



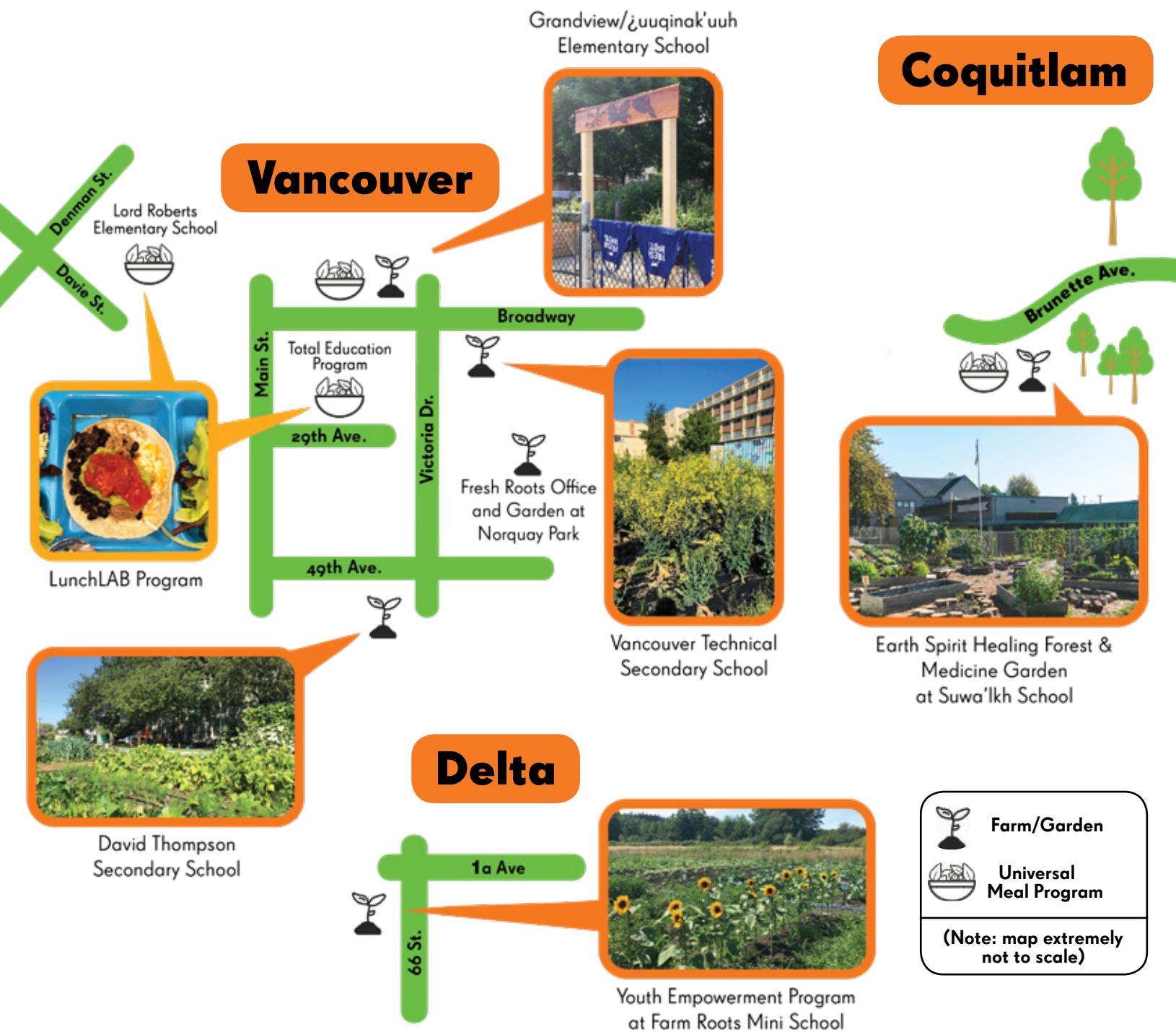
2019

Impact Report

WHAT IS FRESH ROOTS?

Fresh Roots is a charity that runs educational farms on school grounds.

WHERE DO PROGRAMS RUN?



