

# Sustainable Opportunities for Youth Leadership (SOYL)

## a youth program of the Intergenerational Landed Learning Project



a place of mind  
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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### 2013 SOYL Program Overview

SOYL prepares youth to embrace their personal and collective power and engages them as food-literate leaders. Through the SOYL internship, secondary students gain the skills and confidence to advance sustainable food systems and cultivate thriving school food gardens.

2013 SOYL interns shone as leaders. The interns stepped up to grow and prepare healthy foods for each other and the community, lead their school garden clubs, share their knowledge with others, and deepen their skills by returning as 2<sup>nd</sup>-year SOYL Apprentices.

SOYL exceeded its goals for 2013, mentoring a growing number of youth, enhancing our leadership and food systems curriculum, and increasing community access to healthy food and a healthy environment through youth-led programs. SOYL is growing strong!



### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

When SOYL staff came to speak to Lara's\* class, she was the only student to apply. She knew other teenagers thought gardening wasn't cool, but she was curious about sustainability and wanted to do something to help the Earth. Lara was excited to help her school grow its own food and jumped at every opportunity SOYL offered to learn more or contribute to the garden. She committed to riding her bike as many days of the SOYL internship as possible, and when we asked for a volunteer to take responsibility for curing bundles of harvested garlic, Lara stepped up to carry the garlic home...on her bike! She took advantage of the curious glances of passers-by to talk to community about local food.

At the end of the summer, her mother offered to take Lara shopping for new clothes as a reward for persevering through a challenging piano exam, but Lara had her heart set on something else. "Mom," she said, "I want a compost bin!" Although the request seemed unusual from a teenager, Lara's mom bought her the compost bin. Lara says her family has been using the bin a lot and it's going great. "I'd say 95% of our organic waste goes to the compost bin instead of to the city...At the bottom there's a thin layer of brown soil, so that's a good sign." She's proud to be decreasing waste *and* making a rich garden amendment for the garden.

\*For privacy purposes, participants' names have been changed.

### FOOD LITERATE LEADERSHIP

Andrew\* joined SOYL in 2012 as a 14-year-old, entering grade 9. One of the youngest students in the program, Andrew was shy and seldom contributed to conversations. Over time, Andrew gained confidence and started sharing his ideas to ensure that the food grown in the school garden would be used in his school's cafeteria. Cooking became his passion. One day while chopping cabbage for a food preservation workshop, he announced that he might become a chef and wanted to study culinary arts. Andrew followed through on his plan. Not only did he successfully complete his school's culinary program, but he also completed an accelerated pre-International Baccalaureate program.

In spring of 2013, Andrew applied to work with SOYL once again—this time as an apprentice. Andrew displayed new confidence, enthusiasm, and leadership. For the very first Veggie-of-the-Week challenge, in which interns are provided a new veggie to sample and prepare, he arrived with a kale salad that included over 12 ingredients and featured quinoa, a food Anthony had never heard of before participating in SOYL. To prepare his dish, he had gone by himself to the grocery store and spent four hours shopping and cooking. Andrew's salad was delicious. As the group finished every morsel, Andrew proudly told us that his family loved it and that he couldn't wait to make it again!

**LAND** SOYL is committed to leaving the soil better than we found it and preparing the next generation to make consumer choices that protect Earth's ecology.

During the summer of 2013, SOYL interns contributed 1600 hours to ensuring the health and productivity of gardens and compost systems at four Vancouver secondary schools. Beyond the normal internship hours, they committed to a regular watering schedule. This commitment to the simplest, yet most essential garden task increased youth initiative and sense of ownership. SOYL's training prepared youth manage the planning and maintenance of the school gardens, with consideration for the unique needs of each place.



**Britannia Secondary** – Interns planned and executed successional planting for on-going harvest, increased soil fertility, and managed a 3-bin compost system



**Vancouver Technical Secondary** – Youth seeded over-wintering crops to increase school-year harvest. They planted large sections of corn, potatoes, and broccoli for autumn harvest.



