Ext. 312 or email bkumar@tastebudshamilton.ca
Canadian Martyrs Catholic Elementary school launched their nutritious snack program in October 2013 and we’ve been a great success!

Tastebuds vision is that all students have universal access to healthy foods in schools and community environments, to improve student success, support healthy growth, development and lifelong nutritious eating habits. We are also following our Catholic teachings of working together, eating and sharing as God’s family. It has been wonderful to witness this in our community.

Canadian Martyrs is a school with only 210 students but has a very big heart! Our program is a ‘grab and go’ snack program which is delivered twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The snack bins are delivered to the classroom before the morning recess break and students take their snack and eat it outside. We have two McMaster students, Camille and Diana, which have helped us tremendously with our program. Our volunteers, staff and students have been a huge help in making our snack program a huge success! The students love helping out with preparing the snacks or delivering the snack bins to the classrooms. We have also received positive feedback from our parents, with the variety of fruit, and healthy snacks which are provided for their children. They are absolutely thrilled! The parents have also shared with us how their children enjoy the healthy snacks as well as helping with snack program. The students look forward to our snack days. Some of the students are trying new foods which they may have not been aware of. We are also part of the newly established partnership with the Egg Farmers of Ontario and Tastebuds!

On March 6, Canadian Martyrs participated in the Great Big Crunch. The apples were delivered by THAAT Co-op (The Hammer Active Alternative Transportation) an urban delivery service that uses bikes to transport up to 270 kilograms of apples to our schools. The students and staff gathered outside and stood for a group picture in a form of a giant apple. It looked fantastic! Everyone then took a great big bite from their apple at the same time. It was an amazing experience for our students.

On May 15, Canadian Martyrs will be having the Hamilton Tiger-Cats visit as part of their BeFit program, which promotes the importance of exercise and healthy eating. We are thrilled to have them come out to our school and help our students learn the Tastebuds mantra, “Sprouting Healthy Relationship with Food.”

I would personally like to thank Mrs. M. Rossi, our principal, because without her leadership, faith, encouragement, support and most of all her dedication and love for the students this would not be possible. Canadian Martyrs would like to thank Bhairavi Kumar and Grace Evans, our community development workers, for their dedication, compassion and most of all their support for our nutrition program.
HAVE YOU HAD TABBOULEH YET?
By Yusra Kefel, Education Assistant, Pauline Johnson-Arabic

How many of us can say that we witnessed a bunch of children eat their greens with pride? I was fortunate enough to see that happen in my class this week. With the generosity from Tastebuds, our Arabic class at Pauline Johnson School gets to have all sorts of healthy snacks and meals each week. Our goal is to have kids eat nutritious food and what better way to do that than to introduce them to the wholesome, yummy, and nutrition-packed Lebanese food.

At first I thought my students would run the other direction when I took out a colander full of fresh parsley and vegetables. But to my utter amazement, they were fighting over who got to help me chop up the vegetables and squeeze the lemons!

How was this “miracle” made possible? Well, after showing them Google images of bulgur (cracked wheat), a key ingredient in the salad that we were about to make, the infamous Lebanese Tabbouleh, I pulled out a bag full of bulgur and passed it around the class. Most of them had never seen nor heard of this grain before. This sandy-looking grain immediately sparked their interest and the rest is history.

THE GREAT BIG CRUNCH 2014
By Grace Evans, Community Development Worker, Tastebuds

On March 6, 2014, 22,830 students at schools across Hamilton gathered in their classrooms, gymnasiums, breakfast programs and afterschool programs, to take a great big synchronized bite into an apple!

For Hamilton’s first citywide Crunch, 6,962 lbs of apples were delivered by bicycle to 78 locations by cyclists from THAAT Co-op. After receiving a delivery of locally grown apples, each school or nutrition program assembled their students together in classrooms, gymnasiums, hallways or outdoors. Each student was handed an apple and after a countdown, bit into the apple simultaneously, making a great big “crunch!”

With 78 programs participating and 22,830 students crunching, Tastebuds’ Great Big Crunch was a success! There were creative activities taking place across the city, from the “Hungry Games” game-show style competition, to visits from farmers and healthy food demonstrations.

It was the outstanding participation of teachers, Educational Assistants, parents, secretaries, volunteers, afterschool leaders, principals, support staff and the school communities that made the Great Big Crunch so successful. Their enthusiasm and creative ideas got students excited about local food and healthy snacking, and brought people together as a community around food.

Thank you to everyone who made the Great Big Crunch a success in their breakfast, afterschool and school nutrition programs! We’ll see you next year! FoodShare Toronto created the Great Big Crunch in 2006, and this year there was over 100,000 apple crunches across the country.
DYNAMIC DUO SERVES, AND SCORES!
By Jean-Anne Bauman, Community Development Worker, Tastebuds

VOLUNTEERS: Tesha Foley and Christal Morrison
PROGRAM: Elizabeth Bagshaw School’s Early Morning Meal Program
HOMETOWN: Hamilton (Tesha) and Parry Sound (Christal)
FUN FACTS: Enjoying few events together outside of the school, Tesha and Christal attended the Feed the Dream fundraisers together.

When I first met Tesha Foley and Christal Morrison, I was sure they had known each other for a lifetime. They seamlessly complete tasks for the nutrition program and parent council and seem to know each other’s next steps. They’ve helped with the nutrition program for four years now, but met only a few years before when their children started attending Elizabeth Bagshaw Elementary School. Tesha and Christal were actively involved at the school before asking if they could help with the nutrition program. They started by preparing the food but later transitioned to a leadership role to help out a dedicated but very busy teacher leading the program. Tesha and Christal make it look simple, but they are also well organized. They are the first to point out that they don’t (and can’t) do it alone. The team that makes it happen include fellow parent volunteers Jen and Michelle, a team of six students that volunteer on their breaks to prepare snacks, and an Educational Assistant who role out the carts each morning.

The welcoming atmosphere is felt in the former home economics room, the area used for preparation and storage. The warm atmosphere carries over when hanging out at the nutrition cart as well. As students get an item from the cart, I overheard sincere appreciation. Tesha and Christal regularly encourage students to try something new and they are also there for students who have approached them when struggling and hungry. Some days are tougher than others, but Tesha and Christal shared that their willingness to forgive the inconsequential and find humour in these situations, is what keeps them going.”