



Annual Report *2019-2020*



LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR


Dear Growing Chefs! Ontario Community;

After five years of planning, work and your support, we had prepared to share many messages about our growth and increased sustainability as an organization this year. We intended, and were on track to reach our goal of delivering programming to 10,000 children, youth and families through our school and community programs. All of the indicators demonstrated that our model works, that we could generate enough revenue to sustain the organization's ongoing operations through our events hosted at Growing Chefs! Headquarters and the Beet Cafe hot lunch program – even with our three-year core funding grant agreement with The Ontario Trillium Foundation ending.

Our team anticipated sharing our plan to take Growing Chefs! to the next level, by opening a second facility at the Western Fair District, named The Grove. This dedicated programming space will help us reach more children and families, and allow headquarters to function as a revenue-generating event space. We have a vision, plans and the supporters to grow the future of Food Education across the province, and serve thousands more students each year. The Grove is an important part of this vision. Although we are excited to be moving forward with The Grove Project, we are disappointed to have to wait to welcome you to see it in person.

However, since March, with the many changes our world has experienced – and continues to experience - we have continuously reassessed our plans, and now we have a different story to share with you.





Although much of our regular operations are paused, somewhat like the world around us, we still believe our operational model works. This model is the key to changing the way we design, deliver and fund food education programs into the future. Our plans for The Grove continue, as well as planning and preparing for a return to the best events and adult programs at our Headquarters on King Street.

Despite local and global uncertainty, our team rapidly shifted gears and moved to online programs and social media communication. In the spring, we began hosting online cooking demonstrations on Facebook, reaching thousands of families every month. Now we are working on a new virtual platform for online resources, lesson plans and cooking videos. Soon we look forward to inviting you to explore these exciting virtual opportunities with any of the children in your life.

Our entire Growing Chefs! Ontario staff, board of directors, volunteers and supporters united to navigate this unprecedented global pandemic. As a result, we ended our fiscal year in good financial health, shifted our operations and now we continue to work with our community in new and impactful ways.

Thank you from everyone at Growing Chefs! Ontario. Without your support, our continued and future work would not be possible. Your commitment and investment in food education keeps us motivated through the challenges.

In the year ahead we cannot wait to see each and every one of you! We look forward to continuing the work planned and updating you with our progress.

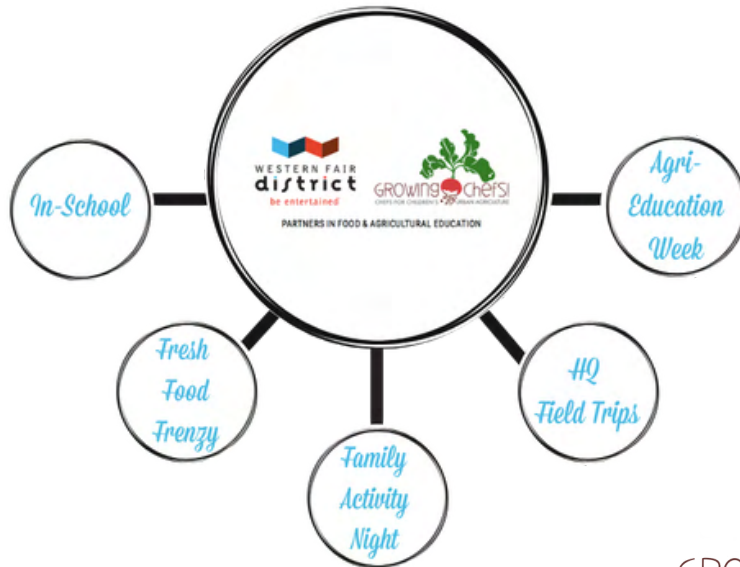
In the meantime, stay safe and care for each other. Together we will build a better future by changing the way children, youth, families and the greater community learn about and develop healthy relationships with food!

Andrew Fleet, Executive Director
Margaret Whitley, Board Chair



2019-2020 PROGRAMMING

Even with a condensed 2019-2020 school year, Growing Chefs! Ontario's food education program was enjoyed by thousands of kids, youth and families throughout our community!




GROWING chefs!
Growing Communities

Through the School Food Education Project with the Growing Communities program, we...