**David Thompson Secondary** – Interns collaborated with DT's chef educator to plan the garden and grow produce for the cafeteria. SOYL worked with student leaders to improve management of an in-vessel compost system.



**Sir Winston Churchill Secondary** – SOYL interns staked and pruned tomatoes, improved soil quality, intensified pest management techniques, and planted fall crops.

## Learning Earth Stewardship

- Garden planning and seed selection
- Crop rotation, cover cropping, and mulching
- Integrated pest management
- Invasive weed ID and removal

Organic Crop Management Practices

- Prof. emeritus, Dr. Art Bomke, UBC Soil Science
- Duncan Martin, Daily Eggs
- Graham Anderson, Shift Urban Delivery

Expert Speakers

Sustainable Food Systems Workshops

- Sustainable waste management
- Sustainable transportation systems

Urban Agriculture Mentors

- Fresh Roots Urban Farm
- Farmers on 57th

"There are three major things that I have learned from participating in SOYL. **The first one is leadership.** From the orientation day to the end you will...get out of your own comfort zone, so you can step up as a leader or step down to allow someone [else]. **The second thing I learned was the importance of gardening...**In our modern society, gardening is a very important skill to have and to cherish. With all of this technology it is often hard to find where your food is coming from. This brings me to **my third and most important value, consumer awareness.** Until SOYL I would often just buy things because it tastes good or the packaging looks cool...I now look at the label and see where it is from or what's in. Is it from Canada? Is it local? ... This skill is by far the most important because we live in a world of consumerism, you can not go two minutes without your brain being fed all of this false information..." –SOYL 2013 Intern



FOOD: We believe that all people have a right to safe, affordable, and appropriate food. SOYL interns take action to contribute to a resilient food system. Through community service learning, workshops, and discussions, SOYL interns experience first hand all areas of the food system: production, processing, food distribution, and waste management.



- **Garden Stewardship**
- Garden planning
- Organic production techniques



- **Backyard Chickens**
- Animal care
- Egg production
- Legislation



**Food Production**



- **UBC Farm**
- Soil assessment
- Honeybee hive tour



- **Field Processing**
- Salad prep
- Market prep



- **Healthy Garden Snacks**
- Preparing Veggie of the Week
- Facilitating a cooking class for kids



**Food Processing**



- **Food Preservation**
- Canning jam
- Making pickles
- Processing grain
- Bread baking



- **Produce Market Stand**
- Outreach and customer service
- Sales and accounting



- **Discovery Organics and Fresh Direct Produce**
- Touring warehouses
- Comparing organic and conventional distributors



**Food Distribution and Access**

- **Portland Hotel Society and Hastings Urban Farm**
- Promoting food security in the Downtown East Side
- Farming and cooking with community members



- **Compost**
- Healthy compost management
- Using garden compost



- **Vancouver Landfill and Burns Bog**
- Touring composting facilities
- Exploring ecologically sound waste management alternatives



**Waste Management and Renewal**



**COMMUNITY** For many youth, cultivating effective communication and leadership skills is one of the most exciting and inspiring aspects of the SOYL Internship, developing competencies relevant to many areas of life. Through a series of workshops, the interns develop a toolbox of leadership concepts and skills to draw upon when working with communities.

With accompaniment from SOYL staff, interns put their learning into action to provide the following in their communities:

**Community Education**—SOYL youth developed, organized and facilitated three Field to Table workshops, taking children and other teens through the steps of growing, harvesting, preparing, and eating healthy foods together in community. Youth also presented a workshop for teachers at the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Think&EatGreen@School Summer Institute, inspiring educators, school administrators, support staff, and parents to advance school gardens and the relevant, real-world learning they promote.

**Community Service**—Interns provided service to a number of organizations within Vancouver's food system. They helped to grow food at Farmers on 57<sup>th</sup> for the residents of the George Pearson Centre who live with physical disabilities, and prepared meals with and for folks living in the Portland Hotel Society buildings who struggle with substance abuse and concurrent disorders. They provided demanding physical labour to maintain and develop Canada's first schoolyard market gardens at Vancouver Technical and David Thompson Secondary Schools in collaboration with Fresh Roots Urban Farm. They spoke to children, peers, adults, and seniors about the needs of their communities, and they helped grow these visions into reality.

