

Annual Report

2021-2022





Letter from our Board Chair and Executive Director

To the Growing Chefs! Community



After two years of pivoting, shifting and constantly rearranging how we operate as an organization, we are excited to look ahead with hope and excitement as we wrap up another year.

Over the past two years, we've learned a lot about how to understand and ultimately maximize the impact of our programming. We have looked at virtual vs in-person, one-time programs vs a series and cooking and food skills programs vs food systems programs. We are very excited to share what we've learned and implement those findings as we create a new Program Delivery Model for the future!

Looking ahead, we anticipate having to accept that the days of 200-person cooking classes won't be returning anytime soon. Virtual programming, outdoor garden education, pre-recorded videos and downloadable resources have become mainstays in Growing Chefs! programs, which we don't see changing as we move into a post-pandemic routine. But we are incredibly excited to redefine how we engage our community and deliver our programs and services in the most impactful, equitable and accessible ways possible. Virtual programming has allowed us to expand our reach beyond the boundaries of the London and Middlesex community. A hybrid virtual and in-person programming model is the future of Growing Chefs! program delivery – and one where more Ontarians will have the opportunity to engage in our programs!





Letter from our Board Chair and Executive Director

Conversations about Food Literacy have also progressed in the past few years since the pandemic began. The Ontario Ministry of Education announced the integration of Food Literacy into the school curriculum this past year - concluding over ten years of advocacy work for Growing Chefs! Conversations are happening nationally, with plans to announce a National School Food Policy in the coming year. Growing Chefs! has emerged as a leader in food literacy programming, and we're proud to have been part of the National and Provincial School Food Coalitions and are excited to have seen several long-term goals achieved this past year.

Although challenges continue to lay ahead, we are excited about all of these recent accomplishments. With your support, we have reached more people in more ways than ever before! Please continue reading to learn more about our impact this year.

Finally, we want to acknowledge that we couldn't have done any of this without all of you! Thank you for believing in Growing Chefs! and coming with us on this journey. We can't wait to share everything we're cooking up for next year! Pun intended!



Andrew Fleet
Executive Director & Co-Founder



Margaret Whitley
Board Chair 2018-2022

In-Person Programming is Back!

In July of 2021, we were finally able to open Growing Chefs! At The Grove, our new teaching kitchen at The Western Fair District. It was such a joyful experience to be able to welcome children into our kitchen to cook with us again!



135 in-person programs



2,352 in-person participants

Let's Get Virtual!

Where in-person offers a more immersive experience for participants, virtual programs provide a larger reach for our team, and provide accessible program opportunities for individuals with barriers to participating in our traditional programs.

- **105** live virtual programs
- **3,559** live virtual participants
- **11,118** online resource views and downloads



Let's Get Growing!

One of the most exciting features of our new space at The Grove is our new heated greenhouse, located right in the middle of the horse racing track on the Western Fair Grounds. As well, we were able to launch our community food box program with the Ontario Student Nutrition Program!



Community Food Box Program

- 234 community food boxes delivered
- 625 pounds of fresh produce harvested from our greenhouse
- \$7,127.50 total value of food boxes
- 51 volunteer hours of meaningful community engagement

Educational Garden Programming

- 44 sessions
- 1032 participants and volunteers
- 27 community partners



Food Literacy Advocacy: A Year Like No Other

Several exciting partnerships have come from this shift back to virtual, including a new partnership with the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea), who are now hosting our Food Literacy lesson plans and video resources on their website for teachers across Ontario to explore and implement in their classrooms.

Through a partnership with Farm to Cafeteria Canada, we created a Teaching the Curriculum Through Food video series to support and inform teachers and volunteers across Canada who are looking to bring food literacy into their classrooms and engage students through food. The videos focus on designing hands-on activities and positive approaches to food and food systems aimed towards Kindergarten – Gr 8 classrooms.

Another win we are celebrating is that Ontario unveiled a new science curriculum that explicitly includes food literacy. This is a huge step forward and something we've been helping work towards for over 10 years, as part of achieving our mission and vision.

We've now had teachers from all across our school boards coming for professional development with us and learning how to integrate food literacy into their classrooms.

Check out our “Classroom Journals” here to read about some highlights from the past year: growingchefsontario.ca/classroom-journals



2022-24 Strategic Plan

As Growing Chefs! prepared to enter its 15th year, and move forward from the uncertainty of the past two years, we gathered together a strong team of committed community members to create a brand new Strategic Plan. This team included members of our Board, senior staff, select volunteers and stakeholders.

