2023

2023 Sprouting Chefs Annual General Report

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

Land Acknowledgement

On this a day October 2, 2023, we would like to acknowledge that it is also the day we pause to reflect on Truth and Reconciliation with the First Peoples who inhabited, cared for, and loved this land before us. 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 all and 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 2023 – Executive Director's Message

In reflecting back on all the various achievements through the activities and programs Sprouting Chefs facilitates, it is the sense of connection, engagement, legacy and community that I am most proud of for the past 2022/2023 season.

Throughout the history of Sprouting Chefs, the main goal has always been empowering the students of our program, fostering a deeper sense of self while connecting to the environment and nature each are living in. Whether these environments have been the urban areas of South Burnaby at Edmonds Community School or the surrounding forested areas of North Burnaby Mountain at Forest Grove Elementary, our aim is always to "meet the students where they are at in the spaces they are in." I believe we have achieved each of these goals in the various programs facilitated this past year.

Connection to self, each other and the environment happens naturally when the opportunity to learn outside in a garden space with children getting excited from watching worms emerge from the grass and finding them do their job and purpose in a compost or worm bin, to learning how they are also part of the same important ecosystem by caring for worms themselves. Connections have been created across age groups and within the larger communities of the schools in our after school programs where we have successfully brought together a variety of children in different age groups and with different learning styles too.

While full engagement of every learner in every class or group is not always possible, we have had some wonderful moments where the level of participation and more importantly, satisfaction of the participants has been seen this year. From building a hoophouse structure to house vining plants to the return of our Community Lunch Events, these moments have been a source of pride for Sprouting Chefs.

Saying farewell to the students graduating from the programs is easier when there is a legacy created and a sense of purpose and evolution can be felt by these same students. Gr. 7 and Gr. 12 students were given chances to generously leave behind something younger generations could benefit from. Starting with a rain garden project at Forest Grove all the way to the continuing efforts of our teens at the Burnaby Mtn Greenhouse Project, with our teens now being a focus of an upcoming documentary film based on their efforts to save the climate with this project as a legacy between the two siblings of Casey and Nathan Lo.

Finally, community continues to be fostered and built in a garden. This has become our motto and validated with our amazing volunteers who have helped from watering and tending the gardens over the summer to helping with the children in our camps and after school programs. Volunteers continue to help us bring a wide variety of people and learners together.

– Barb Koyanagi, Founder/Executive Director

Thank You and Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the support and service of our former board member, Khalid Hosenbocus who was with us as Treasurer for Sprouting Chefs Society since 2015. Henrietta Devine is also acknowledged for her service and support as former Board Chair since 2018. You both have helped us become the organization we are today.

We are extremely grateful for the support of our various sources of financial funding during 2023:

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 Community Lunch Events at Forest Grove and Edmonds June 2023

Various Private/Individual Donations

Inspirational Story- Caio Conradt, Youth Committee Head, Winner of City Of Burnaby Environmental Award

Caio Condradt came to us as a student from Brazil with a desire and passion for Mother Nature that could be seen any time he was outside or inside at the Greenhouse at Burnaby Mountain Secondary. From noticing tiny weeds growing in

the cracks of parking lots to scooping up tiny worms to be placed gently back into the compost bins, his compassion was evident. Caio not only helped us in the greenhouse at Burnaby Mountain taking over from Casey Lo the year before, he also volunteered in every aspect of our programs except for the in school Seed to Table Classes as he also was an AP student securing a full scholarship in a environmental science program at SFU. Volunteering with us was one of many roles he played as he spent his time at a bird rescue organization waking up at the crack of dawn on weekends, Oceanwise's Youth to Sea program as both a mentor and participant honing his passion for marine biology and ran both the Greenhouse Project Club as well as the school's Earthwise Club. Caio encapsulates all we value as he was able to enage our students, lead with kindness, inspire his own peers at his high school and left another legacy in the spirit of generosity with the kids he worked with.

In the late Spring of 2023, all of Caio's efforts were rewarded with a City of Burnaby Youth Environmental Award and an award noting the Greenhouse Project's efforts to address climate change via the Burnaby Youth Sustainability Network and SFU's Sustainability Department ensuring this greenhouse project continues via a grant funding this year's project.

He has been a wonderful addition to our efforts to Sprout More Chefs!

Seed to Table Classes - Edmonds Community School and Forest Grove Elementary

Sustainability by reducing food waste and growing worm bins was a focus for the majority of the Seed to Table Program last year. Developing the Seed to Table Curriculum has been a focus with Sprouting Chefs over the course of the year with the help of our Board Members, Lizzie Gregory and Eddie Chau. There is an aspect of connecting the Core Competencies, First People's Principles of Learning as well as the Social Emotional Learnings in our program where our end goal is to cultivate the Gr. 6/7 students into positive local change makers as set out by the UN's Sustainability Development Goals.