**Community Food**—Youth interns increased awareness about and access to local, sustainable food by hosting two successful market stands at Churchill and Britannia Secondary Schools.

## Urban Farming



## Youth Markets



## Youth-led Workshops



*"Before the internship, I was a pretty 'keep all to himself' guy. I didn't like to talk in front of crowds and I did not like to talk/work with people who I did not know or know well. But after the internship, all of that changed. I started doing stuff I wouldn't have done before. I started playing violin and made a ton of cool friends. I started to volunteer to do speeches in front of big crowds. Just recently my teacher came up to me and ask if I wanted to become next year's (2014) "student forum leader". The old me would say no, but I said "Alright" with a big smile on my face. I can now say that my life is pretty hectic, but in the good way of course."* —SOYL 2013 intern



**Community Communication**—In addition to sharing ideas and knowledge orally through workshops and markets, SOYL youth extended their reach into the global community by communicating their experiences and learning through a blog.

By writing a blog, SOYL interns shared the rewards...

## Delicious Vegetables!

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — dtstudent @ 1:48 PM [Edit This](#)

Tags: [fresh produce](#), [Wow! Look at this harvest!](#) [Wowowow](#), [Wowowow](#), [This is what delicious](#)



Wow! Look at this harvest! Wowowow. Wowowow. This is what delicious, fresh produce looks like. There's value to really putting effort in and seeing growth, huh?

...and the disappointments...

## A Farewell To Onions August 13, 2013

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#) — brittaniastudent @ 2:37 PM



We have had a good year here with the SOYL internship, we've met awesome people, and worked with the gardens at Brit and Van Tech. We worked very arduously at maintaining these wonderful gardens, and was very rewarding seeing our produce harvested and sold at this years Farmers Market at The Artful Sundays. Sadly, however, some person had the audacity to steal our Walla Walla onions that we grew at Van Tech. It was tear jerker to see our beautiful onions taken away. Which brings us to the topic of signage and the importance it is to have them. Apparently studies have shown the significance of signage and that people would be less likely to steal from our gardens if those signs were made by children instead of explaining what and who has made this garden possible.

[Leave a Comment](#)

...very real to urban farmers.