We are grateful to have partnered with the incredible Jennifer Kirkham, who led our team through the visioning process. Now, with a new three-year Strategic Plan complete, the path forward for this organization is clear, as we work towards maximizing our impact and achieving our Mission.

Read the Growing Chefs! Ontario Strategic Plan here:
growingchefsontario.ca/about-us/2022-to-2024-strategic-plan

Learn more about Jennifer Kirkham
and her services at:
mischeviouscat.com

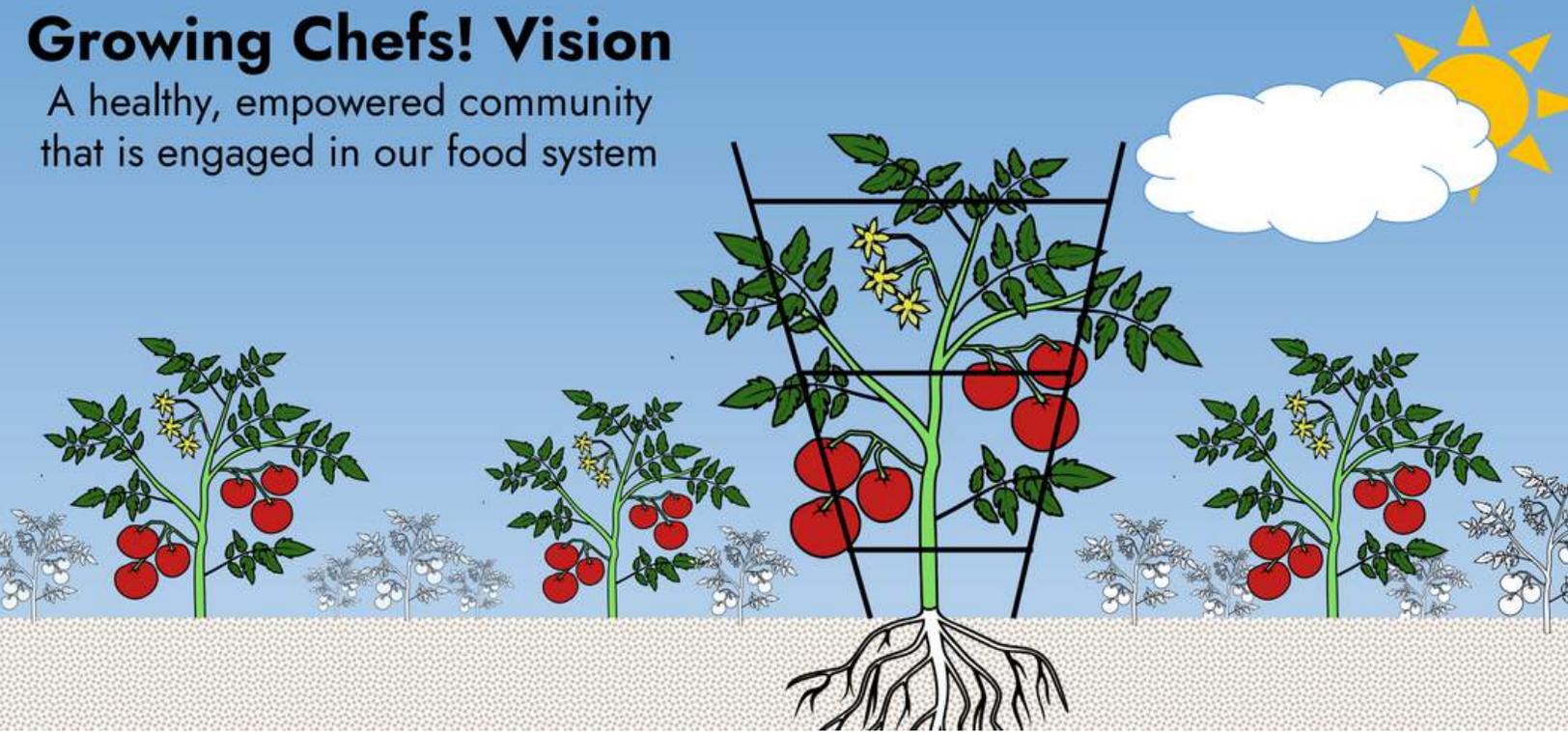
Growing Chefs! Ontario 2022 to 2024 Strategic Plan

