

For the Love of Food and Family Philanthropic Support for Food Literacy at Growing Chefs! Ontario

Mission

To change the way children, youth, families and the greater community learn about and develop healthy relationships with food!



Letter from the Executive Director

Unhealthy eating is estimated to cost Ontarians \$5.6 billion annually in direct health-care costs, including \$1.8 billion directly from inadequate vegetable and fruit consumption. The need for innovative and collaborative approaches to food literacy for children, families and the greater community in Ontario has never been higher.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs defines food literacy as “understanding why local food is important, knowing what local food is available and when, knowing how to prepare local food and knowing where local food comes from.” Food literacy is a set of skills that help us plan, prepare and cook meals for ourselves and our families. These skills help us prepare food that is healthy, tasty and affordable. They can also build our confidence and help us problem solve when working with food.

The ministry established the following four food literacy goals in 2015 to increase the number of Ontarians who: 1) know what local foods are available; 2) how and where to obtain local foods; 3) prepare local food meals for family and friends; and 4) make local food more available through food service providers.

With over 15 years of experience in designing and delivering evidence-based, innovative and impactful food literacy programming, Growing Chefs! Ontario is a key player in making these goals possible. With learning outcomes defined through partnerships with school boards and curriculum developed in line with Public Health Ontario’s Locally Driven Collaborative Project and Canada’s Food Guide, we are a leader in the provincial food education sector. By creating and providing hands-on cooking and food literacy programming for schools, children, youth and families, we have impacted over 50,000 children and youth since opening in 2008.

Thank you for considering your part in making this critical work for our communities possible. With your philanthropic support, we can ensure that as children and families grow, so does their food literacy and love for food!

Andrew Fleet
Executive Director



Who We Are



Growing Chefs! Ontario is strategically guided and supported by a group of generous and capable individuals from the community who provide the capacity, expertise and resources required to ensure our success. Some of them include:

2022 -23 Board Directors

Margaret Whitley, President & Board Chair: 2018 - Present

Spencer Sandor, Board of Directors: 2016 - Present, Past President: 2016 - 2018

Jordan Hypes, Treasurer & Board of Directors: 2016 - Present

Andrew Wolwowicz, Board of Directors: 2010 - Present

Malcolm Scott, Board of Directors: 2012 - Present

Cecile Klerks-Janssen, Board of Directors: 2018 - Present

Andrew Young, Board of Directors: 2018 - Present

Kim Simpson, Board of Directors: 2019 - Present

Michael Clark, Board of Directors: 2022 - Present

Mary Hajpel, Board of Directors: 2022 - Present

Heather Lumley, Board of Directors: 2022 - Present



Community Programs



School Programs



Garden Programs

Fundraising Priorities/Programs

Our Fundraising Priorities

To increase the food literacy of children and families, Growing Chefs! Ontario needs to raise 45% of our annual operating budget through direct community support: \$720,000.00 is required annually to support our programming.

All Growing Chefs! Food Education Programs provide hands-on experiential learning opportunities for children, designed to build cooking skills, food literacy and an understanding of food systems. Growing Chefs! runs both in-person and virtual programs that fall into three categories:

1. School Programs: which are run in partnership with public and private elementary and high school
2. Community Programs: which are run in partnership with community agencies and available to the general public.
3. Garden Programs: which provide outdoor programs for schools and community groups.

For 15 years, Growing Chefs! Ontario has proven itself as a leading organization in Ontario, creating and providing impactful hands-on cooking and food literacy programming for schools, children, youth and families. Over 50,000 children and youth across London and area have participated to date (currently 10,000 each year)!



Family Feedback

"My son had an amazing time tonight and informed me that even though he doesn't normally like any of those foods (chicken, asparagus and cheese) 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."

- Parent of Participant

"Has been as always a wonderful program and my son loves it, and I just want to share with you that this week we had the feedback from the nutrition teacher from school and he was impressed how my son gets involved and participates actively in the class. The teacher asked us if he cooks at home and we said that yes and he goes to Growing Chefs! for culinary classes and he said that he sees the skills he has gained during the time that has been in Growing Chefs!."

- Parent of Participant



Teacher Testimonials

"TVDSB Innovation has thoroughly enjoyed learning with Growing Chefs!. We've appreciated your customized approach to make each learning experience personalized for the students participating. Our Indigenous students were engaged and excited to learn and make cultural dishes. Our English Language Learners were inspired by your outdoor garden to practice naming plants in English. Our French program also greatly enjoyed visiting your space. We value your approach to education and look forward to continuing to grow our collaborative opportunities."

