

# Annual Report

2022-2023











"I just wanted to thank you for giving our youth such an amazing opportunity last night! They all had a fantastic time and I know some of them did not want to leave at the end. They all had so much fun learning how to cook Pupusas and enjoyed getting to eat the meal they cooked. The Chefs were really great and so patient! Some of the youth were even asking questions about culinary school and took selfies with the Chefs."



"Just wanted to say Thank You; my daughter just arrived home with a huge smile and excited to talk about what they made this evening. She's very shy but made friends and is excited for her summer camp week. Thank you again for such a wonderful program"





# Letter from our Board Chair and Executive Director

## To the Growing Chefs! Community

For 15 years, Growing Chefs! Ontario has been serving the communities of London and Middlesex. Through our programming and operations, we have created an avenue for chefs and food producers to get more involved in food education in their community, providing children with the confidence and enthusiasm to grow and prepare good, healthy food, while also serving as an example and pathway for expanding food education throughout the province.



**Last year was our first year operating at full capacity in two locations - Growing Chefs! HQ and Growing Chefs! at The Grove! Here are some highlights:**

- Growing Chefs! Ontario's social enterprise model - which is comprised of both our healthy lunch program for preschools, schools and day camps as well as in-person and catered events at HQ - generated over \$800k in revenue last year through mission-aligned operations while also highlighting locally grown and raised ingredients.
- Through a combination of in-person and virtual school and community programming, we reached nearly 10,000 program participants
- Through a pilot project with the Ontario Student Nutrition Program, we delivered over 5500 healthy, scratch-made snacks to school students across London/Middlesex.
- In an effort to expand food literacy education across the province, Growing Chefs! lesson plans, resources and training materials for educators were downloaded over 13,500 times!

Keep reading



# Letter from our Board Chair and Executive Director

This past year, two past Growing Chefs! Ontario Board Chairs – Spencer Sandor and Margaret Whitley – moved on from their Board roles. Enough cannot be said about the impact Spencer and Margaret have made through their work with Growing Chefs! over the years – solidifying our governance structure, guiding the organization through unprecedented events and being driving forces of transformational change in how Growing Chefs! delivers on our mission. We would like to share a massive thank you to Spencer and Margaret from all of our staff, Board members, volunteers and supporters for their years of dedication, guidance and leadership.

**The model we have built to establish and maintain a healthy, empowered community that is engaged with their food system is working, but it relies on the continued support of our community.** Our 2022-23 Annual Report is meant to give you a glimpse into what we've accomplished over the past year, but also how we put your support to work. Thank you for supporting everything we do, this past year and into the future.

London and area can be a working example for what community-supported food education looks like. Each contribution from our community of donors invests directly in children and families as they develop food literacy that will last a lifetime!



**Andrew Fleet**  
Executive Director & Co-Founder



**Jordan Hypes**  
Interim Board Chair 2023





# Food Education Programs

This year, we've run more programs than ever before! From working in classrooms to learning kitchens, greenhouses to gardens, community events to community centres - we were everywhere! And we still couldn't even keep up with all the requests for programming!

Check out our compilation of recent Impact Reports [here](#) for more photos, testimonials and stories showcasing the impactful work we do!

**360** Food Education Programs

**9141** Food Education Participants

**64** School and Community Partners

**13,790** Online Resource Views  
and Downloads





# Culinary Program

## Food Reviews



"The food was wonderful! A sight for the eyes and a delight for the palate! Great care and precision went into cutting those chives (minus the one that was eaten). The portion sizes of the main dish were measured with perfection and care. The table service was great...minus that broken plate! Bravo Chef! A wonderful start to a budding culinary career :)"



"This evening's visit was absolutely superb! No attention to detail was spared between the well placed cutlery and napkin, the very attentive serving staff and the meal itself. My taste buds were dancing with delight from the complex flavours of the salad to the hearty spaghetti with meat sauce. I will absolutely be sure to recommend this new up-and-coming restaurant to others who are looking for a lovely evening out, or a culinary adventure!"







