2023

2024 Sprouting Chefs Annual General Report

Barb Koyanagi – Executive Director,
Sprouting Chefs
1/1/2023

Land Acknowledgement

We honor all the First Peoples Principles of Learning by doing our best at Sprouting Chefs to include their teachings wherever possible. Most especially, we honor their past sufferings by ensuring that each child in each of our programs knows that they matter and they are loved.

It is in this spirit that we all at Sprouting Chefs Society would like to acknowledge that we have the privilege of teaching, learning and connecting on ancestral and unceded homelands of the Coast Salish Nations of Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish territories. We are grateful to continue to learn as many of the lessons all our elders teach us.

Sprouting Chefs Society AGM 2024 – Executive Director's Message

Full circle moments in seeing students become the teachers and leaders in our program are the moments I have been most proud of this past 2023/2024 season. From former cooking class students returning as teen leaders in our summer camp programs to former students loving compost so much they learned even more to teach individual class workshops, were real moments of pride.

The gardens and kitchens of our programs have become places where students are finding their voices and passions. Some honing their English skills like Lily featured in this photo giving me packages of seeds she saved as gifts as well as being able to tell me what they were in a language foreign to her a year ago was remarkable. Hearing that our classes are the favorite of some of the most challenged learners inspires the need to continue this work as well as being told our program has made a difference to those who are moving on. What I know now is many of these students return with new lessons to share.

Although we may not have the same kind of youth committee as in the past this coming year, our program will continue to bridge the gap between the various schools we work in with the greenhouse at Burnaby Mtn. The space will be taken care of by a special group of teens struggling with their mental health. Our younger student will start the seeds and the teens will nurture them into strong seedlings where they hopefully will feel they are making a difference.

A holistic sense of learning and teaching continues to be a source of pride with our evolving and developing Sustainability and Wellness curriculum with the support of our board members and teachers. This curriculum not only

highlights the core competencies and regular curriculum, it highlights mental health tools students need to balance themselves.

I hope you enjoy the journey of reflection of this report as Sprouting Chefs celebrates another year of a variety of impactful moments with Forest Grove, Edmonds Community School, Burnaby Mountain Secondary students, other teen volunteers and our summer campers too!

– Barb Koyanagi, Founder/Executive Director

Thank You and Acknowledgement

We are extremely grateful for the support of our various sources of financial funding during 2024:

Private Investment via Bruce Forester and Pat Stephenson – Top Donor (After School Programs at Edmonds Community School – Cooking Class Spring Semester, Seed to Table Program at Forest Grove & Edmonds Community School)

McGrane Pearson Endowment Fund held at the Vancouver Foundation– Top Sponsor (After School Garden Club activities at Forest Grove & Burnaby Mountain Greenhouse Project 2023)

ASSAI Funding – District Funder (After School Sports and Art Initiative Funding via the Burnaby School district) – After School Garden Clubs & Cooking Classes at Edmonds Community School)

Greater Vancouver Food Bank – Food & Snack Donations, Grant for the Winter Edmonds After School Cooking Classes, 2024

Various Private/Individual Donations

Grateful for Our Awesome Volunteers!

From doing piles and piles of dishes, supporting our cooking class students, building or repairing structures in our school gardens, housing seedlings for the elementary gardens, returning to share new lessons and creating a sense of a team family, we thank you!

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Impact Stories of Legacy

Tower Gardens

Indoor growing towers using an aeroponic water nutrient system was our way of demonstrating an innovative food growing idea to students this past year. The towers themselves were purchased thanks to funding sourced by former Youth Committee Head, Caio Conradt via funding from the Youth To Sea Organization. Caio's intention was that the elementary students would first have a chance to learn how to grow food inside as well as supporting his own school, Burnaby Mtn with materials and supplies for the greenhouse project. In January, Nathan Lo secured similar funding via the Youth to Sea grant to purchase a tower for the high school as well thus allowing an interesting comparative project between the 3 schools.

The towers were planted in January of 2024 and by the end of the school year, we had a variety of successful crops, most notably, kale and parsley. Edmonds and Forest Grove both had individual special cooking classes as part of their Sustainability and Wellness classes using the two main crops successfully grown in the towers. Part of the success also was thanks to the students themselves who every week, tested the water nutrient levels, adjusted the ph if necessary, and added more water as the plants grew.