Strategic Priorities:	Organizational Capacity	Awareness & Brand Recognition	Education Programming	Relationship Building
Goal:	To build and maintain a sustainable balance of human, financial and physical resources	To increase awareness of the importance of food literacy and our role as a leader and innovator in food education	To consistently deliver engaging, high-impact food education	To build and maintain a network of food system change makers
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strengthen financial resilienceIncrease staff capacityBuild an engaged volunteer baseFoster a supportive, inclusive and compassionate organizational cultureCultivate excellence in governance at the Board levelEnsure physical resources are responsive to organizational changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Build a recognizable brand in local communities and the provinceParticipate in local, provincial and national conversations about food literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure programming is accessible and inclusiveExpand and sustain the reach of programming provinciallyContinuously improve program delivery models that are responsive to local and provincial needsMeasure and evaluate impact of programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strengthen relationships with existing partnersIncrease the number of mutually beneficial partnershipsIncrease advocacy at the provincial and federal levels

Theory of Change

Growing Chefs! Vision

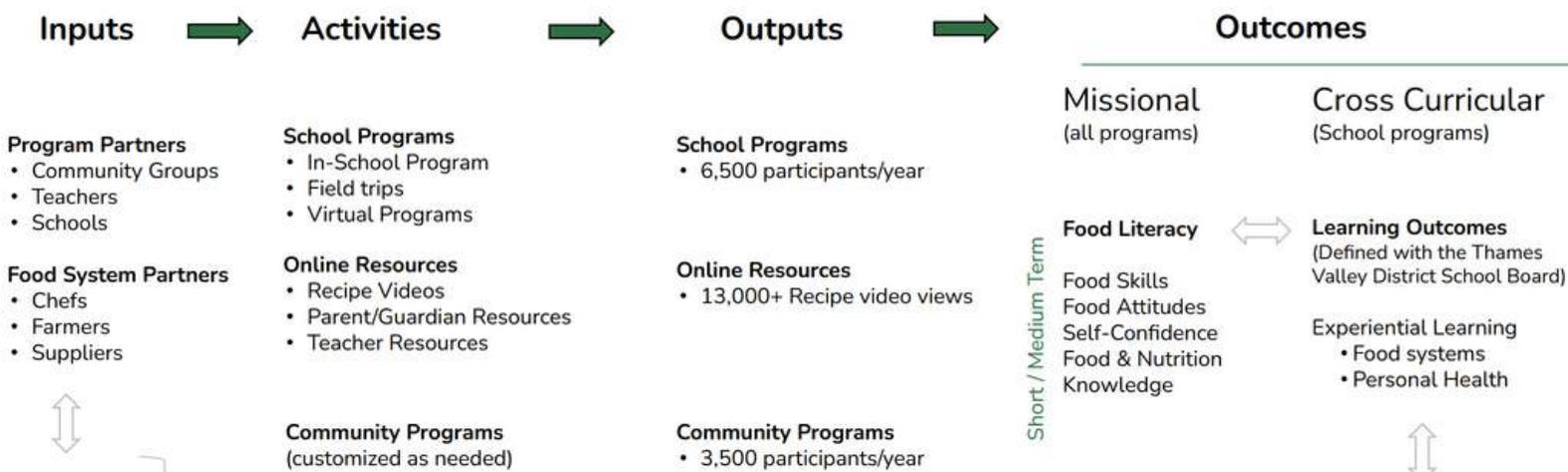
A healthy, empowered community that is engaged in our food system



During the pandemic, we conducted a very insightful internal review in order to better understand the impact we're having on our community.

Our new Theory of Change and Logic Model, developed in partnership with Co-effect, helped to clearly and concisely articulate how we expect our work to lead us toward our vision. These tools will help us to better understand how to evaluate our programs, identify key indicators of success and provide a clear structure for data analysis and reporting.

Growing Chefs! Ontario Program Logic Model



Our Social Enterprise



Our commercial kitchen - The Beet Cafe - has continued to produce hundreds of meals a day for schools and camps across the city.

As we reopen our event space at our Headquarters, we're excited to announce new events next year. You may even see some of our talented Beet Cafe chefs supporting!



\$642,000+
revenue



77,000+
meals
served!



