



Christine Schwarz, community developer for food security in the South Okanagan-Similkameen, prepares dinner for her family. Schwarz is organizing community forums on food security, to be held in Summerland Tuesday and Feb. 26.

SUSAN McIVER/Special to The Okanagan Saturday

Where has all the good food gone?

By SUSAN McIVER

Special to The Okanagan Saturday

Access to good food will be the topic of conversation at a free dinner at Summerland United Church on Tuesday.

"Participants will identify already existing resources, programs that improve access to good food and gaps in resources," said Christine Schwarz, community developer for food security in the South Okanagan-Similkameen.

Everyone is invited. There is no charge for the light meal, which begins at 5:30 p.m., but Schwarz needs to know how many will be there, so registration is required by calling 486-2206 or e-mailing sosfood4all@gmail.com.

A second dinner forum to identify three priority initiatives and design action plans will be held Feb. 26 at the same time and place.

The Summerland events are the second in a series of six consultations to improve access to good food.

"Growing more edible gardens and holding community feasts were among the priority initiatives identified in Princeton," Schwarz said of the first consultation of the series.

Consultations are scheduled for Penticton, Oliver, Osoyoos and Keremeos.

"When we're finished, the results will be used to develop a community action plan that will serve as a road map for future directions to enhance food security," Schwarz said.

The consultations grew out of a forum that was held in Penticton in November 2006 to initiate community discussions on food security.

"Food security is when everyone has access to food that is good for you, good for the community and good for the planet," Schwarz said.

An important way good food is good for you is by helping maintain proper weight. In 2001, more than one-quarter of adults in the province were obese, compared to slightly more than one-tenth in 1985. Obesity is linked to a higher incidence of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, osteoarthritis, and some types of cancer.

"Our food security project is one of seven projects that address policy issues to decrease the incidence of type 2 diabetes," Schwarz said.

FOODFACTS

Here are a few ways to promote food security:

- Participate in community meetings to plan local food security strategies.
- Eat locally and regionally grown food.
- Shop at a farmers' market.
- Start your own garden.
- Encourage local stores and restaurants to buy from local growers.