We have the privilege and honour to work with the land. This land is the ancestral and unceded homelands of the s̓c̓awaθ̓ən məsteyəx̓w (Tsawwassen), k̓w̓ik̓w̓əḷ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), ḡíćəḡ (Katzie), stó:lō (Sto:lo), x̓w̓məθ̓k̓w̓əḡəm (Musqueam), sel̓il̓witul̓h (Tseil-Waututh), q̓iq̓éy̓t (Qayqayt), and s̓k̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish) Coast Salish peoples. As settlers, as farmers, and as educators, we acknowledge the harm that farming and schooling has done to Indigenous Peoples and the land across this region. We work towards ongoing reconciliation as listeners, food sharers, and land stewards.

WHY?

We love the land. We love food. We love our community. Here are just a few more reasons why we do what we do:

We know that...

We also know that...

So...

In British Columbia, one in six children live in households experiencing food insecurity.¹

Youth who have access to adequate and nutritious foods are healthier and better able to learn.

Fresh Roots grows food to fill hungry bellies *and* teaches kids to grow, cook, and share their own food, creating a more food-secure future!

Canadians now spend more time indoors than ever before—approximately 90% of each day—and most of that time is spent sitting in front of a screen.²

The benefits of youth going outside and getting their hands dirty growing, preparing, and sharing food are plentiful and powerful, including increased environmental stewardship, physical exercise, and psychological well-being.

Fresh Roots creates and cultivates spaces where youth are excited to get outdoors, learn new skills, connect with peers and adult role models, and forget about their screens all day!

B.C. youth are reporting an increase in mental health conditions, including anxiety disorders, depression, and PTSD.³

Empowering youth to learn new skills, build food literacy, and become leaders in their own right builds confidence, resilience, social connection, and grows the food citizens of tomorrow.

Fresh Roots uses a youth-leading-youth model along with partnerships with teachers, counsellors, and service workers to enhance food-systems education, build life skills and job skills, and create community connections that help youth thrive.¹

OUR VISION IS GOOD FOOD FOR ALL, which is realized when youth have the skills, capacity, and will to act as food citizens and land stewards, to grow and share healthy food for themselves, their families, and the planet!

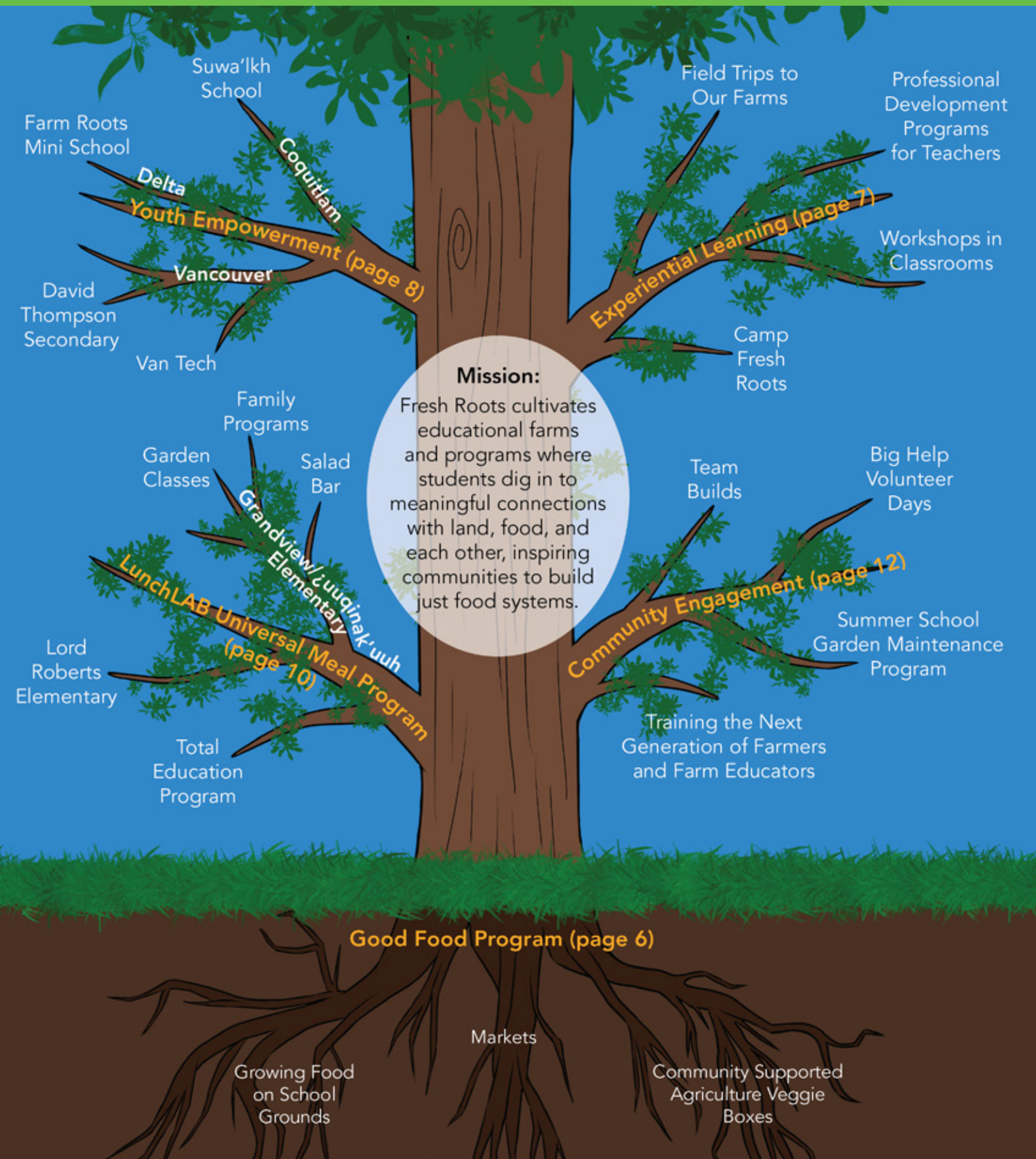
¹ Dr. Paul Martiquet, "Food Insecurity in British Columbia," Vancouver Coastal Health, October 14, 2016, <http://www.vch.ca/about-us/news/food-insecurity-in-british-columbia>.