Students at Edmonds faced the hard truths of how much waste their school produces by doing a basic waste audit and determining that due to the lack of food waste bins in their school because of a serious rat problem, an average of 2 tons of waste is produced in their school alone with lunch waste going into garbage landfill bins. Students were shown alternate ways to reduce their waste by bringing their waste home or reducing the amount of food chosen for their lunch. This created an impact in some students who reported small changes in their habits of questioning where their garbage in general goes.

At Forest Grove, a similar audit happened in the Spring and to prepare for this, students in the winter season were given the task to tend to worm bins in 7 different classrooms. Garden Club helped maintain these bins, checking on them throughout the months of Jan to March.

Instilling a sense of legacy and empowerment by discussions of a few of the Sustainable Development Goals, was a focus in the classrooms of the Gr. 6 & 7 students. Meeting students where they are at, Forest Grove and Edmonds were approached a bit differently. Students at Forest Grove being 500 ft from the Transmountain tank farms, had discussions on alternative ways they can be local changemakers in their community by planting a rain garden and watching videos of one of the most influential global changemakers, Greta Thunberg.

Edmonds students were shown videos of Ron Finley, the guerilla gardener from South Central LA to further help define food security. By combining food nutritional lessons, students gained valuable insight in the benefits of eating locally and seasonally and began to grasp the importance of having their own school garden to access some food items found in their lunch boxes. Empowerment and legacy were created in the building of a cage tunnel structure to learn how to grow food vertically and save space.

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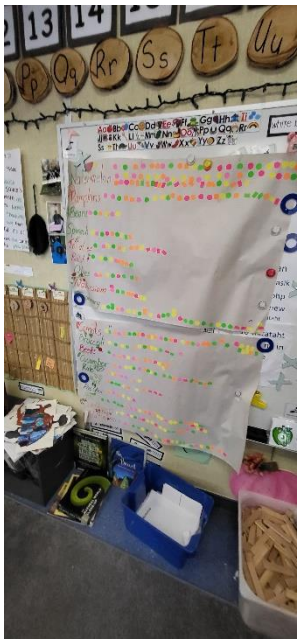
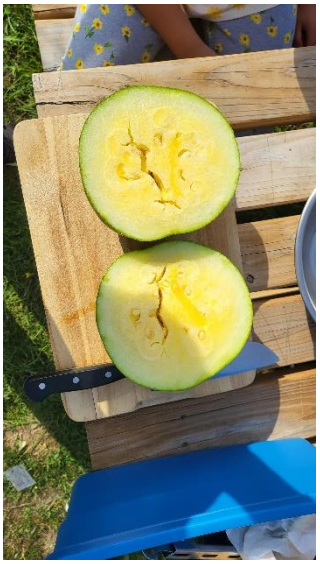


Having a voice and choice in what to grow in the school garden was a key factor with the younger primary students at both schools with a slide show presentation on what we can grow in the garden and then the ability for each student from Kindergarten to Gr. 2 to vote on their favorite crop.



Full circle moments came when Barb returned in early September to showcase a key crop chosen by the students in a harvesting and tasting lesson at Edmonds with 6 classes enjoying watermelons that grew successfully. Students not only learned the health benefits of watermelon and how best to grow them, but also a shared sense of joy and delight with their fellow classmates eating slices of the deliciously sweet fruit outside on a sunny day. Diversity was also included in these lessons with yellow watermelon sampled as well.

All our programs merged into one under the hoophouse structure that housed the watermelon and marigolds growing together. One bin at Edmonds represented the combined efforts of 2 separate groups. The marigolds and watermelon seedlings, companion plans, were taken care of and started in the Greenhouse project at Burnaby Mountain. The hoophouse itself was built by the teens at the high school which ensured the successful harvest by the time the students at Edmonds returned in September.

Unfortunately, these watermelons also spurred on a deeper conversation of social responsibility as many were stolen from the garden space in the end.

Forest Grove also had some hard lessons by the time it came to harvest in early June. Nearly all the salad planted to be harvested and eaten for the year end Community Lunch was severely damaged by a caterpillar infestation for the first time in the history of the garden. This presented a unique opportunity to introduce the idea of interconnectedness of

all life with the question posed to the students: who is more important? The caterpillar that grows into a butterfly to pollinate our plants or us as humans that want to consume the plants for food.

The intense heat during the month of May also lent to some early lessons on climate change and the various issues farmers now face when growing food. Cloth was draped on a variety of cool weather crops in the attempts to stave off the intense sun.