Financials

Total Revenue
\$1,394,936

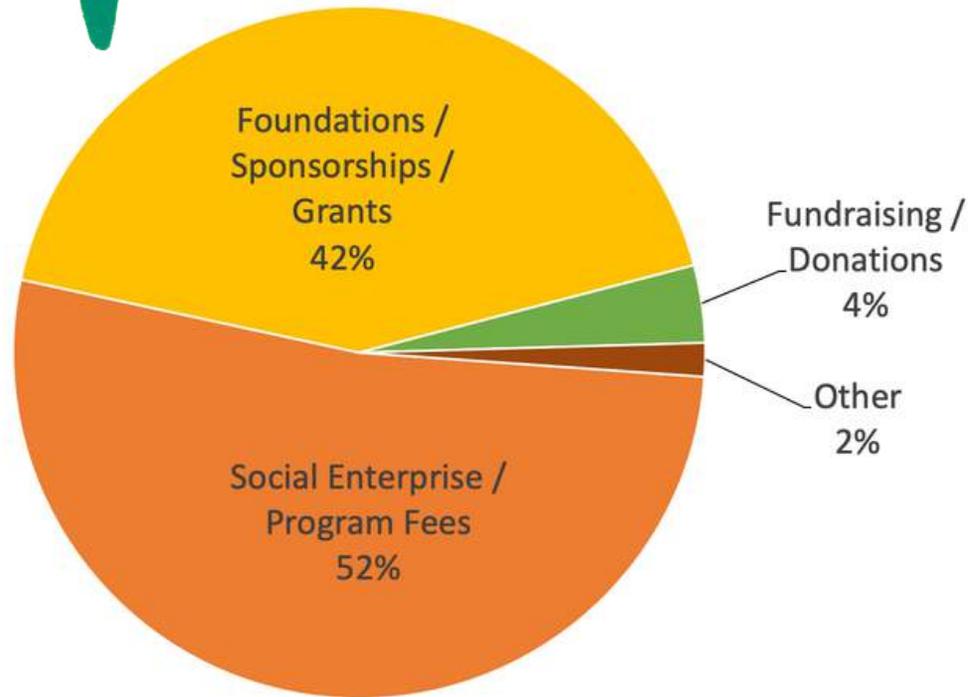
Total Expenditures
\$1,383,522

**COVID-19
Government
Assistance**
\$0

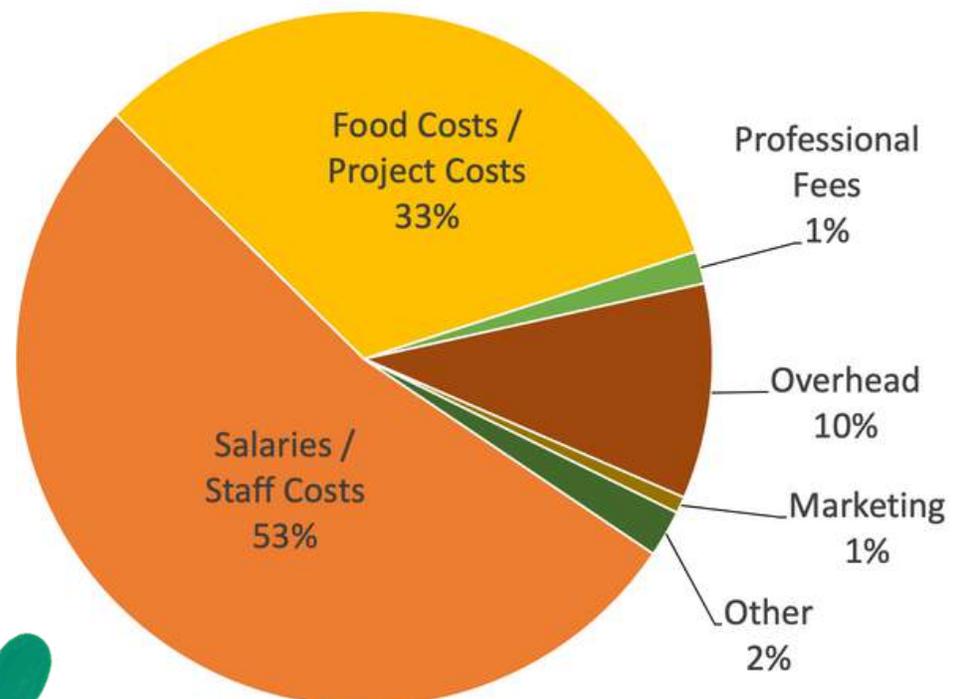
**Total Revenue
over Expenses**
\$11,414

**Internally
Restricted Income
for Future
Operations**
\$80,000

Income



Expenses





"My son had an amazing time tonight and informed me that even though he doesn't normally like any of those foods, he LOVED them all. He had a blast and is excited to join the program again next month. He was so excited to tell us about everything he did and said he will eat asparagus from now on if I let him make it 'that way'."



