



# School Food Education Project



PARTNERS IN FOOD & AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

A photograph of various fresh vegetables including carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants, and leafy greens, arranged on a rustic wooden table. A large blue circle with a white border is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the title text.

## Growing Chefs! Ontario *Classroom Journal* 2020 Issue 2

# In-School Program

This school year we visited over 2400 students at Ashley Oaks PS, St. Theresa Catholic School, Elgin Court PS, West Oaks French Immersion PS, and Princess Elizabeth PS. We worked with every class from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8, to deliver hands-on unforgettable learning experiences!



# Teacher Testimonials



"Great experience for the class. My students were engaged and enjoyed the process of learning about plants and making salads. Their joy and excitement during the black box challenge was tangible in the room. What a great culminating team activity!"



"This program was absolutely amazing for both students and staff. The hands on nature and the effectiveness of the program was exemplary. The students were engaged and learning the whole time. Thank you so much for this wonderful learning experience."



"My students loved the growing chefs program! They were so engaged with the process and loved getting to make and taste their own food. They were able to think critically about different parts of food, and how they can use different flavour profiles to enhance and change a dish. It offered me an opportunity to introduce them to fractions in a fun way. I was so surprised by how open they were to trying new foods, and appreciated to see, smell and taste items like kohlrabi."



# In the Classroom

**YUM!**

You know Growing Chefs! is in the classroom when it's:

- a. Hands-on
- b. Fun
- c. Curriculum-linked
- d. Eye-opening
- e. Delicious

f. All of the above!

**CRUNCH!**

We start the Grade 5/6 lesson off with a history lesson on food preservation, exploring the origins of drying, pickling, smoking, curing, fermenting, freezing or canning. Next, we roll up our sleeves to make and can our very own poached pears.

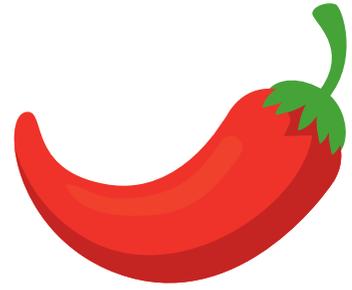
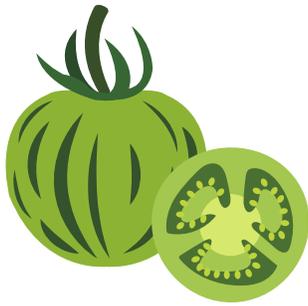
To tie everything we learned about preserving together with a tasty snack at the end, we serve up an Amuse-Bouche: a single, bite-sized hors d'oeuvre to get our taste buds excited. This year, Chef Anna came up with a fun new Amuse-Bouche recipe created from preserved ingredients: corn chip, sour cream, shredded cheddar cheese, tomatillo salsa, and pickled onion.

Once ready, the class holds up their creations and then all together count down to our first bite, 1-2-3-CRUNCH! Head to the next page for Chef Anna's delicious salsa recipe!

We finish the class off by sharing our "food critic" reviews of how the different flavours and textures came together, and if/how we would make it better for next time. The next time we visit this class, we'll bring back their canned poached pears, and make delicious edible art!



# Tomatillo Salsa Recipe

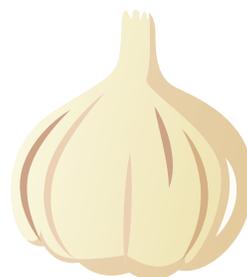


## Ingredients

- 3 ½ lbs tomatillos
- 1 white onion, diced
- 1 Serrano or 2 Jalapeno chiles (or to taste, remove seeds for milder taste)
- 5 cloves garlic
- 1 cup cilantro, packed
- 2/3 cup lime juice
- Kosher salt to taste

## Directions

- Roast tomatillos, onion and chiles at 500°F for 20-35 minutes until well charred.
- Blend hot mix with cilantro, garlic, lime juice and salt.
- Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.
- Cover and refrigerate for up to one week.



# Field Notes from Christy

## Why invest in Food Education now?

Hello everyone! I'm Christy Cook and have been the Education Projects and Volunteer Coordinator at Growing Chefs! Ontario since August 2018. We had a fantastic fall and winter visiting schools across London and St. Thomas to deliver our in-class lessons for elementary students. Every year, we visit each class at participating schools twice, the second lesson building on the first. Unfortunately, in the middle of our second visits, schools were closed indefinitely to curb the spread of COVID-19.

