



## The Little Kitchen That Could

Have I ever told you about my Mom's buns? She makes the most delicious, light and fluffy buns you will ever taste. *What did you think I was talking about? ;)* People taste them and they immediately ask for the recipe. Except that when they try to replicate them it cannot be done. My mom has been perfecting the recipe and process for **YEARS** you can't just get the recipe and expect to produce the same delicious goodness. My Mom's buns are a coveted item at every family gathering. Before one large family celebration my Mom spent days and days making buns for the event. She made what was the equivalent of 2 buns for every person which turned out to be around 300 buns, and she made sure we were aware of the quota. During the family event my brother-in-law walked around trying to trade items for an extra bun, he was not successful in his mission as no one was willing to give up one of their buns.

When I was a kid I remember my mom baking buns just as frequently as she does now. She always let us join her in the kitchen. Baking buns became a family affair. As she rolled and hand crafted each bun she allowed us kids to make "dough people." You could craft a little man or woman or baby out of dough then we got to bake it and, the best part, eat it. Now when my Mom bakes buns my nephews run into the kitchen to ask if they can make dough people. We had some of our best family conversations in the kitchen and it was always a time to laugh and enjoy being together.

This year at [ABC Head Start](#) the supervisor and social worker at our St. Alphonsus site have decided to do something brand new to our agency. They have started what we call "The Kitchen Project." They bring parents together once a month to learn about and cook a meal for their families. Through a partnership with Edmonton Catholic Schools we are able to use the new, beautiful kitchen space in their One World One Centre location. ABC Head Start provides transportation and child care for the families to attend.

What you will notice the minute you walk into the centre during the Kitchen Project is the wonderful smells coming from the kitchen and then you will hear the parents laughter and chatter as they cook. It is quite incredible to watch the stress and anxiety melt away as the parents enter the space. They are learning from each other and the parents who have limited english language can share their skills with the parents in a different way. Not only are parents learning how to prepare nutritious meals for their families but they are sharing all sorts of wonderful knowledge, everything from parenting tips to how to access community resources.

And in the process of cooking together they have really become a family. At one session a parent could not attend because she was home with her sick children. The other parents decided to make an extra meal and deliver it to the family. The parent receiving the meal was overwhelmed with gratitude and was so touched that the other parents would consider doing such a wonderful thing for her family. What an amazing example of community being created through something as simple as a kitchen.

Of course this Kitchen Project does not come without costs, but after seeing the outcomes for families the program really is priceless. We are extremely grateful to the [EPCOR Community Essentials Council](#) for providing us with the grant funding to keep this vital program going and creating strong families and strong communities.

The ABC Head Start Kitchen Project was featured in Metro! [Click here and check out the article!](#)