After School Cooking Classes – Empowerment, Diversity and Inclusion

With the support of special funding via the After School Arts and Sports Initiative funneled to us by the Burnaby School District, allowed for the added support of a team of Educational Assistants. Having these assistants allowed for a special group of learners who were either on the Autism Spectrum or other special needs. Providing basic life skills and delicious meals to the group at Edmonds was a success because of this funding with 45 students participating in the year, 4 of the students with special needs and over 20 recipes shared with each group.

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Forest Grove saw the return of a main core group of students who have been participating in the program on and off over the past 5 years. Some of the recipes they created together included soups and stocks, pastas and stir frys, basic grilled cheeses to the more complex Thai curries and seafood as well. These groups also learned sustainable ways of fishing, how to choose sustainable eggs as well as the health benefits of the key ingredients. It was wonderful to see some of our Forest Grove Students be so impacted by our after school cooking class during the school year, that they also wanted to join us in the summer for our Wellness camp.

Community Lunches Return

Thanks to a grant we received in the spring of 2023 from our friends at the Great Vancouver Food Bank, Sprouting Chefs was able to facilitate a school wide Community Lunch at both Forest Grove and Edmonds Community School. Edmonds experienced the full scale of our Community Lunch event for the first time, while the students and staff at Forest Grove were thrilled to have the Community Lunch return.

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Of all the events we have created over the years with our programs, the Community Lunch Events encapsulates what we most endeavour to achieve: community, connection to the school garden by serving as many ingredients from there as possible, or sourcing locally grown crops while providing the opportunity for our students to shine. Gathering all the current and past cooking class students together to prepare, cook and serve a meal to their fellow students was the first task. Training these students to know how to trust themselves and each other with the recipe they have learned over the time they've been with us was next. We were thrilled to source 150 lbs of tomatoes grown in the greenhouses in Delta from our friends at Houwelings Nursery along with 16 basil plants to add to the sauce. Students from Gr. 3 to 5 were also sourced and offered the chance to set up, serve and clean up after the event. Organizing the gymnasiums into a min restaurant with the servers responsible for 2 tables each, created a sense of both teamwork and responsibility.

Since this was the first-time students at Edmonds would be gathering for this lunch event and knowing salad greens would be served, Sprouting Chefs gave the students a chance to first try the salad greens made with a dressing that would be served at the event during the Seed to Table Classes before this event. By the time the lunch occurred, many students were asking for seconds of the salad, appreciating both where the salad came from and how great it tastes.

Students at Forest Grove understood that their salad had to be sourced elsewhere due to the caterpillar infestation in their school garden.

Big thanks to our former Board Memner Selena Yip, who volunteered her time to help Barb pre cook the pasta ahead of the Forest Grove event, anchor the kitchen during the event itself and provide the support needed at the end with the added help of her husband, Scott. Caio Conradt also joined us at both schools to provide tremendous help and support with helping the students prepare the food and afterwards in the clean up efforts before returning to his school to plant in over 50 trees before the end of the school year!

In the end, we Sprouted More Chefs at these events with all students at least trying both the tomato pasta and the salad of assorted greens, eating together as a school community and feeling inspired to join us in both future cooking classes and the garden clubs as well.

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Garden Clubs - Community

As former board member Al Post says, Gardens Build Community which has been affirmed over the years and where 2023 was no different. Community members involved in both Garden Clubs at Forest Grove and Edmonds were diverse and dynamic with teen volunteers including alumni students from Burnaby Mountain joining us at Forest Grove and Educational Assistants who brought their special needs students with them to support at Edmonds.

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Our main intention with the After School Garden Club program is to ensure the school gardens are supported throughout the year by sustainably building the soil, ensuring the seeds planted grow into harvestable food the children can enjoy and learn from while also providing a safe space for our learners to gather with fun outdoor nature based activities.

Achieving each of these goals while facing a variety of climate changes is not always an easy task. Soil was being rebuilt at Forest Grove with cover crops planted in the fall, buried in leaf mulch and a delivery of new composted veggie based soil in the spring. Edmonds with its rat issues and plant theft, had its own set of challenges as well.

We focused on growing as many marigold plants as we could both directly in the garden metal troughs at Edmonds to keep the rats out as well as in the greenhouse at Burnaby Mountain with the greenhouse project creating the bridge between the three spaces. Teens in the greenhouse project, started a few crops ahead of the growing season for both Edmonds and Forest Grove. Some of these crops were successful like the broccoli, watermelon and marigolds while others were harder to transplant into the elementary spaces. Timing these crops was also the challenge with the intense heat of May. Students all learned how it's important to try with a new idea and course correct to improve in the future.

Of all that we learn in the garden spaces, trust, patience, acceptance and forgiveness seem to be the main virtues, important for us all to learn. We emphasis also that it is not the plant to blame or the person who planted the seed but to also take into consideration the growing conditions of these seeds and plants, people and places. What's remarkable is how the children do not want to give up and continue to try again. This was seen at Edmonds when despite 10 strawberry plants being taken out of 16, the children wanted to continue to try to grow them again.