We have heard from our school board partners that even if schools are to reopen this school year, field trips and other planned activities will still be suspended as teachers concentrate on classroom learning. This means that our School Food Education Project will not be able to continue this school year. All cancelled field trips will be rescheduled next school year, and all schools will have the opportunity to pick up where we left off with their in-school lessons.

Currently, we have shifted some of our content online, including our monthly kids cooking classes and a weekly staff recipe blog so that families and their children can stay engaged from their homes. Check out our Facebook page to stay involved! We are also working with partners to develop new video resources for their audiences, but are the first to admit that online learning is no replacement for hands-on sensory experiences.

In addition to creating online content, we are using this programming break as an opportunity to focus on reinvesting in program improvement. Such as through updating volunteer and staff training resources, and creating teacher-tailored resources for classes that want to build on what they've learned with us. We are disappointed, as are our teachers and students, that we won't have the opportunity to work together again this school year, but are choosing to reframe this as a learning opportunity. This crisis has highlighted the need to invest in food literacy and food education, and ensure the public understands and can trust in our food supply chain in times of need. Coming out of this crisis, we have an opportunity to strengthen our food systems to be more healthy, resilient and equitable.

At Growing Chefs!, we look forward to being able to get back in the classroom, get students back into our learning garden, and get teaching!



# *Title Sponsor Spotlight*



As an Agricultural Society, the Western Fair District has deep roots bridging urban and rural communities. This is achieved through educational programming and facilities that help us support the needs of the regional agri-business sector, as well as the customer's desire to learn more about agriculture and food.

The District believes the more knowledgeable you are about food and farming the better you are able to support local agriculture and the community. As home of London's Best Weekend Market six years running, Eastern Canada's largest indoor Farm Show, the National Poultry Show and the annual Western Fair's traditional school tour program, the Western Fair District continues to provide educational experiences for today's consumer.

The Western Fair District is four years strong partnering with Growing Chefs! Ontario in support of the School Food Education Project and more recently, our organizations developed a new learning experience called Agri-Food Week for students in grades 6, 7 & 8. These projects allow each group to weave their educational mandates together, expanding on innovative learning activities for students and the community. We like that!

We appreciate your support in helping Western Fair District and Growing Chefs! Ontario continue to cultivate love for farmers and food.

# Community Partner Spotlight



## The **Jill Wilcox** Foundation

Jill Wilcox is the founder of Jill's Table, a specialty food and kitchenware shop in London, Ontario. She opened her business in 1999 with the vision of creating a central destination for food lovers. The inspiration behind Jill's vision was her passion for gathering around a table with family and friends to enjoy a well-prepared meal.

In the spirit of giving back to the community, Jill chose to establish the Jill Wilcox Foundation. The Jill Wilcox Foundation's vision is to improve the lives of women and children through food, with a mission to raise funds and grant donations to food-related and learning projects. Her hope is that the work of the Foundation will nurture the lives of women and children who in turn will discover the richness and joy that comes from sharing a well-prepared meal with family.

The Jill Wilcox Foundation has been supporting Growing Chefs! food education programs since its inception in 2012, and has been a key supporter for the School Food Education Project, helping it to reach thousands of students and families each year.

# The 2019-2020 School Food Education Project is presented by our Title Sponsor:



With the generosity of the following community and corporate sponsors:

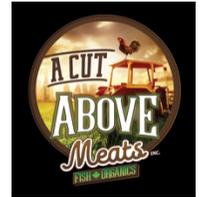


*Auberge du Petit Prince Inc.*

*A.L. DeKay Law Professional Corp.*



*Gemini Investment Club  
London, Ontario*



We are fortunate to have the generous support of individual donors and private foundations through the following giving platforms:



BENEFACTION

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

*the  
Clark  
Family  
Foundation*

*Cambria  
Development  
Corporation*

*The Smibert Family*

*The Wilson Family  
Foundation*

*Charles & Jill Wright  
"Making a Difference Fund with London Community Foundation"*

*The Richard and Shelley Baker Family Foundation*

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

