

Growing Chefs! Ontario

2024-2025

Fall Impact Report - Garden Programs



WESTERN FAIR
district



GROWING  CHEFS!

Partners in Food & Agricultural Education



London L I C I O U S

Winter Edition: January 17 - February 9, 2025

Thank you to all of our sponsors!

The Londonlicious Festival supports us in realizing our vision of a healthy community that is engaged with our food system! **All sponsors of the bi-annual festival also support our children's education projects.**

The Londonlicious Festival was recently recognized as a finalist for the 2023 **"Culinary Tourism Event of Year"** by the **Tourism Industry Association of Ontario and the Culinary Tourism Alliance**. We are exceptionally proud of this great accomplishment, in our first year taking over the running of the bi-annual festival!



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For more information on the new
Londonlicious Festival visit www.londonlicious.ca

Notes from the Field!

Learn to Grow, Grow to Give

Our Learn to Grow, Grow to Give Initiative has continued to:

- provide bi-weekly fresh food boxes for families in-need
- offer hands-on garden programming to children and their families
- create meaningful volunteer opportunities for youth and adults facing mental health, addiction and homelessness challenges.

Thanks to community support, we're growing both food and valuable connections!

Community Partners

Since the start of summer, we've worked with so many of our favourite partners, including the London Public Library, Nshwaasnangong Family Centre, ReForest London, Hutton House, Childreach, Indwell, Western Fair Association, Punk Rock Flea Market, Kiwanis, London Training Centre and more. We couldn't do it without them!

Impact

One of our valued community partners, who works closely with individuals experiencing homelessness, shared a powerful reflection on the importance of our programs:

"Programs like the Gardening Program that Growing Chefs! has created for our participants are so very rare, and desperately needed. The incredible staff at Growing Chefs! have created a welcoming atmosphere of inclusion; one that is judgement free. This nurturing environment allows participants the freedom to be as hands on as they like, or to simply sit in nature and enjoy some delicious snacks while making social connection."

These words reflect the heart of the initiative—to create inclusive, supportive spaces that empower individuals and foster community! Keep reading to hear more testimonials from our partners and participants.

- Christy Cook, Education Projects Manager



Learn to Grow, Grow to Give

“One of the most impactful initiatives that I have had the pleasure of being allied with, has been our partnership with the Growing Chefs program.

For the past few years, my families have been lucky to benefit from the locally cultivated, organic vegetables, sustainably grown by the Growing Chefs! program. I have received the freshly raised produce, on a bi-weekly basis to deliver to many families in the local community.

A great deal of these families are newcomers to Canada, often coming as refugees from war-torn countries. The Growing Chefs! program grows vegetables that include produce specific to the cuisine of these countries. This results in less waste and maximizes the health benefits of the families who are lucky enough to receive the support.

Newcomers have enough stress to deal with in a new country and the outreach is a much-appreciated provision.”

- Tom L., School Support Counsellor



Exploring
the
gardens!



A photograph showing children engaged in a gardening activity. In the foreground, a child with dark hair in a bun is seen from behind, wearing a light-colored shirt. They are sitting at a wooden table. On the table, there is a large red bucket filled with dark soil, a silver metal bowl also containing soil, and a small decorative pot. A child in the background is wearing a blue shirt with a name tag that says 'Aria'. To the left, there is a stack of brown, cylindrical biodegradable pots. A glass jar with a blue lid and dark contents is on the table to the right. The scene is outdoors, with green foliage visible in the background.

Testimonials

“My son loved potato harvesting, planting his own bean bush and the sensory play. The program leaders were kind and thoughtful and really engaging with all the children.

This was a really great learning experience for my child and goes hand in hand with everything we are teaching him about caring for the environment. The garden is beautiful and so well kept!”

- **Mindy B.**

“We loved the hands on experiences with dirt, sink and float, seeing the worms and watering the plants. The snacks were amazing!!”

- **Tamara B.**



Planting a
food forest!



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Growing Chefs! Ontario HQ
460 King Street
London, Ontario N6B 1S9

(519) 679-4769
andrew@growingchefsontario.ca

Charitable #85895 9026 RR0001



Growing Chefs! Ontario



@growingchefsontario



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www.growingchefsontario.ca