A meal of sauteed kale on crostini with tomato bruchetta was made at Edmonds while Forest Grove students enjoyed the process of chopping up the parsley to make a chimichurri dip for pita bread. There was enough parsley to load in a large Ikea bag to bring over to Edmonds to share with the community members who regularly use parsley in their meals at home.

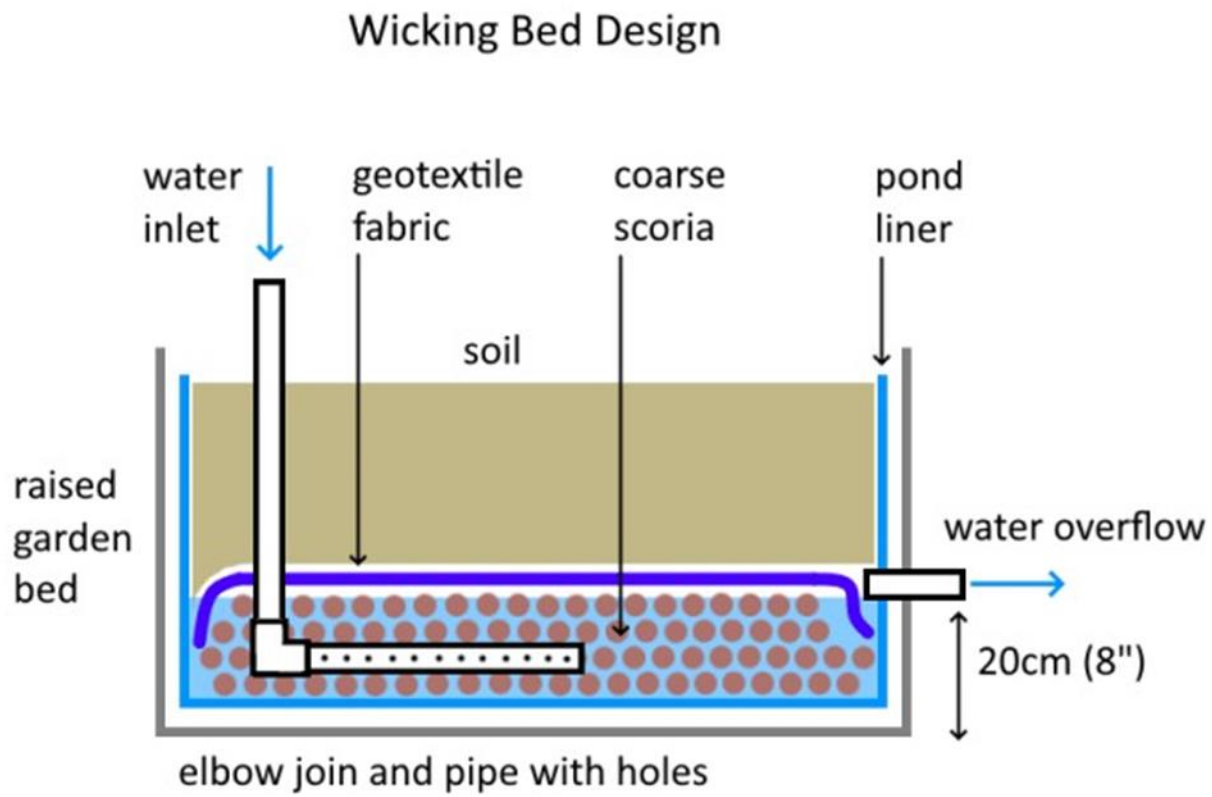
Tomato plants grown in the Edmonds tower garden were moved into the bins at Edmonds housed by the special system Casey Lo developed described next. These tomato plants have produced enough of a crop to be a main ingredient in the first cooking class at Edmonds in October.

Casey and Nathan Lo – Water Reservoir Project at Edmonds

In 2022, Casey Lo, former alumni student at Forest Grove designed a water reservoir system for the outdoor metal garden bins at her high school. The design was created as a way to lower the need of volunteers during the summer months and to provide a way to capture the rain as it fell during the spring to save the plants in the bin. After 3 years of using this system, Nathan Lo her brother, was able to secure funding from the school district to install 6 of these reservoirs in the garden bins with the students at Edmonds.