² Parks Canada, 2014, *Connecting Canadians with Nature — An Investment in the Well-Being of Our Citizens* (Ottawa, ON: Parks Canada), 24.

³ McCreary Centre Society, 2019, *Balance and Connection in BC: The Health and Well-Being of Our Youth: Results of the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey* (Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society), 29.

HOW?

Our schoolyard farms are the soil from which all of our programs grow, and each branch of programming stems from our mission.



WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

In 2019...



10+

acres of land
stewarded



17,928

nutritious meals
served



34,616

program hours



15,000

pounds of produce
grown



4000

pounds of local
apples pressed into
cider in **1 day!**



6354

kids + youth
supported!



GOOD FOOD

The Good Food program is all about, you guessed it, growing good food! The farm team plants, nurtures, and harvests the produce grown on our educational farms, and then they make sure that food goes back into the community. Good Food is at the core of everything we do—because of the farms, kids in all of our educational programs can learn where their food comes from and taste food straight out of the ground.

We grew over **15,000 pounds of produce** this season, which was enjoyed by kids in our programs, who feasted on the veggies in salads and meals that they made for themselves; **62 households**, who received our Community Supported Agriculture Veggie Boxes every week; and countless community members, who purchased our food and flowers at **three farmers' markets**. This year, our experienced farmers trained **five new members of the farm team** to become leaders in farming, education, and land stewardship.

"I like knowing that every week I'll get fresh, nutritious food from the farm, and at the same time, I'll be helping Fresh Roots programs to continue!"

—Tanya, CSA Veggie Box member





EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

This year, **2435 individual learners** participated in our Experiential Learning programs, where students get their hands dirty on our farms, learning through play, self-guided discovery, and hands-on experiences—all while meeting B.C. Curriculum goals. Kids spent **4497 educational hours** out on our farms this year! Wowee!

"I like vegetables. They are full of nutrition!"—Emmy, kindergarten student



"My son never likes anything new and this was the first time he has ever wanted to go anywhere."

—Jess, Camp Fresh Roots parent

CAMP FRESH ROOTS!



This year's summer camp was a smashing success! Remember last year's camp pilot, with 30 kids? This year, **126 campers** came out for summer fun on the farm! (That's a **320% increase!**) Sliding scale registration prices meant that all families could afford to send their kids to camp, and engaging games, crafts, and food festivities kept the kids excited to come back every day.

Our campers were really into worms this year, making worm houses, worm castles, and even worm hospitals. The kids showed a lot of empathy and care for the worms, and knew that they were important to the farm. Now that's ecosystem connections in action!



