



Volunteer Handbook

Updated January 2018

Why we exist

Approximately 20,000 people in Kingston live below the poverty line. Thousands more are unable to buy the healthy food that keeps minds and bodies working. Loving Spoonful is a charitable organization that works towards achieving a food-secure community by facilitating fresh food access, skills, and engagement in a collaborative, empowering, and environmentally-sustainable manner.

Our goals include:

- 1) Delivering innovative and impactful programming;
- 2) Enhancing access to healthy food for all; and
- 3) Engaging diverse sectors of the community.

Who we are

Loving Spoonful is based in Kingston, Ontario, and has 4 core staff, 6 program staff, 250 volunteers, and a local board of directors (see Figure 1). We deliver fresh food from farms, gardeners, and grocery stores to more than thirty local shelters and meal programs. We lead garden-based education programs and teach hundreds of people healthy food skills. We work with partners across Kingston on food security issues.

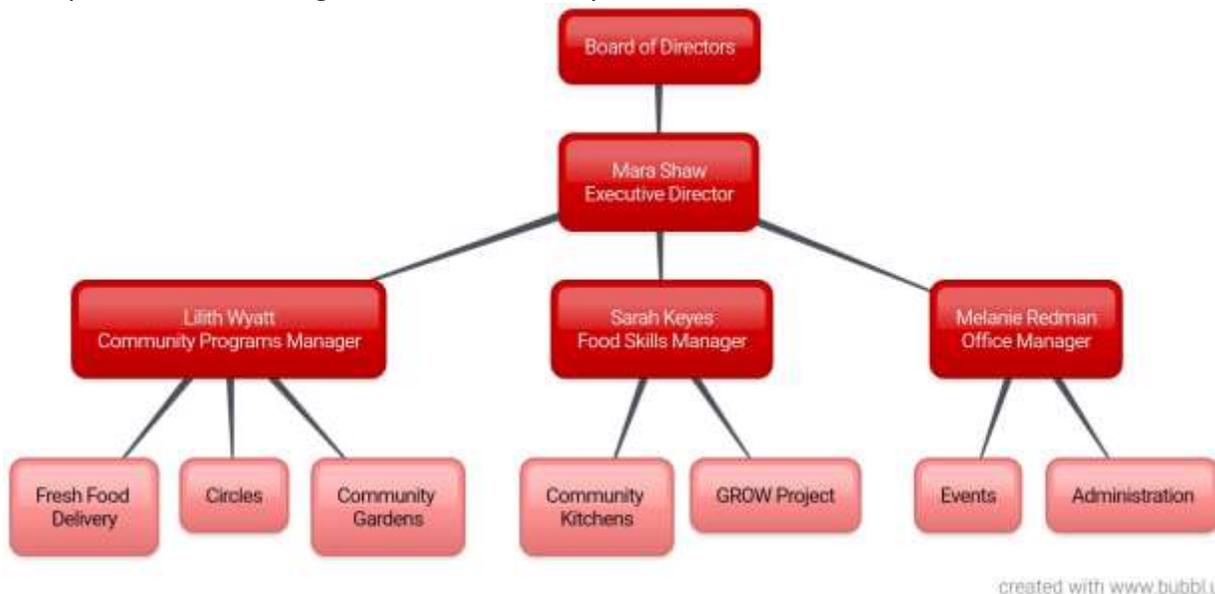


Figure 1: Structure of the Organization

Contact Info

For support, please call the most appropriate staff person:

- Loving Spoonful office (559 Bagot St., 2nd floor): (613) 507-8848
- Lilith Wyatt, Community Programs Manager: c. (613) 893-6393
- Sarah Keyes, Food Skills Manager: c. (613) 929-6145
- Melanie Redman, Office Manager: c. (613) 770-6105
- Mara Shaw, Executive Director: c. (613) 217-9404

Being a Volunteer

First off – **thank you!** It is only because of volunteers like you that our work is possible.

We commit to timely and open communication with you, providing you with sufficient support, and demonstrating our gratitude and respect. We want our volunteers to find roles that are a good fit, are fulfilling, and are not an undue burden. We want you to have fun!