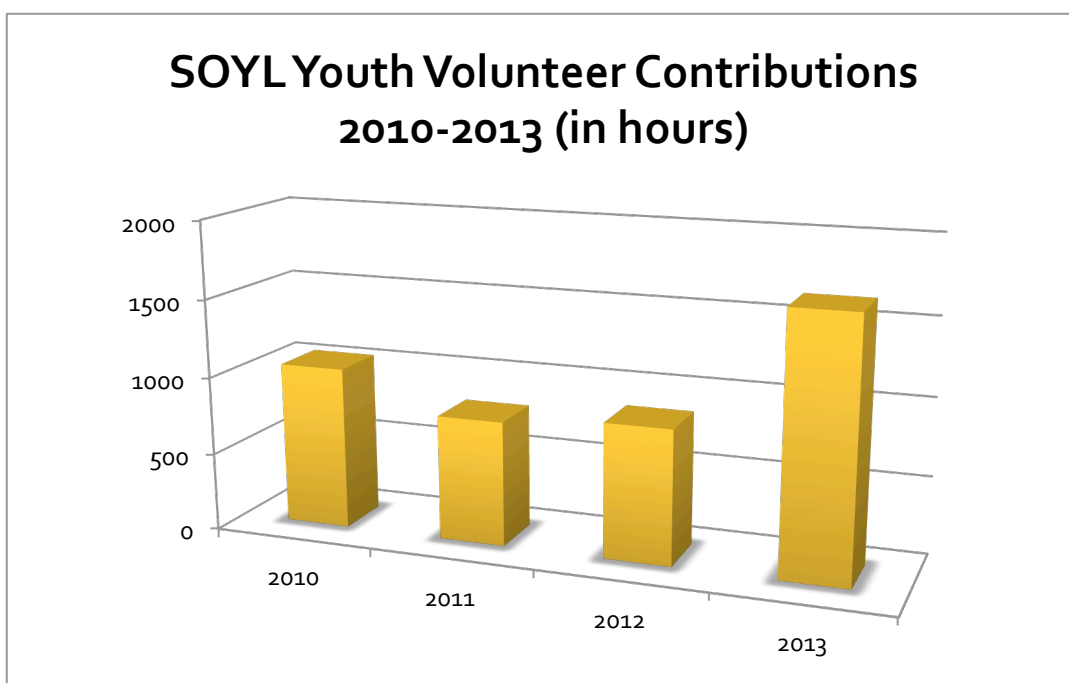
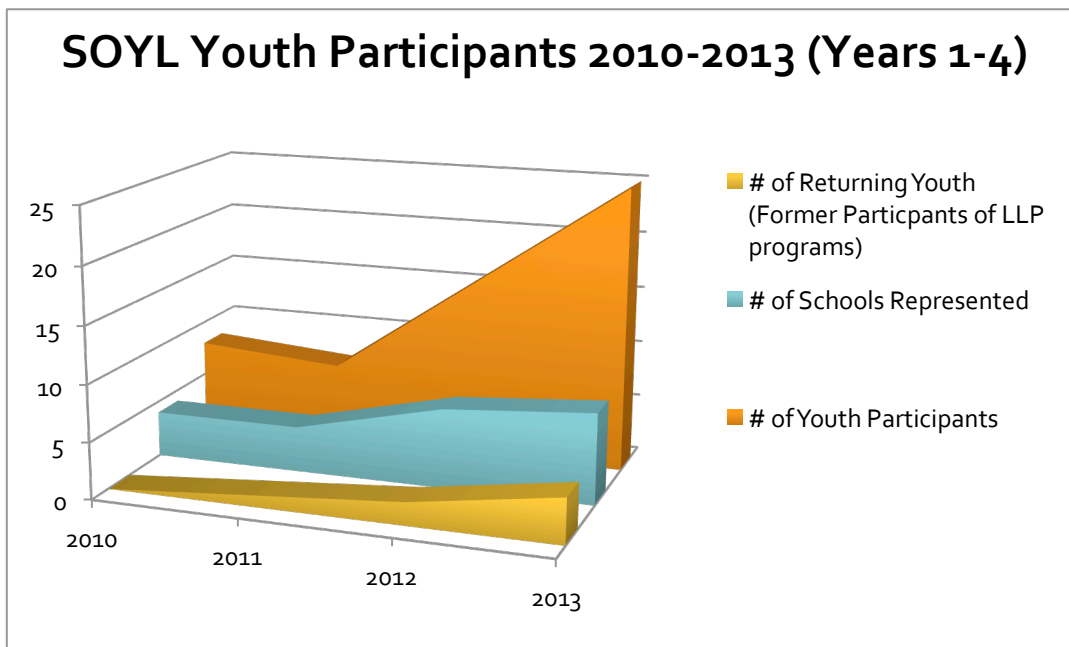
Read more about the SOYL Internship in the interns' own words at <https://soylprogram.wordpress.com>.

**A YEAR OF GROWING** The SOYL internship is gaining the attention of teachers and youth across the Vancouver school district and beyond. Youth want to get involved with SOYL to deepen and extend their understanding of sustainability and put their academic learning into action to create change in their community. Due to unprecedented youth interest in the 2013 SOYL summer internship, we accepted 22 interns and 3 apprentices into the program, despite our original capacity of 16 participants.

This summer, the internship ran 159.5 program hours, 9:30am-3pm over 6 weeks time. SOYL interns worked in two separate crews during the week. Each crew spent two days each week, plus flex time for watering, taking on the leadership of two school gardens. Each Wednesday the two crews united for a Community Day to extend their knowledge and experience in the local food system.

Staff also accompanied SOYL 2012 graduates, returning as SOYL apprentices, to deepen their skills in areas ranging from community education to outreach and communication. SOYL apprentices, in turn, accompanied the 2013 interns as they developed workshops and created a blog.