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Through growing food, selling it at market, and cooking for their community, the youth in Fresh Roots programs become empowered to be who they are and to embrace their potential as learners, leaders, and mentors.

Fresh Roots Youth Empowerment programs provide spaces for teens to grow and explore. Fresh Roots programs are spaces where youth feel safe, where one-on-one conversations with non-parental adults are meaningful and relevant. Programs are a space for youth to use what they have been learning at school, and some youth become peer mentors to others in a way that the regular school experience doesn't allow for. Programs provide an opportunity for youth to engage in and think about future career choices, as youth workers, teachers, scientists, and more. Our Youth Empowerment programs also bring, in a non-stigmatized way, food to those youth in need.

This summer, we hired **71 youth** to participate in our SOYL Youth Empowerment program, which now runs at **three locations** (Vancouver, Coquitlam, and Delta), and **16 youth** from last summer's SOYL program returned in 2019 as mentors to their peers.

"All the skills we learned are important and useful, but my favourite ones that I will be using in the future are harvesting veggies, facilitating activities, weeding, and serving food. My appreciation for nature, farming, urban agriculture, and sustainability increasingly improved. I can now say I enjoy vegetables and feel more aware about waste we produce."

—Ivy, SOYL youth

Advice to students thinking of joining:
"Don't be shy—we all end up as one family." —Brian, SOYL youth



SUWA'LKH

The Earth Spirit Healing Forest and Medicine Garden is a project in partnership with Fresh Roots, Suwa'lkh School, the Coquitlam School District, and the Kwikwetlem First Nation. With Kwikwetlem youth and elders, we grow and cultivate a garden full of indigenous plants and we are re-indigenizing a seven-acre forest. Together we identify indigenous species; remove invasive plants; and create spaces for neighbours, students, and teachers to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing and being, connecting with the land.

Gray Oron, one of Fresh Roots' co-founders, now facilitates programs at Suwa'lkh and shared this story:

"This year, one of the Suwa'lkh students walked out of class because he was bored and didn't feel like he was getting work done. He stumbled onto our leadership team doing some work, got curious about what we were doing (feeding the salmon alevin), and asked if he could join in. We got permission from the teacher, and we let him spend the hour with us. He asked to join our leadership crew, and, even though he was younger than what we usually allow, we let him join. He ended up being one of the top leaders, presented at the National Farm to School Conference about how his work with the Suwa'lkh programs connects him to traditional knowledge and practises of his ancestors, joined the SOYL Youth Empowerment program this summer (and was hands down the best seller at the market), was filmed for a documentary about Fresh Roots at Suwa'lkh, and is now in his second year of the leadership program. He is doing better at school and in short: he became a leader!!!"



In the first phase of the new pilot, **198 kids and youth** signed up for LunchLAB lunches, and in 2019 alone, students served their peers **9205 meals!**

Moving forward, each year kids and youth at these two schools will provide themselves with more than 17,000 plant-forward, non-stigmatizing, safe, healthy, locally grown lunches.

We're already seeing successes on so many levels: one nine-year-old girl at Lord Roberts Elementary sat with her friends and teacher and said, **"This is so successful—it reminds me of being in high school."** High school students who would not normally stay in the high school during lunch (who would go to the smoke pit and would cut classes in the afternoon) are **showing up, eating, and staying for their afternoon classes.**

LunchLAB is a pilot for what a curricularly connected school food program can be—a program that helps students learn about healthy food, not just by reading about it in a book, but by cooking it themselves. At the same time, it shows that students can help solve the problems they see at school and in their community. Students learn about and cook healthy meals that strengthen local food systems and support a sustainable planet; meals that provide non-stigmatizing access to those that need it most; meals that are nourishing, safe, healthy, and delicious; meals that kids and youth are excited to eat.

In 2020, we are looking forward to continuing LunchLAB at Lord Roberts and Total Education, as well as working with the Vancouver School Board to develop a model that is easily replicated in any school that wants LunchLAB.



Did you know that Canada is the only G7 nation without a national school food program?

Canada was recently ranked 37th out of 41 countries on providing healthy food for kids, yet we don't have a national school food program. Fresh Roots is actively supporting the work of the national Coalition for Healthy School Food. The Coalition is a group of more than 100 organizations seeking federal government investment in a cost-shared Universal Healthy School Food Program that will enable all students in Canada to have access to healthy meals at school every day.

