



The Grandview Woodland Food Connection 2014 Year End Report

The Grandview Woodland Food Connection had an ever growing year with exciting new projects, new community connections, and new learnings. The GWFC is proud to be a leader in the local food movement and most recently joined 37 other **Good Food Organizations** across Canada who have pledged to work together from a set of shared principles that prioritize creating respectful environments, offering high-quality programs and the only best food possible, supporting community leadership, and working together towards progressive social change.

Closer to home the GWFC has partnered with new innovative programs such as the Britannia Food Share, the Eat it Forward Community Market and Off the Grill and have expanded existing programs which are helping to build dignified food access and strengthen community food security especially for those in our community who are struggling financially. A total of 3,300 community members participated on our programs and festivals in 2014.

We also saw the completion of the report **“Who Gets Sustenance: Community Voices Speak about Access to Local, Healthy Food”** co-authored with SPARC BC Society and ourselves. This report highlighted several important issues that challenge us to consider this coming year including ensuring that hard to reach individuals have access to food information, better supports for those living with illness or in isolation, increasing availability of quality produce and nutrient rich foods, and programming that supports the emotional, social and psychological well-being of the whole person.

With such an active 2014, join us in sharing a few highlights from the past year.

Nexwaʔs wa lh7áʔnexw (Transformed Life) Garden

The Nexwaʔs wa lh7áʔnexw Britannia School Garden continues to grow and we worked with over 100 students teaching them how to grow food. Cultivating food growing skills and healthy eating awareness early in life is an important part of our food programming and we are seeing increasing student interest in food growing.





We continued to work with the Environmental Youth Alliance's Growing Kids and the Sustainable Opportunities for Youth Leadership (SOYL) summer garden internship. Both programs are now in their fourth year and providing fantastic opportunities for youth to learn about the food system and a variety of food growing topics.

We also saw the best harvest ever this year. More garden plots were built and our soil fertility has vastly improved after several years of composting and soil building. Two very successful Community Service Days with Aramark employees and McMaster Alumni students saw us build new and attractive infrastructure in the gardens.

Le Chou / Garden 2 Plate

The Le Chou Intergenerational Garden located in the Woodland Park Community Garden has two new partners – the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre and the WATARI Latin American Kitchen program. A second year of Evergreen Foundation funding also allowed us to run a new program for at-risk youth called Garden 2 Plate.

Le Chou serves as an abundant community food growing space and opportunity for cross-cultural relationships and friendships that were built, fostering greater community inclusion and a stronger more resilient social fabric.

The Garden 2 Plate youth program was particularly interesting. Youth learned about the connection from garden to plate by growing and cooking their own tasty lunches with food from the garden. This project provided a half day hands-on gardening to build their food growing skills and a half day preparing a garden fresh lunch led by a trained chef. Field trips to the Van Tech School Market Garden and to the UBC Farm offered the youth an eye opening experience of other food growing possibilities.

Britannia Bulk Food Buy

Britannia Bulk Buy is an ever more popular program responding to many people's need for basic quality nutritious fruits and veggies at an affordable price. But as the word gets out, the program is now at full capacity with a small wait list and mostly limited by sorting and distribution space. In 2014 we helped 38 families save between \$1,260 and \$1,800 on their food bill through this program.



Off the Grill

Off the Grill is helping to improve adolescent health and positive connections among at-risk youth, the community, and youth supports through an intersectoral and collaborative approach. The cornerstone of this program is the preparation of healthy meals with youth support and the serving of these meals to both youth and community members in the Britannia Plaza where these youth congregate. These meals are thus a point of social connection among youth, the community, and youth service providers, filling several gaps in the lives of these youth.

Off the Grill is proving to be a tremendous support for those Britannia youth served. Off the Grill fed approximately 1217 nutritious meals to youth and community members in 2014. The program continues to run every Friday evening, providing healthy snacks and will resume in 2015 twice a week during the 4 summer months in the outdoor plaza.

The program is increasing access to nutritious food, diversifying youth palates and fostering of healthy food choice knowledge; directly engaging youth in the planning, coordination and implementation of the program building their food and leadership skills; providing quality engagement hours among youth and adults; creating a safe, inclusive, and engaging space in the Britannia Plaza where the youth congregate; and increasing collaboration amongst community partners that is strengthening community capacity to respond to the needs of some of our most vulnerable youth.

Eat it Forward Community Food Market

We are thrilled to partner with the Eat it Forward Community Food Market, which is now running and enjoying considerable community support. We regard this initiative as important in helping to providing dignified organic food access for residents who previously were not able to eat organic. It is an important game changer in making organic finally accessible for some of those most financially strapped in our neighbourhood. As the market builds its subsidy pool, we will move our Bulk Buy participants to the Eat it Forward market discount program where these participants will be able to purchase organic food of their choice at up to 80% savings.



Britannia Potato Farm

It is worth mentioning that the children's Potato Farm once again pulled in a respectable harvest of potatoes grown by the Britannia Grade 3s. This wonderful little project is providing a fun harvest to plate experience for the kids who especially get a huge thrill digging up and eating the fall potatoes.

Britannia Community Kitchen

The GWFC ran two Community Kitchen sessions in 2014 with 20 individuals and a number of children who participated. These enjoyable kitchens provided new cooking and eating experiences and a chance to build friendships with others over a tasty meal. The highly diverse participants were from places like Kenya, Vietnam, Haida Gwaii, China, Latin America, and Portugal made for an ethnically diverse cuisine.

Stone Soup and the Corn Festivals

These two annual festivals remind us that food security is not also serious business but an opportunity to celebrate the importance of food in our lives – to sing, dance, play and feast. Both festivals again drew large crowds of people and for the corn festival, 2014 was their biggest year thus far with all food vendors selling out of food near closing time. Connecting with other cultural groups through food is a key priority in building a stronger food resilient community. This next year in 2015, Stone Soup celebrates its 20th year.

Britannia Food Share

The Britannia Food Share was launched this past year in partnership with CityStudio and targets the Greenest City Action Plan's Zero Waste goals by diverting unmarketable yet edible produce from two local grocers – Eternal Abundance and Drive Organics to supplement GWFCs Bulk Buy and the Off the Grill programs. The local grocers simply set aside produce in designated crates for us to pick-up weekly for use in the meals or for redistribution. This past year we recovered a total of 566 lbs of quality organic food.

For more program information visit: www.britanniacentre.org > services > community services > food sustainability