Worked with:

23 schools
&
23 community partners

Reaching:

4315 in-person participants and

7335 virtual participants

WE'VE MADE A VIRTUAL SHIFT

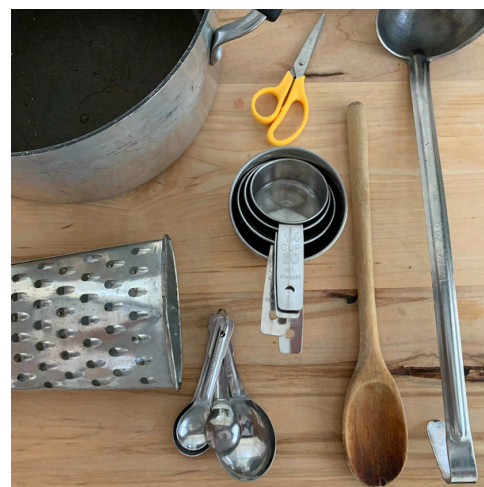
As soon as the initial COVID-19 shut down began, the entire Growing Chefs! board, executive team, staff, select volunteers, as well as several of our funders and stakeholders, began working together to create a plan to adjust and pivot our operations and program structure as well as fundraising and income strategies for the coming year.

As our programming was forced to shut down, we immediately began producing virtual content to share with students, teachers, parents and children through various online platforms. The production and video quality was very simple, but the strength of the content came through and we quickly built an online audience with hundreds of participants in the first weeks, growing to thousands in the months to come. People were engaging with us through these new online platforms from across the province and we began receiving requests for more online classes from new and existing partners.

We made the decision to invest in new video equipment which allows us to more efficiently create a higher volume of content with improved production quality.

The COVID-19 pandemic has helped to uncover new opportunities for Growing Chefs! Ontario to set broader, provincial targets to reach more children, youth and families through the development of virtual programming to complement and enhance our in-person programming.

Our aim is to evolve Growing Chefs! Ontario to become the media and creative centre for food education programming in the province.





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PARTNER PROFILE

As the pandemic shut down schools and student nutrition and school food programs, thousands of families across Ontario who rely on these programs were left in need.

Growing Chefs! Ontario was able to partner with OSNP Southwest Region to deliver scratch-made, healthy, frozen and fresh meals to over 40 families across London through the duration of the shut down.

This partnership, which helped to provide more than 4,000 meals, was also the cornerstone to our own reopening of Growing Chefs! Ontario after the initial shut down.



OSNP-SW administers funding and provides program support, including the development and implementation of healthy breakfasts, snack and at times lunch programs to 480+ schools across Southwestern Ontario.



2019-20 SCHOOL PROJECT SPONSORS/SUPPORTERS

Whether you're a corporation, a local business, a personal donor, or a volunteer. Whether you have provided a financial donation, a gift in kind, an allotment of your time or assistance...

**You know who you are.
We know who you are.
We see you.
We see you all.
And we thank you ~ ALL!**

From the bottom of our hearts ~ we thank you for every gift you have given to us over the past year.

During such uncertain times, our local community surrounded us with their support, in so many different ways.

We truly could not have succeeded through these past several months without you, and your dedication to furthering our mission!



Auberge du Petit Prince Inc.

A.L. DeKay Law Professional Corp.



*Gemini Investment Club
London, Ontario*



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

ANNUAL AUDITED FINANCIALS

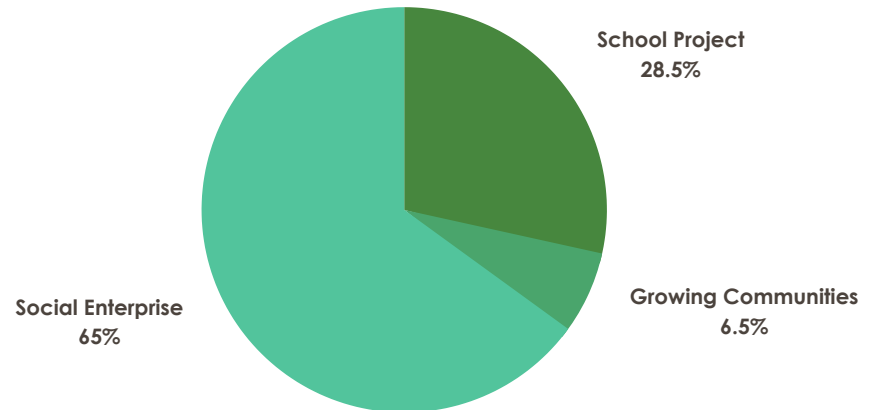
TOTAL REVENUE
\$736,823.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURES
\$729,134.00