For more info, check out healthyschoolfood.ca.

"Seeing 180 students happily munching away on healthy, local, and delicious food prepared by their peers has been so rewarding. LunchLAB brings so much joy and community-building to our school, and sets the students up for success now and in the future."

—Brent Mansfield, Edible Education Teacher, Lord Roberts Elementary



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



GIVING

This year's Schoolyard Harvest Dinner was as successful as it was beautiful. One hundred and fifty of our friends and farm family members gathered on our farm at David Thompson Secondary School for an elegant feast created by chefs Karima Chellouf and Kym Nguyen, using produce from our farms and from our farm friends. Four veterans of the SOYL Youth Empowerment program bravely stood up and shared with the audience their experiences in Fresh Roots programs—and then even more bravely asked the crowd for support so that even more youth can have life-changing experiences like theirs. Thanks to the generosity of everyone who attended, and some supporters who couldn't be there in person, the youth raised \$65,080 to support the SOYL program! Thank you so much, everyone!





VOLUNTEERING

Thanks to the support of **221 fantastic volunteers**, we accomplished some amazing projects on the farm this year! We built a new compost bay; created new growing space; and built beds for winter squash, climbing crops, and youth programs. We also moved **countless wheelbarrows** of compost, wood chips, and weeds, proving that when we all do a little, we can do a whole lot! Thank you so much to all of the community volunteers who came out to weekend Big Helps, and to the companies and groups that helped out during Team Builds—we couldn't have supported so many kids out on the farms without your contributions!



UNDERGRAD STUDENTS

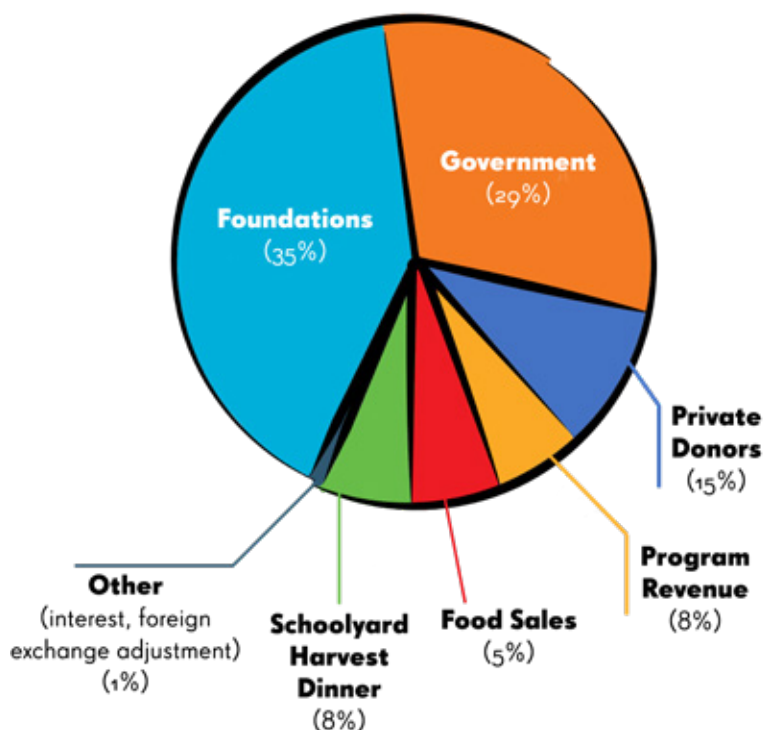
Between the Good Food, Experiential Learning, and Youth Empowerment teams, we supported **15 undergraduate students** this year. They received course credit in their undergraduate studies as they learned, led, and grew in their career placement at Fresh Roots.

"I learned so much about plant families, the seasonality of food grown in Vancouver, culls and food waste, how to drive a big truck, how to work with tools and machinery, how to write professional emails, how to cook large amounts of food based on what's in season, and a lot about myself! And it didn't even feel like learning—in a good way!"