Loving Spoonful does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, and partners. We expect all volunteers and staff to share in this commitment.

Policies

All volunteers are required to read and agree to comply with the Privacy Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, and Code of Conduct. Visit [this web form](#) to read and agree to them.

Volunteer Roles

Fresh Food Delivery: Pick up donated food from local grocers, farmers, and other businesses and deliver it directly to local shelters and meal programs.

Grow a Row Market Booths: Represent us at our booths at the Downtown Kingston Public Market and the Memorial Centre Farmers' Market over the summer. Receive fresh healthy produce donated by local farmers and gardeners for local shelters and meal programs.

Community Kitchens: Help run cooking classes to teach people to cook healthy, affordable and delicious meals while building confidence and community.

GROW Project: Work with primary schools in Kingston, teaching kids about food security, gardening, healthy eating, and community through in-class and in-garden workshops, or help maintain gardens over the summer.

Gleaning: Help harvest surplus produce from farmers' fields for donation.

Events: Help organize, set up, and represent us at various events throughout the year.

Administration: Helps keep everything organized and running smoothly from our head office, this role includes mostly phone and computer work.

Program Details

Fresh Food Delivery

Fresh Food Delivery drivers are responsible for picking up donated surplus food from restaurants, grocers, caterers, and farmers' markets and delivering it to local shelters and meal programs to get it to people experiencing hunger.

Regular routes are available weekly, or you may sign up to cover one-time routes on an occasional basis. If you are delivering food by car, you will need a valid driver's license and regular or occasional access to a vehicle. If you are using a bike to deliver food you will need access to a bicycle; large bike trailer or the willingness to attach one to your bicycle and a backpack, panniers, and/or basket for transporting food.

You will need:

- An account on the [Food Rescue Robot](#) (sign up for region=Loving Spoonful)
- Route details (time, locations, route order, any special instructions)
- A scale for weighing donated food (in pounds (lb))
- A Loving Spoonful car magnet (while supplies last)

You will receive training in-person or by phone before your first shift. Delivery drivers are responsible for arriving at all pick-up destinations on time and loading donated food into your vehicle. All donated food must be weighed (in lbs) and entered into the Food Rescue Robot online. You will receive training on how to do this and a bathroom scale to use if you don't have one.

Food must be sorted through at the point of pick up, and any food that you would not feed to your family can be discarded by the food donor.

When delivering food, offer each drop-off location to take what they like. They will typically not need all of it. In this case, move onto the next location. We design delivery routes to ensure that each agency receives adequate donations. If you're delivering to Fresh Food Market Stands, leave as much as you like, since they aren't staffed.

If you cannot cover your shift for any reason, either temporarily or permanently, please schedule an absence on the Robot or inform the Food Access Animator as soon as possible, at least 3 days before your shift.

Be mindful of the safe lifting and safe driving tips above. This position requires some light physical labour and occasional heavy lifting. You will be working without supervision, but will be able to discuss any concerns with the Food Access Animator.

SAFE LIFTING TIPS

Some of the volunteer roles require lifting heavy objects. Improper lifting techniques can potentially lead to various back injuries. Here are a few simple tips about how to lift heavy objects safely:

- Always begin with your feet should be shoulder-width apart, with one foot slightly ahead of the other.
- Squat down, bending at the hips and knees only. Do not attempt to lift by bending forward.
- Look straight ahead, and keep your back straight, your chest out, and your shoulders back. This helps keep your upper back straight while having a slight arch in your lower back.
- Slowly lift by straightening your hips and knees (not your back). Keep your back straight.
- Hold the load as close to your body as possible, at the level of your belly button. Never lift a heavy object above shoulder level.
- Be careful not to twist your body as you lift or hold a heavy object. Use your feet to change direction, taking small steps.
- Lead with your hips as you change direction. Keep your shoulders in line with your hips as you move.
- Set down your load carefully, squatting with the knees and hips only.