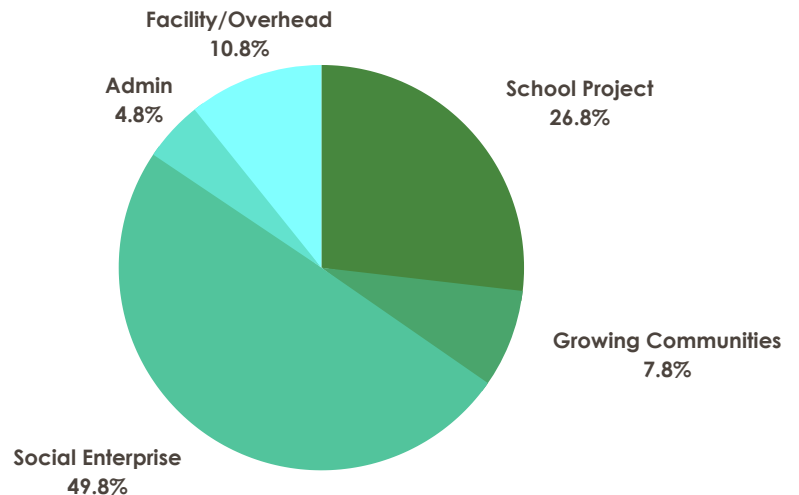
**REVENUE OVER
EXPENDITURES**
\$7,689.00

DEFERRED REVENUE
\$12,419.00

REVENUE



EXPENSES



HELP US GROW

Allow me to introduce myself - my name is Jen Wyant. I joined the Growing Chefs! Ontario team in early 2017 as Facility Director. I was tasked with building the Events portfolio to the standard of excellence it became, prior to COVID-19 challenging our upward trajectory. During the three years we successfully ran in-house events, we consistently generated ~\$150,000 annual revenue, which we put towards our social enterprise; keeping us on target to reach our goal of becoming fully self-sustainable.



Then COVID-19 hit. As with every local business and not-for-profit, we were forced to pivot and completely change our business model. Retrofitting our space to follow updated safety guidelines was not a viable option as we are housed within a historic venue. We made the difficult decision to close our Headquarters for the foreseeable future. This significant loss of revenue created an enormous financial funding gap; translating to a minimum of 25% of our annual income lost. However, COVID-19 also provided an opportunity for me to shift gears and move into a new role within Growing Chefs! Ontario.

As I move forward within the organization as the new Executive Administrator, I look forward to working alongside Andrew to help secure much needed funding to propel our organization forward. This global pandemic has shown us there has never been a more important time to invest in food literacy and food education programs; but, we need your help. We are asking our local community to come together and further support our mission by considering a financial commitment. Whether it is a one-time gift, or you sign up to become a monthly donor or you choose Growing Chefs! Ontario as a legacy benefactor, your financial donation today will leave a lasting legacy. Whatever the size, your gift will help improve our community's health by allowing access to innovative cooking and food skills programming for generations to come.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to you and share my excitement about the future of Growing Chefs! Ontario. To donate, or to find out more, reach out to me directly! I look forward to meeting you.

Jen Wyant
Executive Administrator
jen@growingchefsontario.ca
www.growingchefsontario.ca/donate

NOTE: Until December 31, 2020, Finch Auto Group will match donations (up to \$1000) if you fill in this online form: www.seefinchfirst.com/finch/match-my-donation/

THE GROWING CHEFS! ONTARIO TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andrew Wolwowicz

Andrew Young

Cecile Klerks-Janssen

Elsa Rose Eastabrook

Jordan Hypes

Karen Conway

Kim Simpson

Malcolm Scott

Margaret Whitley

Matt Pawelec

Spencer Sandor

Leah Derikx - Young Leaders

Placement

STAFF

Alyssa Lampkin

Andrew Fleet

Anna Carroll

Beverley MacNeil

Chris Large

Chris St. Laurent

Christy Cook

Hannah Dannenberg

Ilana Guslits

Jen Wyant

Katherine Jones

Liane Reeves

Morgan Gibbens

Nick Paus

Peter McIntosh

Rob Lewis

Ryan Wishak

Sean Walter

Sheri Templeton

Stephen O'Quinn

VOLUNTEERS

A total of 96 volunteers donated almost 850 hours of their time this past year to help make our food education programming and fundraising events a huge success! We are so grateful for their time, energy and talent. Volunteers, we couldn't do it without you!





CONSIDER SUPPORTING OUR EFFORTS!

Visit

www.growingchefsontario.ca/donate

or email

jen@growingchefsontario.ca

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Charitable

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