**Our new  
Agridplex  
Hoophouse  
and Garden!**







**Our Food  
Education  
Programming  
in action!**







In 2022, Growing Chefs! Ontario purchased the local Londonlicious Festival with the goal of rebuilding a strong, local food economy, featuring fantastic local restaurants and the best locally grown products, and spotlighting what is unique and delicious in London, Ontario.

**The Londonlicious Festival will support us in realizing our vision of a healthy community that is engaged with our food system!**

In January 2023 we relaunched Londonlicious, building upon the established business model, while implementing some significant changes. The festival now operates as a nonprofit, with reduced registration fees and flexible menu pricing for participating restaurants, an added take-out meal component for participants and a marketing partnership with Bell Media to promote the festival to a broader audience.

**We estimate that over 55,000 people participated in our inaugural run of Londonlicious, which ran from January 21 to February 10, 2023, and featured 44 participating local restaurants.**

**Get more information on the new Londonlicious Festival at [www.londonlicious.ca](http://www.londonlicious.ca)**





"I always look forward to Londonlicious each time and it encourages us to try some new restaurants"

"It was amazing. Probably the best food I have had in a long time! The place was very busy and lots of people were there! I think this is my new go-to spot and I can't wait to go back. We love Londonlicious and look forward to the new restaurants every season!"

"I just love Londonlicious as it gets me out into different areas of the city and I get to try new places and dishes!"



London  
LICIOUS



WESTERN FAIR  
district

Thank you to all of our sponsors!



PURE  
COUNTRY • 93



Harrison  
Pensa  
PERSONAL INJURY  
LAWYERS





# Social Enterprise: Lunch Program



Our social enterprise revenue comes from sold services that have positive impact on communities! One example is our hot lunch program. **Partnering with schools and camps across the region, this program enables children to eat healthy lunches while providing us with the revenue required to teach more children about food literacy and food preparation through our core programs.**



**\$800,000+  
Social  
Enterprise  
Revenue**



**80,000+  
Meals  
Served!**





# Social Enterprise: Events at Headquarters & The Grove

All revenue generated by our private events, held at either our Headquarters or Grove locations, funnels directly back into our Food Education Programs!

Our Events and Social Enterprise portfolios continue to grow and thrive each year, creating a boost to our local economy, while teaching young minds the importance of good food education!

We thank you for choosing Growing Chefs! in all of our different capacities, and for keeping us in mind for all of your future event needs in London!



2022-2023

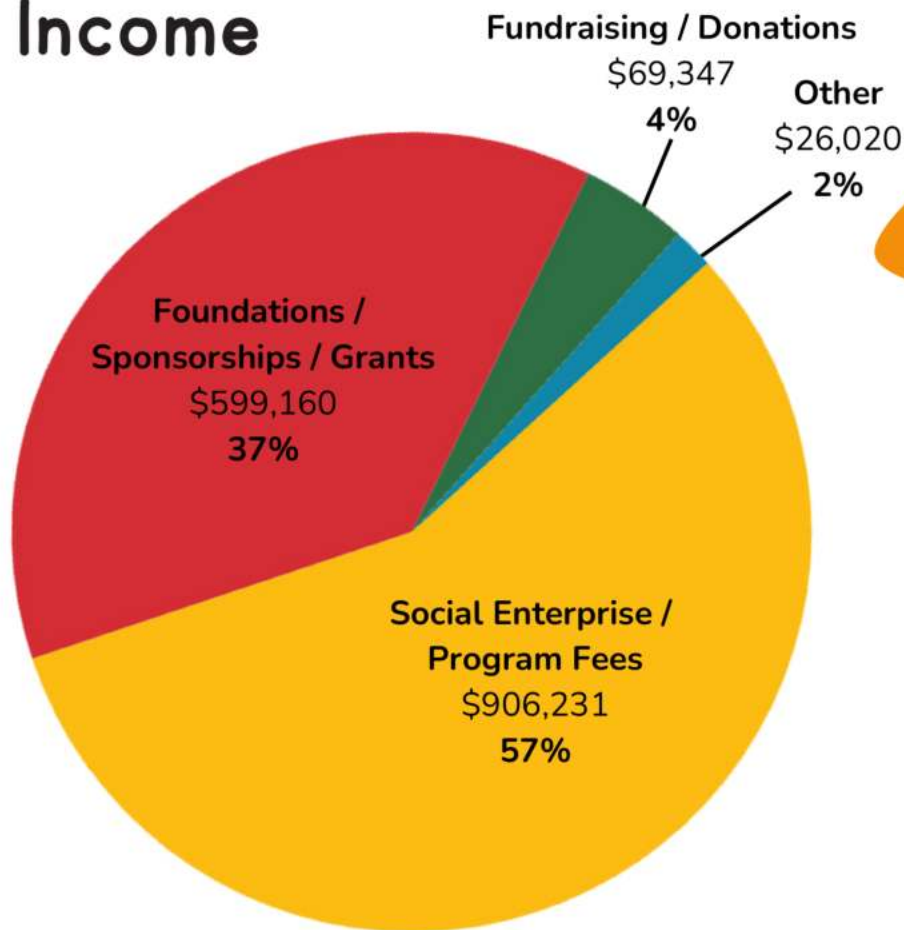
Over 100 privately booked events  
Approximately 4000 event attendees