SAFE DRIVING

When picking up or dropping off donations, always remember these tips:

- Some of our pickups and drop offs take place in locations where parking can be difficult. If stopping in a no parking zone, indicate that you will only be there temporarily, make sure to leave your four way lights on. Make sure you return to your vehicle as quickly as possible
- Make sure to keep your Loving Spoonful magnets displayed at all times.
- In the winter, the cold weather can make the magnets stiff, causing them to fall off. It may be best to leave them on your dashboard instead.
- Always obey all traffic rules.
- Never put speed or efficiency above your own safety, even if you are running late.

Grow A Row Market Booths

Grow a Row Market Booth Volunteers will be in charge of running the Loving Spoonful Booth at the Memorial Centre Farmers' Market and the Downtown Kingston Public Market. These volunteers will be responsible for collecting, weighing, and recording donated produce, as well as engaging with curious passerby and answering questions about who we are and what we do.

DAILY TO-DO LIST

- Arrive 5-10 minutes before your shift starts
- Gather the materials listed in the inventory below and set up the booth. The materials for the downtown market booth will be down the stairs across the street, in a room that

serves as a change room during the skating season. You will see a big sliding door on your left. Ask staff for location of the key and the combination for the lockbox. For the Memorial Centre Farmers' Market, materials will be in the storage room inside the Memorial Centre.

- Greet curious passers-by, answering their questions, offering info about Loving Spoonful, and inviting them to check out our materials, and sign up for our newsletter or to volunteer
- Greet donors, weighing their produce one type of item at a time in POUNDS (lbs), noting their name, donor type (market vendor, workplace challenge participant, community garden, GROW garden, individual, other), produce, and item weight directly into the [Grow A Row Track Sheet GoogleDoc](#) – be sure to thank them!
- When your shift ends, calculate the total weight of donated produce and gather materials to return to storage
- Give the produce and total weight to the driver
- Return materials to storage
- Every other Saturday (DKPM only): use the Allen key in the tent repair kit to tighten every nut in the tent to ensure the joints don't loosen and bust apart
- Contact Alex (alex@lovingspoonful.org) if anyone signs up for the newsletter (send a photo of the sheet), makes a donation (arrange for pickup of funds), if anything is missing or damaged, or if you need help of any kind.

INVENTORY

These items will all be in storage ready to go when you arrive.

- Banner (Grow A Row @DKPM, Loving Spoonful @MCFM)
- Tent & repair kit (DKPM only)
- Cinder blocks to weigh down tent legs (DKPM only)
- Table (DKPM only)
- Chairs (2 MCFM, 3 DKPM)
- Veggie table cloth
- Annual report
- Loving Spoonful rack card
- Grow A Row rack card
- Recipes or other materials
- Tote bags or other giveaways
- Knit veggie weights
- Newsletter signup
- Messaging cheat sheet
- Donation box
- Events board (with posters taped to it)
- Chalk board (for writing fun facts & audience questions)
- Grow A Row track sheet clipboard
- Veggie ID chart
- Pen, tape, string
- Scale
- Calculator
- Coolers (2@MCFM, 3@DKPM)
- Coolerpacks
- Bins

Community Kitchens

Community Kitchen Instructors will be leading healthy cooking classes with groups of people of all ages at various locations in the City (e.g., Kingston Community Health Centres, Princess Street United Church, etc.). Classes vary from 2-4 hours in length. Shifts can be during the day, evening, or weekends. Volunteers can commit to either one-off or regular volunteer positions (such as a 4 – 6 week cooking series). Cooking programs run between September and June each year. Note that Community Kitchen positions are limited, so please sign up for another volunteer role with Loving Spoonful in case we are unable to fit you into the kitchen.

A training meeting will be set up as at the start of each cooking program as required. The Kitchen Instructor will review details about the cooking participants and volunteer position, as well as the recipes and activities that will be used during the workshops. This meeting will either take place before the program begins or directly before the first shift at the kitchen.

The Community Kitchen Instructor will provide support to the volunteer. Supervision will take place to make sure recipes are being followed (within reason) and people are having fun.

Community Kitchen volunteers will:

- Assist in leading a small group of participants through the workshop recipes.
- Engage with participants in a fun and encouraging way.
- Help with set up, clean up, and workshop activities required.
- Reading recipe in advance & give feedback about the class as required.