—Yuka, 2019 undergraduate student

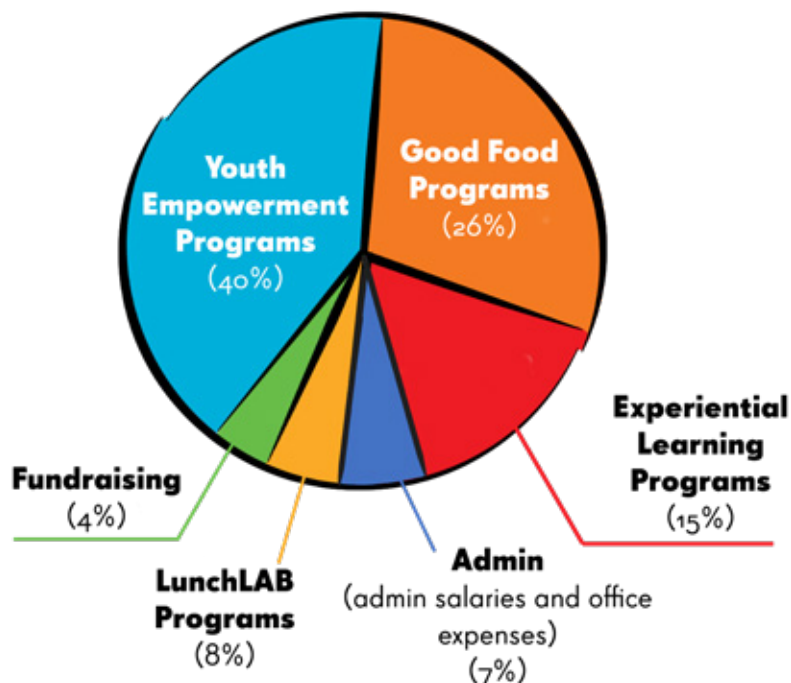
2019 FINANCIAL REVIEW

WHERE SUPPORT CAME FROM



TOTAL REVENUE: \$839,286

WHERE SUPPORT MADE A DIFFERENCE



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$789,995

THE LAST WORD, FROM THE BOARD

In true Fresh Roots form, 2019 was another remarkable year! We are incredibly grateful for the diverse network of staff, volunteers, supporters, partners, and collaborators who continue to make our work possible. Thank you!

We have always been motivated to grow, share, and celebrate good food, and, most importantly, to engage kids and youth in every step of the process. We do this because the needs are great. Across the Lower Mainland, kids come to school hungry, and food has the power to nourish bodies and minds. In 2019, Fresh Roots supported **6354 kids and youth!**

The reflections we hear from youth, parents, teachers, and counsellors tell us that Fresh Roots is making a big difference in the lives of kids and youth across the Lower Mainland. As one parent shared:

"My son was a youth crew member with the SOYL Youth Empowerment program last summer. He had struggled

in his previous year in high school, coming into conflict with the administration and using vaping to manage his anxiety and to rebel. **SOYL was truly transformational** for my son. He attended every day feeling excited about learning, joy from growing and selling food, and pride from being part of a team. This school year, he's had self-awareness and drive, and he makes healthier choices with a more secure sense of self. SOYL has also made him an educated food citizen, aware of the importance of a sustainable, equitable, and healthy food system for all—**he brings me hope that the next generation is being empowered to make our food future a better place."**

We're hopeful, too. Here's to a brand new decade of giving kids and youth the skills, will, and sage to be the next generation of community leaders.

Matt Breech
Board Chair

Marc Schutzbank
Executive Director

On behalf of the 2019 Board of Directors

THANK YOU!

Thank you so much to our program partners and generous supporters!

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NEXT STEPS

In 2020, we're all about fun on the farm, with expanded field trip programming in Vancouver and in collaboration with Indigenous Education at Suwa'lkh School in Coquitlam. We'll also be piloting a summer camp program at Suwa'lkh, and a new weekly pop-up market at the Italian Cultural Centre! And we're looking forward to welcoming back many former SOYL Youth Empowerment participants who will be returning as mentors and other leaders this year. Stay tuned for updates!

GET INVOLVED

We couldn't do what we do without YOU!

Volunteer! Donate!
freshroots.ca

Stay in the loop!



@freshrootsfarms

"At Fresh Roots, we connect with each other, whether we are processing produce for market, helping at Big Helps, or having team lunches; it is magical how we can grow community through growing food together!"

—Hazel, 2019 undergrad student and farm team member



**Growing food.
Growing communities.**

5050 Wales Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5R 3M6
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