To book an event, visit:  
[growingchefsonario.ca/events](https://growingchefsonario.ca/events)



# Income



## Total Revenue

\$ 1,600,758



## Total Expenditures

\$ 1,589,635



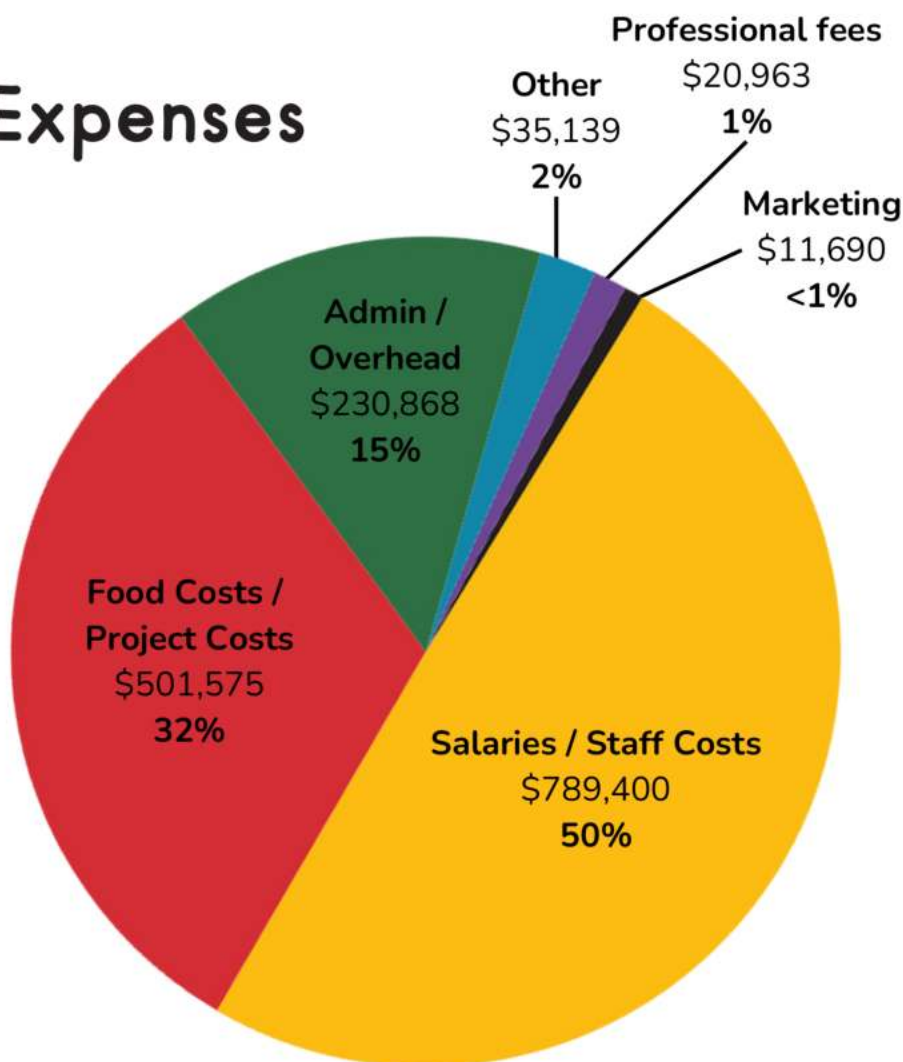
## Total Revenue over Expenses

\$ 11,123



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

# Expenses





# 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!



Anna Carroll  
Karla Conde  
Christy Cook  
Will Cowan  
Meridith Dales  
Tim Drew  
Andrew Fleet  
Jordan Grecia  
Ilana Guslits  
Curtis Hiscox