Children at Forest Grove understood the value of the caterpillar despite them eating all our salad greens. Teens at Burnaby Mountain continued to re plant several crops that didn't quite grow well in the greenhouse environment, noting what they learned and how to course correct for this current growing season we're now in.

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Of all the activities both groups experienced in 2023, it was thrilling to see one of the Edmonds Garden Club students, Alvin Chow, visit Forest Grove Elementary Garden Club. Alvin's passion is trees so bringing him to Forest Grove was a fun way to connect him to the trees in the area and to a few of the students too. Alvin also joined us when the Forest Grove Garden Club students visited Burnaby Mountain to explore the greenhouse and surrounding area hosted this time by Caio Conradt.

Burnaby Mountain Greenhouse Project

Continuing the efforts of former Youth Committee Head, Casey Lo, Caio Conradt and the students in the Earthwise and Greenhouse Club at Burnaby Mountain worked extensively throughout the 2023 school year. There was focus on regenerating their soil with compost and worm bins, protecting their outdoor crops under hoophouses built with the support of our friend Pablo Vimos from University Highlands and the SFU Community Gardens, revitalizing the pollinator outdoor garden as well as supporting the two elementary schools by either volunteering to help at the Garden Clubs at Forest Grove or growing crops to be planted later.

Leadership was demonstrated during the field trip Forest Grove had over to the green spaces at Burnaby Mountain. Our hope was for the younger students to continue to appreciate how much effort it takes for food to be provided for them via the challenges farmers face in a small way.

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Summer Wellness & Cooking Camp at St. Timothy's

The Summer Wellness and Cooking Camps are a chance for us to bring all the various cooking and wellness activities together in a week long day camp environment that we are privileged to facilitate in the Community Kitchen space of St. Timothy's Church in Burnaby. Our campers this year came from a variety of places around the lower mainland including North Vancouver and Vancouver, as well as Burnaby, Coquitlam and Port Moody. They included a few returning campers from last year as well as 3 students from the Forest Grove After School Cooking Class programs.

Supporting the campers were returning volunteers from last summer Josh, Kayla, Anika and Vanessa along with Caio and Katarina Callingham from Burnaby Mtn and who were volunteering with us during the school year. We also had the help of former cooking class students, Hailey and Erin with Erin's younger brother Wesley, being more of a junior volunteer than a camp participant as he did so well supporting and passing on his skills to the younger campers.

Activities began with setting intentions and stretching our bodies with the help of a Yoga Buggy children's yoga teacher, Ms. Anastasia each morning. Virtues of Trust, Patience, Confidence, Inner Peace and Gratitude were all a focus each day. We continued the tradition of visiting Whole Foods for a field trip each Wednesday to shop on a budget with the kids cooking their lunch upon their return. Mindful craft activities included creating infinity block fidget toys, dreamcatchers, intention bracelets and one whole afternoon devoted to creating our own bath and beauty products including face masks and body scrubs.

Impact Story – Noah Gonzales

Noah came to us as a very reserved yet respectful camper who didn't necessarily enjoy the morning yoga or crafts as much as he loved to cook. During the other activities, we did our best to include Noah, but he often preferred to sit quietly on his own. Whenever there was an extra chance to make smoothies for everyone or turning those smoothies into popsicles, making the starter for the bread dough or an afternoon snack, Noah gladly helped us out. And when it came time to return home, he thanked us with a special gift of dried mango and coffee from his visit to his home country, the Philippines.

Near the end of summer, I received a special video call from Noah and his dad as Noah was preparing to serve his entire extended family using recipes he learned during the camp. Noah re created 7 recipes from camp with the help of his dad. This is our marker for success: when a child transforms from being quiet and reserved as well as doubting his abilities to doing his best to re create the meals he learned in our programs. Well done Noah! Proud of your efforts and hope your family enjoyed the meal you made with love for them!

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A Look Ahead - Goals of 2023/2024

- Youth Committee Head – Nathan Lo & MG Danielson
- Seed to Table Program at Forest Grove and Edmonds
    - Gr. 6/7 Legacies – planting a tree at Edmonds, Improving the Rain Garden at Forest Grove, fostering compassion, kindness and interconnectedness.
- Garden Clubs
    - Continuing to create connections between us all, sustaining the Garden Club at Edmonds with funding for the Spring
- Cooking Classes
    - Expanding the cooking classes into the Richmond School District
- Summer Wellness & Cooking Camp
    - Securing funds to employ our valued teens.

In closing, it was with much appreciation, pride and gratitude for all those who have been mentioned in this AGM report who have helped us achieve where we are now.

May we continue to learn, grow and connect with each other in the kitchens, gardens, forests and classrooms we have the privilege to teach in together!

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