Bringing both Casey and Nathan to head this project at Edmonds with the students in Gr. 7 had two main intentions, to inspire the current grade 7 students to continue to learn innovative ways to save water and to create a sense of empowerment where the students felt they were making a positive change while working together as a team.

Casey's Design:



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The project took all afternoon with the bins being dug out first, then lava rock added with the pipe and fabric before adding all the soil back. The system was tested and worked well in the summer with a week where the garden was not being watered but the tomato plants from the tower garden thriving due to the reservoir system.

Youth Committee Highlights - Nathan Lo, Worm Composting Project

Sprouting Chefs prides itself on being a bridge between each of the schools we teach at, connecting students to each other as well as echoing the basic lessons we are trying to impart. Our younger learners had unique opportunities to learn from our alumni teen leaders this past year via the Bin Project at Edmonds as well as Nathan Lo returning to Forest Grove to share what he learned from creating more compost using worms in the greenhouse.

Nathan facilitated 2 worm workshops with a group of K/Gr. 1 students as well as Gr. ¾ students in March of 2024. Students had the chance to see 2 different ways of reducing food waste using worms as well as learning basic facts of how important worms are in the health of soil with Nathan as their guide.

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Planting a Tree with Edmonds

The goal of planting a tree at Edmonds has been in place since Alvin Chow, the student Garden Club was created for began his journey with us. Alvin's passion of trees was apparent from the first few days of being in Garden Club where he noted his favorites and extensive knowledge of them. Bringing Alvin to Forest Grove and Burnaby Mountain Secondary was to further inspire him as both of these other schools are surrounded by trees and forests. It was naturally something we wanted to create as a legacy project for Alvin and his fellow Gr. 6/7 classmates where a tree was first chosen based on a huge list of approved varieties from the City of Burnaby and school district. Once the tree variety was narrowed down by a series of votes and discussions with Garden Club, a Japanese Hornbeam was purchased using funds secured by former Youth Committee Head, Caio Conradt the year before.

An added bonus for teaching how to properly plant a tree was that the current principal at Edmonds, Mr. Guy Hamilton, was previously a landscaper and joined us on the day of planting the tree with the class.

Students were guided through an exercise where before the tree was planted, written notes of what each student wanted to "leave" behind in their journey to the next year were added to the hole as well as what they wished to "plant" forward for themselves in the future.

The tree is now becoming a focal point in the garden area demonstrating how a tree grows and changes over the year as well as the challenges of growing a tree with the climate changing. Notes of gratitude have also been added to the tree from students in Garden Club.

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Wellness and Sustainability Classes - Edmonds Community School and Forest Grove Elementary

- K to Gr. 7 Classes taught 5 times at both schools
- Lessons included: waste management, soil health, innovative ways of growing food, art in nature, nutrition and mental wellness
- Edmonds – 250 students, Forest Grove – 350 students, Windsor – 300 students (taught once in the spring)
- Remain only program to weave in Social Emotional Lessons into Garden and Kitchen based learning