- Secondary School Teacher

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

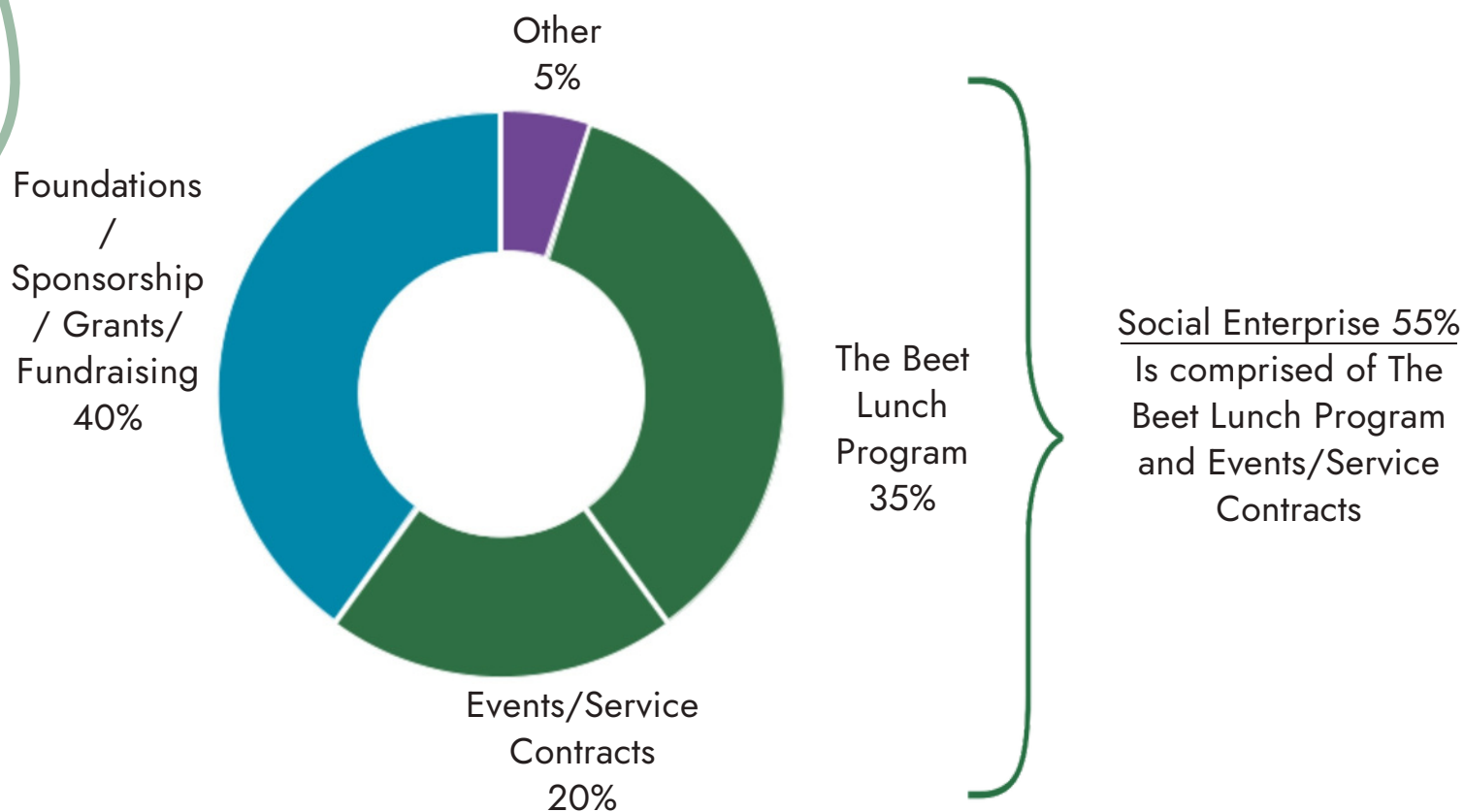
- Secondary School Teacher



Growing Chefs! Ontario - By the Numbers

Our charity earns revenue through a mix of grants, individual philanthropy and social enterprise which provides us with sustainable funding from multiple sources. Following is a summary of the revenue and expenses that make our impact possible.

