

Growing Chefs! Ontario

2024-2025

Summer Impact Report - Community Programs



Partners in Food & Agricultural Education

Notes from the Community!

Rooted in Our Community

This year, our community programming remained deeply rooted in collaboration. We delivered nearly 100 programs across the city, engaging approximately 4,000 participants through meaningful, hands-on experiences grounded in food, learning, and collaboration.

We focused on cultivating inclusive programs that responded to the diverse needs of our community:

- Cooking and food literacy workshops for children and youth with high support needs
- Free or affordable garden and culinary activities for low-income families
- Culturally grounded programming with Indigenous organizations and partners
- Sensory-based learning experiences for young children and caregivers

Partnering for Impact

These programs were developed for and delivered with community organizations including Autism Ontario, Life Spin, Indwell, Childreach, London Public Library, North West and South London Neighbourhood Resource Centres, Nshwaasnangong Family Centre, Investing in Children, London Training Centre, Storybook Gardens, Hutton House, the London Knights, Kiwanis Club of London, Environmental Defence, and many more.

We also took part in several large community events such as Seedy Saturday, Kids First Day, EarthFest, the Kiwanis Walk, Run, Roll, Science Rendezvous, Forest City Road Race, Fall Food Fest, and the Punk Rock Flea Market - bringing food education to public spaces through engaging, hands-on activities.

Rooted in our community and made possible by the dedication of our team and the continued support of our partners, we're excited to build on this momentum in the coming year - please keep reading for highlights from specific community programs!

- Christy Cook, Education Programs Manager

Program Spotlight: Science Rendezvous!



At Science Rendezvous, hosted by Western University and attended by thousands, we shared one of our favourite food science demonstrations: **Miracle Berries**! These unique berries contain a protein called **miraculin**, which binds to taste receptors and temporarily makes sour foods like lemon, lime, and rhubarb, taste sweet.

It was a fun, hands-on way for children and youth to explore the science of taste and how our brains interpret flavour! We can't wait for next year and another chance to get kids excited about food (and science too)!

Program Spotlight: Seedy Saturday!



We had so much fun sharing our love of seeds with the amazing gardening community at this year's **Seedy Saturday**, hosted by our partners at London Middlesex Master Gardeners.

- We gave away **thousands of seeds** - harvested, processed, and packaged by our team - to help others grow their own culinary herbs, native plants, and pollinator-attracting flowers.
- All seeds came from our own **learning gardens**, where students and volunteers learned about **seed saving, climate resilience, and biodiversity**.
- Our booth also featured a **free pollinator flower planting activity** and our **always popular sensory tray**, to engage kids of all ages in hands-on exploration.

Testimonial



"The content was excellent and exactly what was described. Activities were engaging and age appropriate. Information was great and classes were fun with a good variety of learning and play time!"

**Amy M.,
Parent**



Let's Get
Planting!

Recipe: Flower Power!

Supplies:

- 1 quart
- 1 mixing bowl
- 1 mixing spoon
- Measuring cups & spoons

1 cup potting mix and 1 tablespoon vermicompost to bowl and mix with spoon.
add 1 tablespoon of water and mix with spoon.
more or less water as needed for a moist but not soggy wet mix.

press the top with soil mixture. Make a small 1 inch hole in the middle of the soil with your finger.
drop in 2 seeds

Gently tuck in seeds with more soil and give a gentle pat

After-care:

- Place pot in a sunny, warm window.
- Put a small plate or container lid underneath pot to catch any water spills.
- Check in daily for watering, only water when soil on top

Testimonial



“Our families were so grateful and excited to be able to learn new skills, try new foods and enjoy cooking together.

Huge thank you to the professional and fun team, and to Growing Chefs! for bringing healthy and delicious food to our community.”

- Saira L

**Families First CAPC Project Manager,
South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre**

2024-2025 Education Projects are presented by:



With the generosity of the following Corporate Sponsors
and Community Partners:



Cohen Highley
LAWYERS



LERNERS

Harrison
Pensa
PERSONAL INJURY
LAWYERS

fico family lawyers
collective



seasons care
DIETITIAN NETWORK 25 years

SCOTT PETRIE LLP
LAW FIRM



Colborne Street United Church
Local Outreach Committee



Grand River
Agricultural Society



SPM Financial™
MANAGE YOUR RISK. GROW YOUR WEALTH.

We are fortunate to have the generous support of Grants,
Individual Donors and Private Foundations \$10,000 +:



Peter Gilgan
Foundation



THE SCHAD FOUNDATION



TreeCanada



Peter & Catherine Clark Family Foundation

The Smibert Family

*The Brian and Heather
Semkowski Foundation*

*Brenda and Dave Savel
Foundation*

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

*Rocca Hunter Family
Foundation*

*Richard and Shelley Baker
Family Foundation*

*Cambia Development
Foundation*

Estate of Jeanne Olliver

We are fortunate to have the generous support of Grants, Individual Donors and Private Foundations \$500 - \$9,999:

Auberge du Petit Prince Inc

Carolyn Luistro

ROOTS Community Fund

Ian Smith & Janet Fleet

*Making a Difference - C & J
Wright Family Fund*

Enterprise Mobility Foundation

The Gate Key Foundation

Nigel and Rhonda Gilby Foundation

*Nature London Community
Eco-Grants Program*

Christine Scheer & John Wilson

Heather Manness

Whole Kids Garden Grant

Les Siemieniuk & Jackie Bell

Dara Lambe

Mary Hajpel

Brian & Sharon Lessard

Justin Pilon & Sarah Emms-Pilon

Vincent Chicoine

Axay Sharma and LeeAnn Ungar

Libby McMillan

Natasha Roberts

Jordan Hypes

London Waldorf School

John Wojcik

Mortgage Wise Financial

*Milton and Jean Broderick
Charitable Fund*

Ivey Community Connects Internship

Gord Hart

Optimist Club of Byron

Janet Stewart

Joel Bakker

We are proud of our in-kind supporters:



We are fortunate to have received generous support through:



Thank you for your support!

Growing Chefs! Ontario HQ
460 King Street
London, Ontario N6B 1S9

(519) 679-4769
andrew@growingchefsontario.ca

Charitable #85895 9026 RR0001



Growing Chefs! Ontario



@growingchefsontario



@GrowingChefsON



Growing Chefs! Ontario



www.growingchefsontario.ca