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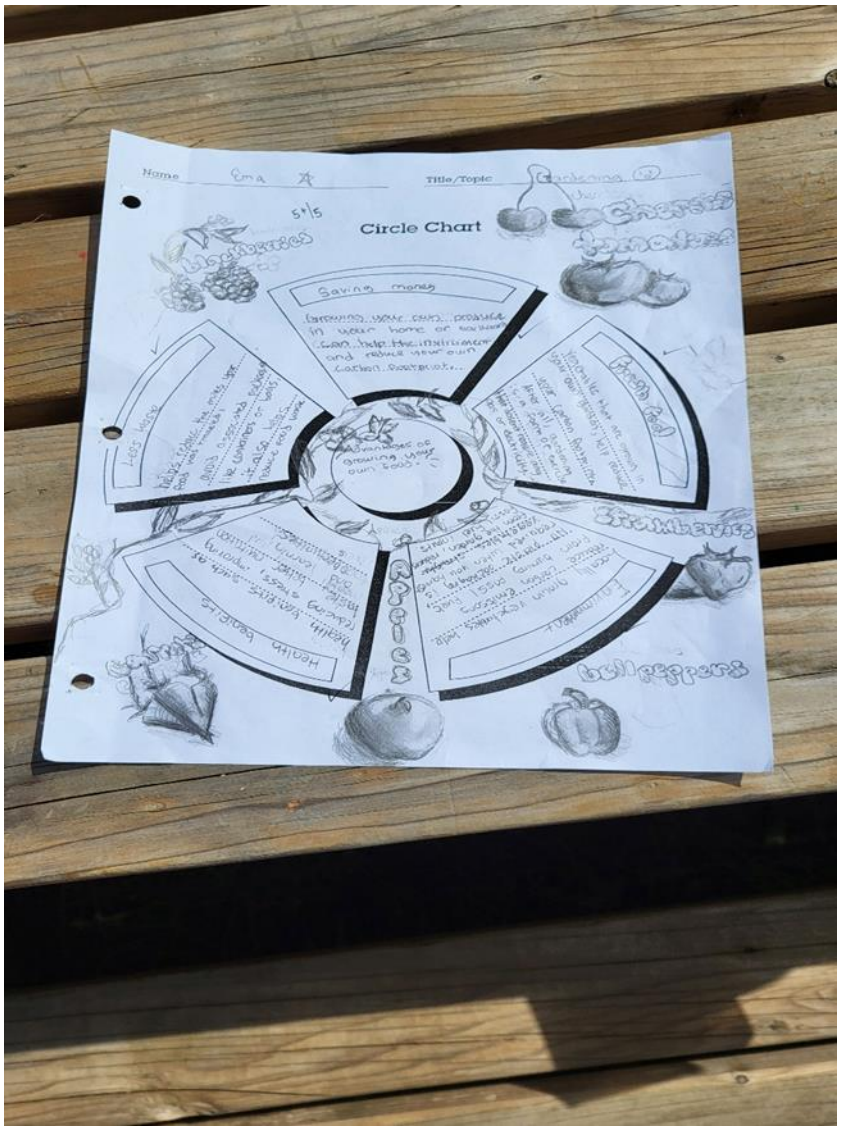
Outcomes of the Program Include:

After our nutrition lessons in the fall highlighting how eating seasonally and locally should be the goal to wellness, key take aways from a Gr. 7 student included:

- Less waste
- Save Money
- Healthy Benefits
- Helping the Environment

The ability to deliver this program throughout the school 2023/2024 year was thanks to our private investor funding allowing us to come in to Forest Grove and Edmonds Community School 5 different times last year.

We were able to deliver seed planting lessons to Windsor Elementary with the school contributing to half the funding needed for one set of classes there.



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After School Cooking Classes – Empowerment, Diversity and Inclusion

Key Highlights – The Numbers:

- 72 recipes learned
- 34 students at Forest Grove, 40 students at Edmonds
- Ingredients from the school gardens harvested: garlic, kale, chives, oregano, mint, radishes, spinach, arugula, lettuce, tomatoes. Sourced from Farmer's Markets: mushrooms, eggs, strawberries, carrots, apples, pears.

The after school cooking program at both Edmonds and Forest Grove focus on teaching students basic life skills of how to cook but also how the ingredients we choose matter for both our own health and the health of the planet. A few recipes of how to heal our gut and ensure we are getting the right nutrients in the colder months, were taught with a mix of success. Although most of our students tried the special herb based soup we made, it was a new experience for most where the fact they tried at all mattered as this new concoction of zucchini, mushrooms, herbs and sauerkraut were blended together.

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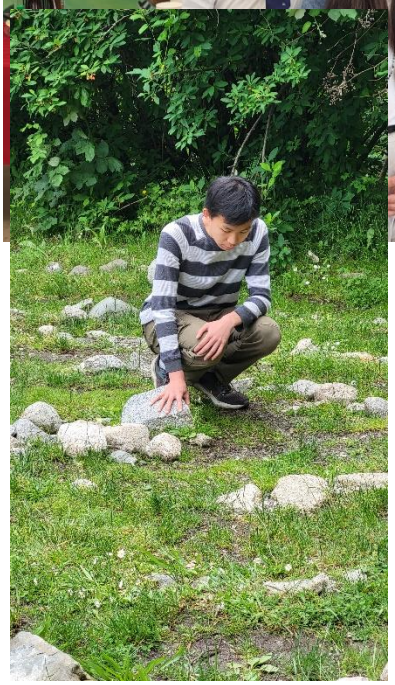
Other basic recipes and techniques included: pasta, curry, breakfast, pan fried chicken, alfredo with wild mushrooms, pizza and students were given 3 chances to create their own meals throughout the year.

