

Growing Chefs! Ontario

2025-2026

Winter Impact Report - School Programs



Partners in Food & Agricultural Education



Winter Festival: January 16 - February 8th, 2026

Thank you to all of our sponsors!

Londonlicious is a, community-focused, bi-annual food festival in London that not only highlights the city's diverse restaurants but also emphasizes supporting local farmers, growers, and producers.

All sponsors of the bi-annual festival also support our children's education projects.

The Londonlicious Festival supports us in realizing our vision of a healthy community that is engaged with our food system!



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For more information on the new
Londonlicious Festival visit www.londonlicious.ca

Notes from the Classroom!

Throughout the school year, Growing Chefs! Ontario delivered inclusive, hands-on food education programs reaching students across multiple schools and learning environments.

This year, we engaged over 1,700 students through Growing Chefs! Ontario in the Classroom at Woodland Heights, Masonville, and Princess Anne French Immersion Public Schools, as well as Standing Stone Elementary School. Students strengthened their confidence and food skills as they chopped, measured, tasted and learned together.

We also ran our first cooking class designed exclusively for blind and visually-impaired students – an exciting milestone in expanding accessibility! Read on for more details.

In partnership with First Nations Knowledge Sharers, students prepared a Three Sisters (corn, beans, squash) succotash with wild rice while learning from Ray John Jr of Oneida Nation, Turtle Clan about its significance and history, and from Joy Rogers of Six Nations of the Grand River, Seneca Nation about corn beading.

Coming up this spring, we will:

- Expand Classroom Kitchen programs for Grades 1-6, building on last year's pilot
- Continue Kindergarten Kitchen and Specialist High Skills Major field trips
- Host HQ field trips with our wood-fired pizza oven and Learning Garden, giving students in Alternative Education and Developmental Education Programs fun and seasonal culinary experiences
- Launch Farm Field Trips for Grade 7-8 students at our new farm location!

As our programs grow in reach and complexity, our commitment remains the same – creating meaningful, inclusive, hands-on food learning experiences for students across our community.

Thank you for helping us plant seeds of confidence, curiosity and connection!

- Christy Cook, Education Programs Manager





Classroom Memories



Testimonials



“Thank you!!! We are so grateful for the experience and all the classes have nothing but wonderful things to say about the program!!! The most common feedback I have received is how engaging the program is and how wonderful it is to see the students so willing to try new and nutritious foods.”

- Jenny C, Woodland Heights Public School, School Champion, Growing Chefs! in the Classroom

“This program was a fantastic opportunity for my students to learn about food preparation, food history, and healthy food practices! They loved getting to eat their creations. I was really impressed with their engagement, enthusiasm, and willingness to try new foods. The chefs do an amazing job teaching valuable content while engaging the students and using age-appropriate strategies. What an incredible experience!”

- Princess Anne French Immersion Public School, Teacher, Growing Chefs! in the Classroom



Program Spotlight: After-School Snacks

This accessible, confidence-building cooking class, focused on after-school snacks, supported blind and partially-sighted youth from FDK to Grade 12 in building independence through fun, practical kitchen skills. Delivered in partnership with the Thames Valley District School Board, recipes were provided in braille and large print, and the program was hosted in the accessible kitchen at the Canadian Institute for the Blind.

"I wanted to reach out and thank you and your chefs. They were professional, knowledgeable and went above and beyond for our students. The care that went into this day was impressive. They ensured they gave each student individualized attention, allowed for many hands-on experiences, had examples to show the students, encouraged them to smell the ingredients, and delivered an awesome program.

This was a meaningful experience for our students and it certainly built their confidence in the kitchen. Our students and staff are still talking about it, and I've heard more than once that students have used these recipes at home, taught their siblings how to make them, etc. It was a wonderful experience and we are so grateful."

- Jaclyn F, Thames Valley District School Board, Vision Resource



REFRIED BEAN QUESADILLAS
Crispy golden quesadillas stuffed with creamy refried beans, melty cheese, and tasty veggies. A perfect warm snack or simple lunch.

Accessibility Matters



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