## Our Staff

Lauren Ibbott  
Michael Isase  
Mike Johnston  
Katherine Jones  
Sophia Martella  
Leila McBeth  
Emily McDonald  
Natalio Meijia

Kathleen Milani  
Tyler Norman  
Justin O'Reilly  
Nick Paus  
Matt Rice  
Miguel Rodas  
Desiray Tynes  
Ashley Ungar  
Julie Van Osch  
Jen Wyant

## Our Board

Margaret Whitley  
Spencer Sandor  
Jordan Hypes  
Andrew Wolwowicz  
Malcolm Scott  
Cecile Klerks-Janssen  
Mary Hajpel  
Michael Clark  
Kristina Pringle  
Nicholas Cardelli  
Jessica DiFruscia

## Our Volunteers

This year we welcomed 47 volunteers who contributed a whopping 680 hours towards our programs and events! Please contact [lauren@growingchefsontario.ca](mailto:lauren@growingchefsontario.ca) if you'd like to start, or restart, volunteering!





The 2022-2023 School Food Education Project  
is presented by our Title Sponsor:



With the generosity of the following Community and Corporate Sponsors:



TD Friends of the  
Environment  
Foundation



Harrison  
Pensa  
PERSONAL INJURY  
LAWYERS



Soft  
flirt



Colborne Street United Church  
Local Outreach Committee





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



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



*Peter & Catherine Clark Family Foundation*

*Janet Fleet*

*Cambia Development Foundation*

*The Smibert Family*

*Richard and Shelley Baker  
Family Foundation*

*Andrew Young & Friends'  
Fantastic Feast Fundraiser*

*Auberge du Petit Prince Inc.*

*The Walter J. Blackburn Foundation*

*Beverley and Bernie Zaifman  
Family Fund*

*The Jack and Barbara Hay  
Foundation*

*Wilson Family Foundation*

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



*Christine Scheer & John Wilson*

*Justin Pilon & Sarah Emms-Pilon*

*Mies Berwoets Scholarship Fund*

*The Barnswallow Company*

*St. Theresa Catholic School Parent Council*

*Brown, Beattie, O'Donovan LLP*

*Angela & Andrew Hall-Holland*

*Matthew Pieszcchala Foundation*

*Vincent Chicoine*

*Dario Carpino*

*Ivey Business School at Western University*

*Brian & Sharon Lessard*

*The Thirty-Two Associates Fund*

*Keith and Lynn Watson Family Fund*

*Les Siemieniuk*

*Mark & Margaret Whitley*

*Juriaan & Sharinne Snellen*

*Cornerstone Architecture*

*Eric & Monica Janitis*

*Katie Zammit & Mark Minnie*

*Andrew & Michelle Wolwowiec*

*Heather Manness*

*Matt & Tara Santagapita*

**We are fortunate to have the generous support from the following giving platforms:**




**BENEFACTION**

**Giftfunds**  
Canada

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







"Urban farming, the feast of the senses during the food preparation and a celebratory, delicious family-style meal... it was a fantastic experience for students and educators!"

- Grade 6 teacher

"I'm so glad I came here because I didn't like cucumbers before and now I like them!"

- Grade 3 student

## Field Trip Testimonials

"The guacamole gave me goosebumps, in a good way!"

- Grade 3 student



# 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 low or no cost to schools and families so as not to exclude anyone from being able to participate.

We are currently in the process of fundraising for our 2023–24 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!

**Growing Chefs! Ontario**  
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**growingchefsontario.ca**  
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Growing Chefs! Ontario



@growingchefsontario



@GrowingChefsON