Welcoming a new assistant leader, Ms. Cat Zimmerman, into the Forest Grove Cooking Class program has been one of the most rewarding and easiest things to do this past Spring. As a former pastry chef with a love of children, Cat ties two key ingredients most needed for our learners as well as providing the best kind of support.

Our base group at Forest Grove were mostly made up of returning students with 3 students having been a part of the program since they were around age 7. By the time they ended their year with us this past June as Gr.7's, the sense of pride both with themselves and by myself as their teacher was very high. Thank you gifts and cards were given to Sprouting Chefs from Audrey, Elliott as well as Wesley seen below:

Dear Barb,

Wow, it's been a while since I first walked into cooking class not knowing just how far it would take me. No words can describe how grateful I am to have learned from you for as long as I have. I thought of the orchid (a gift he gave me) as a representation of many of your students with the smallest and slowest starts, but with tender and patient care, have one of the most unique and beautiful results. Your impact on Forest Grove is honestly amazing; I could talk for hours of how differently people act when around you versus not around you. You have affected our school culture more than anyone else and though they might not show it, there are hundreds of kids who are completely different people because of you.



Thank you.

Yours,

Wesley

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Garden Clubs - Community Building

The after school Garden Club programs at both Edmonds and Forest Grove continue to be places where the community comes together to make a difference, support the growing gardens, learn other ways we can celebrate and protect nature. The Edmonds Garden Club had up to 30 students throughout the year thanks to funding from the Arts and Sports After School Initiative funding from the Burnaby School District. This funding allowed for 3 Educational Assistants to support special needs students creating a more inclusive environment.

Donations from the parent community at Forest Grove as well as funding provided by our private investors allowed for our Forest Grove Garden Club to continue to thrive with 20 students including a core group of teen alumni who helped throughout the year.

Activities ranged from learning about what tree to plant at Edmonds, creating seed libraries for both school communities, growing early summer crops that were housed in the Burnaby Mtn greenhouse, learning about the tower garden, the Forest Grove students managing the indoor worm bins over the winter months, painting the garden bins at Edmonds and painting new signs of virtues at Forest Grove.

All the programs together have inspired our learners including, Avie and her classmates when tasked to create a model of a home in the future that uses a variety of innovations to be more sustainable including rain barrels, solar panels and an indoor growing tower!

Garden Club is also a time where we take the chance to allow nature to heal us with quiet contemplation in nature.

Alumni teen student, Zan Giamondo, continues to inspire even though he has gone on to a special gifted program at Alpha Secondary. Last spring, he came to show the students a variety of tools crafted using indigenous principles and throughout the year, he made this drone video for us demonstrating how close the school garden at Forest Grove is to the Transmountain tank farms as well as where it is situated in Burnaby.

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Summer Wellness & Cooking Camp at St. Timothy's

What was most noted about our group in the summer camps this past year at St. Timothy's Church were how many returning campers came back and the teen staff who supported them. We had over 50% of the group in both weeks in July and August as returning campers. There were 7 students from the Forest Grove programs as either previous cooking class students in the past year or the past several years as support staff.

Campers enjoyed learning about food and cooking most but we were also told the Spa Day learning how to craft their own bath salts and face masks were something the previous campers looked forward to as well as the tour to Whole Foods to shop on a budget, crafting bracelets and dreamcatchers and learning how to use a journal to manage their mental health was also well received.

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A Look Ahead - Goals of 2024/2025

- **Burnaby Mtn Greenhous**e support for ACESS learners, twice a month for the year ahead
    - Senior Gr. 11 & 12 students facing mental health challenges are learning soil science, healing benefits of the plants growing in their outdoor bins while housing future seedlings of the elementary schools Sprouting Chefs works with
- **Native Plant Garden at Edmonds and Forest** Grove thanks to Whole Kids Foundation Grant
    - A variety of classes at both schools will be taking part in planting a native garden project
- **Tower Gardens – Year 2**
    - All 3 towers at Forest Grove, Edmonds and Burnaby Mountain will be growing seedlings over the winter months in an attempt to have food by early spring
- **Alumni Teens raising** funds for students at Edmonds to come to camp
    - Our goal is to add more chairs to our long tables at camp to include some of our cooking class students from the Edmonds Community thanks to fundraising efforts of our former cooking class alumni students