SOYL continues to provide support for school gardens and youth interns during the 2013-14 school year. Approximately 85% of the 2013 intern graduates are involved with their school's garden club and many have assumed leadership roles. This year, our part-time staff members are meeting regularly with youth to offer opportunities for skill building, mentorship, and networking. We are hosting four reunions over the school year to continue to strengthen this supportive community of youth leaders.





THANK YOU to the many people and organizations whose generous contributions of time and resources have made SOYL possible!

**Donors:**



Coast Capital Savings Credit Union

NSERC PromoScience

Vancity Credit Union\*

Service Canada—Canada Summer Jobs

UBC Work Learn Program

*\* Support for this project does not necessarily imply Vancity's endorsement of the findings or contents of this report.*

**Gifts In-Kind**

Fresh Roots Urban Farm (FRUF)

Stellar Seeds

Sustainable Produce Urban Delivery (SPUD)

**Program Advisors and Contributors:**

Gray Orion and Scott Bell, Fresh Roots Urban Farm (FRUF)

Tessa Wetherill, Farmers on 57<sup>th</sup> at George Pearson Centre

Ian Marcuse, Grandview Woodland Food Connection & Britannia Urban Garden (BUG)

Sarah Carten, Vancouver Coastal Health

Melanie Beliveau, Vancouver Technical Secondary School

Lee Green, David Thompson Secondary School

Pauline Tinka and Francois Clark, Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School

Yulanda Yuen and Denise Isomura, Britannia Secondary School

Dr. Art Bomke and Stephanie Shulhan, Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm

Duncan Martin, Daily Eggs

Graham Anderson, Shift Urban Delivery

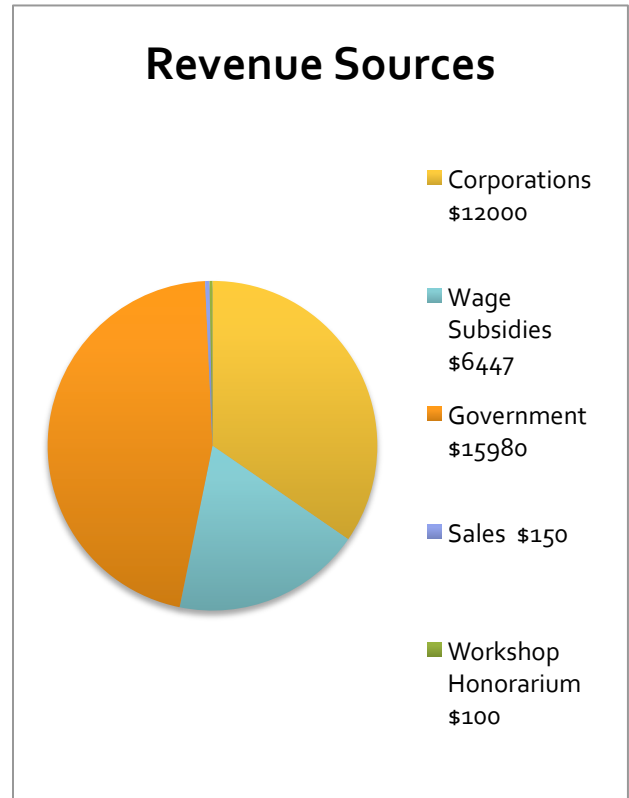
Randy Hooper, Discovery Organics

Coco Culbertson and Eric Drewes, Portland Hotel Society & Hastings Urban Farm

Rick Havlak, Homesteader's Emporium

# Financial Report 2013-14

REVENUE	
Coast Capital Savings	7500
Canada Summer Jobs-Service Canada	2767
Work Learn	3680
Workshop Honorarium	100
Produce Sales	150
NSERC PromoScience	16000
Vancity Credit Union	4500
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>34697</b>



EXPENSES	
Staffing	33450
Garden Supplies	150
Promotion/Communication	500
Transportation	507
Volunteer Expenses	90
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>34697</b>