REVENUE



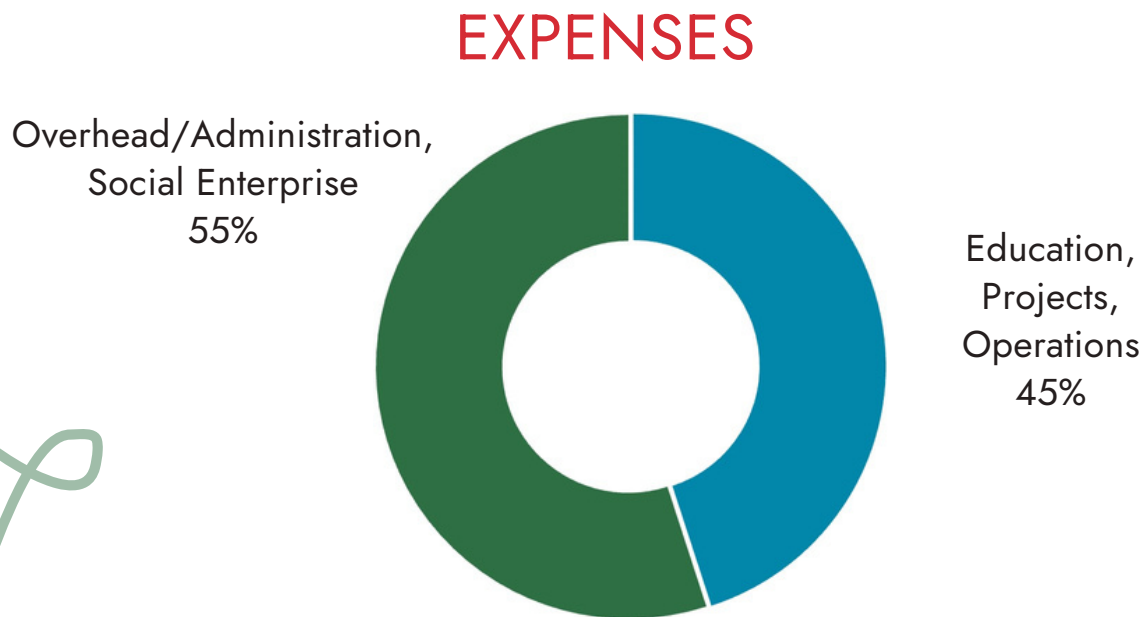
Sustainability in Action

Our social enterprise revenue comes from sold services that have positive impact on communities. One example is our hot lunch program in London, Ontario. Partnering with schools and camps across the region, in 2021/22 we prepared over 77,000 hot and healthy lunches to enrolled children! 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 at no or low cost to them.

Growing Chefs! Ontario - By the Numbers

Expenses

The Growing Chefs! Ontario business model is built so that our overhead and administrative costs are paid for through the operation of our Social Enterprises. This allows us to dedicate donor support directly to our education programs, charitable activities and capital/special projects.



Notes from our Partners

“Helping to teach and support a healthy and sustainable relationship with food, and with the local agri-food system, is one of the most important tasks of the Middlesex London Food Policy Council. Growing Chefs! is a national leader in delivering this type of programming and we are very pleased to be able to support their educational and outreach activities in the London Middlesex community. It is important everyday, as we look toward the agri-food systems we want to have someday, to remember that those future agri-food systems are being built now through how we teach food literacy and foster the development of the food relationships and eating habits in today’s children.”

Benjamin Hill, Chair
Middlesex London Food Policy Council



“...based on my direct observations of the dynamic GC programming in action over the past 5+ years, I can confidently say that young people are getting to know the food system, where food comes from, and what that means for themselves and the environment. They are also learning valuable food skills and attitudes, which will serve them well into the future, setting them up for optimal health and well-being.

I have been observing GC activities for over 5 years now and highly commend the novel and important work that The Growing Chefs! team are doing, as I believe they are filling a vital gap in food literacy education for our community.”

Dr. Jason Gilliland, BA (Hon), MA, MArch, PhD Director,
Human Environments Analysis Laboratory (HEAL)

Conclusion



Building and maintaining healthy, empowered communities that are engaged with our food system is no small task. Each contribution from our donors helps to change the way children, youth, families and the greater community learn about and develop healthy relationships with food. We invite you to join us and our existing supporters in investing in children and families as they develop food literacy that can last a lifetime! Annual, monthly, multi-year, in-kind and planned gift opportunities are available, and we would be thrilled to share further information about our work with you.

Andrew Fleet
Executive Director



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR EFFORTS!

Vision

To build and maintain a healthy, empowered community that is engaged with our food system.

Values

Community: To engage, strengthen and support communities in their ongoing conversations around food

Food: To celebrate the positive change that we can create through food

Health: To foster healthy bodies and minds through positive relationships with food

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Charitable
85895 9026 RR0001