"Growing Chefs! is the BEST field trip every year for my students. The staff are fantastic (knowledgeable, personable and caring), the skills and knowledge students learn are relevant and interesting, and the food is delicious!"



"Thank so much for all your help getting my daughter settled and comfortable. She is now so happy to go to Growing Chefs on Tuesday nights and then come back and share what she's made. She consistently helps with food prep at home (lots of chopping veggies). Her knife skills are better than mine! I couldn't be more thrilled she is developing this interest!"

"I just want to let you know that my daughter had the most amazing time last night. I heard all of the exciting details and she was so proud of herself. Thank you for this amazing opportunity to help her grow and foster her independence in the kitchen. We will be sure to sign up again!"



Our Growing Team

Thank you to all of our amazing staff, board members and volunteers for all of your tireless work this year; none of this would have been possible without you!



Our Staff

Ipek Aydin
Mason Buchko
Anna Carroll
Karla Conde
Christy Cook
Meridith Dales
Tim Drew
Andrew Fleet
Jordan Grecia
Ilana Guslits
Laura Hattayer

Curtis Hiscox
Katherine Jones
Umama Karim
Rob Lewis
Lexi Magder
Magdalena
Masciantonio
Leila McBeth
Emily McDonald
Kathleen Milani

Tyler Norman
Nick Paus
Arbi Que
Matt Rice
Miguel Rodas
Desiray Tynes
Julie Van Osch
Marisa Verbeem
Ryan Wishak
Jen Wyant

Our Board

Margaret Whitley
Spencer Sandor
Jordan Hypes
Andrew Wolwowicz
Malcolm Scott
Cecile Klerks-Janssen
Andrew Young
Kim Simpson
Mary Hajpel
Michael Clark
Heather Lumley
Leah Derikx

Our Volunteers

We welcomed back volunteers after a two year hiatus and have enjoyed catching up with returning volunteers and working with brand new faces. Please contact christy@growingchefsonario.ca if you'd like to start or restart volunteering!

Title Sponsor:



Community and Corporate Sponsors:



We are fortunate to have the generous support of Grants,
Individual Donors and Private Foundations:



LONDON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

Community Fund

Beryl Ivey Endowment for the Environment

Ontario Endowment for Children & Youth In Recreation; and

TD Canada Trust Merv Lahn Community Development Fund

at London Community Foundation



London
CANADA



Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Peter, Catherine, Michael and Graham Clark

The Smibert Family

Janet Fleet

Brenda and Dave Savel Foundation

Cambia Development Foundation

Richard and Shelley Baker Family Foundation

Keith and Lynn Watson Family Fund

Auberge du Petit Prince Inc.

Bakesale Showdown

*Lynn Davis and The Verna
D. Davis Family Foundation*

*Dr. Donald and Donna
Morgenroth Foundation*

*Making a Difference -
C. & J. Wright Family Fund and Nancy Wright*

Andrea DeKay

Mark & Margaret Whitley

Vincent Chicoine

Brian & Sharon Lessard

Christine Scheer

Les Siemieniuk

Ken McGill

Catherine McClure

Justin Pilon & Sarah Emms-Pilon

Richard & Jo-Anne Hammond



BENEFACTION

Giftfunds
Canada

We are fortunate to have the generous in-kind support of:



**Thank you for your investment in food education and
the future health of our community.**



Help Us Grow!

Growing Chefs! Ontario needs your support! We are a registered non-profit charity based in London, Ontario; incorporated since 2008. We rely on the support of individuals, corporations and our community in order to operate.

For 15 years, we have been creating and providing impactful, hands-on cooking and food literacy programming for families and schools in our community and beyond, regardless of financial, social or logistical barriers.

Growing Chefs! Ontario continues to be funded through contributions from local businesses and organizations, as well as our own fundraising efforts. It is very important to us that our programs be offered at no cost to schools/ families so as not to exclude anyone from being able to participate.

We are currently in the process of fundraising for our 2022–23 Food Education Programs! Help us reach over 10,000 participants again this year! Reach out to us directly to discuss, or make a direct donation [here](#), with our thanks!

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Growing Chefs! Ontario



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