It's essential that the facilitator allow the participants to do most of the cooking. Volunteers are there as support, and while they can show participants how to chop/measure etc. in ways that are safe and time efficient, it's important they don't take over and do the task themselves (even if they can do them 'better').

A non-judgemental and respectful approach is always required when working with cooking participants, ensuring participants feel welcome, included, and dignified.

GROW Project

Loving Spoonful's GROW Project teaches elementary school students about community and collaboration, local food systems and stewardship, and gardening and cooking through classroom and garden workshops.

GROW Project Volunteers will choose to:

- 1) Assist with in-class and in-garden workshops that occur during the school year (in April, May & June and Oct & Nov) at our GROW schools **and/or**
- 2) Look after one GROW school garden during the summer (July & August)

⇒ *In-school and summer volunteer shifts are approximately 2 hours in length.*

During the in-school workshops, you will assist with workshop activities as required, including set up and clean up, small group work, and one-on-one interactions (e.g., ensuring knife safety when cooking, helping with seedling transplanting, planting gardens, etc.). When appropriate, you will talk to students about relevant topics to generate discussion around the activity.

If volunteering in the summer program, you will be responsible for ensuring the garden is well watered and weeded a minimum of once per week. You will also help with thinning of the crops as needed, and will need to make sure cuttings and weeds are disposed of. This will include harvesting any ripe produce and ensuring it is delivered to Loving Spoonful as needed.

Students are informed of the weekly garden sessions during the summer to encourage them to come help out. It is therefore necessary to have a consistent day and time for your garden visit each week. You may choose from the following shifts:

- Any day Monday – Friday
- Morning (8:30 am – 10:45 am), midday (11 am – 1 pm), afternoon (2 pm – 3:30 pm)

Volunteers must be comfortable interacting with students and generating garden-related conversations with them.

Volunteers must be able to transport garden equipment and harvested produce to/from garden as required. Loving Spoonful will provide the garden tools and harvest bags.

A Criminal Record Check (CPIC) is required to volunteer with the GROW Program (in-school and summer positions).

Gleaning

Gleaning volunteers collect leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. This food is then either processed for or delivered to 40+ local shelters, meal programs, and social service agencies in Kingston.

Volunteers drive or carpool to a local farm or garden to harvest produce. Produce is weighed at the end of the shift, delivered to Loving Spoonful's Little Cat Cold Storage, and the delivery details are recorded on the track sheet there.

Gleaning occurs in the harvest season, August to November. A one-time commitment is all that is required. Equipment is provided. No training or experience necessary, but this will involve light physical labour and occasional heavy lifting.

Events

Volunteers are instrumental in representing Loving Spoonful at events like:

- Seedy Saturday (March)

- Food Revolution Day (May)
- Skeleton Park Arts Festival (June)
- The UnWasted Dinner (July)
- Night Market (August)
- Community Garden Trolley Tour (June/July/August/September)

Other ways to help include:

- Putting up posters around Kingston, in advance of events
- Decorating at event site, setting up tables/chairs, etc.
- Disassembling event site, removing tables/chairs, etc.
- Attending events, assisting as required with distribution of materials, food, etc.
- Representing Loving Spoonful at the events

Volunteers will be notified of upcoming events in advance. They will be asked to attend planning meetings prior to events and help distribute posters advertising the events. Regularly scheduled events take place, as listed above. Volunteers will work without direct supervision, but will coordinate their work with the Office Manager. Volunteers will be responsible for ensuring events are well coordinated, start on time, and run smoothly. They will also be required to ensure good relations are maintained with event holders & attendees.

Administration

A strong administrative foundation is key to allow Loving Spoonful to provide consistent quality programming.

Administration volunteers assist in:

- Data entry & database management
- Graphic design
- Building resources
- Organizing hard copy and electronic files
- Digitizing historic archives
- Website development

Familiarity with Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, and computers is preferred. Skills with graphic design are also valued. Ideally volunteers would be able to dedicate 2 office hours per week; however, as much time that can be given to these tasks will be accommodated. A flexible schedule is an asset. Training will take place as needed. A supervisor will be available to you at all times while in the office.