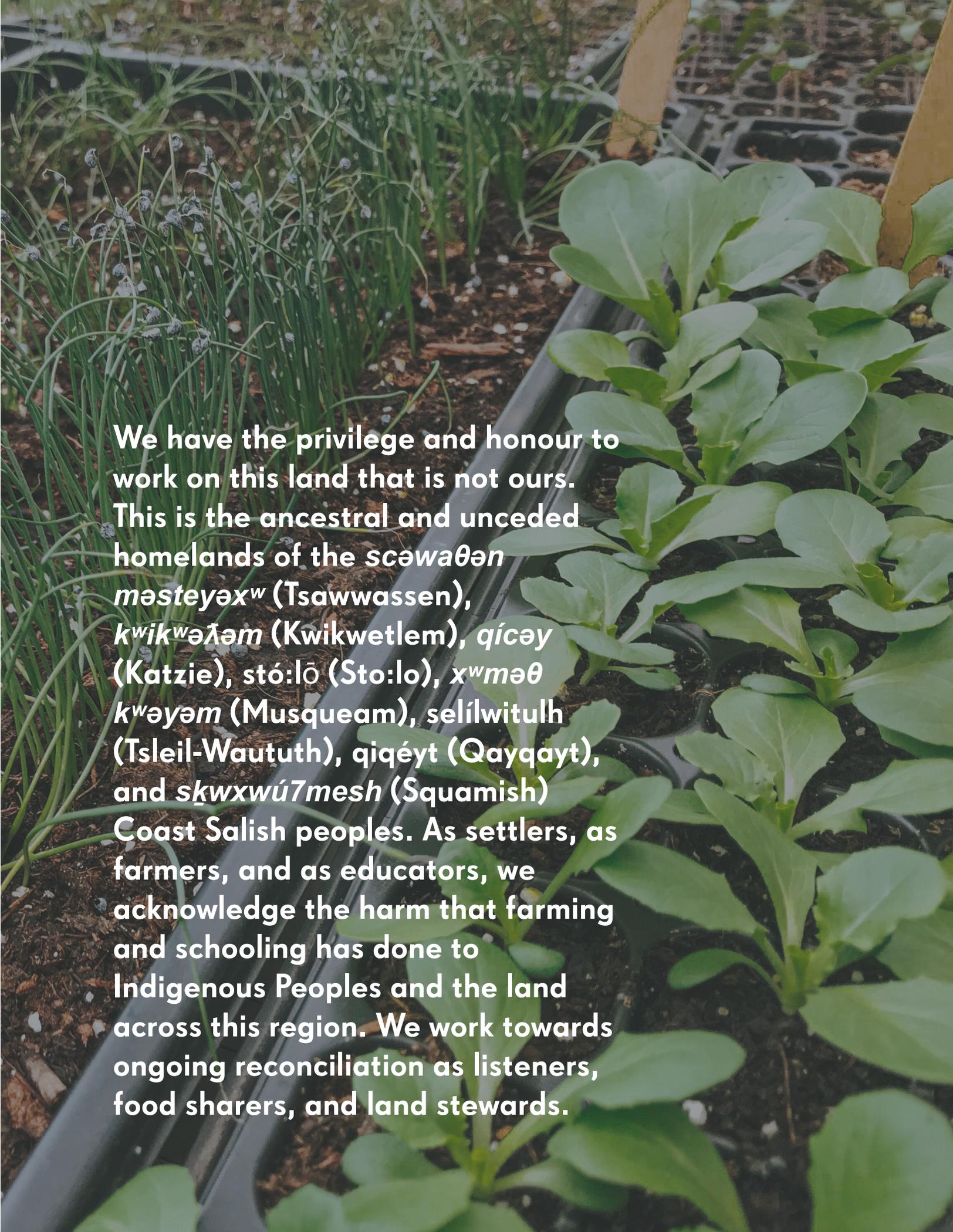




**IMPACT REPORT
2020**



We have the privilege and honour to work on this land that is not ours. This is the ancestral and unceded homelands of the *scəwaθən məsteyəx^w* (Tsawwassen), *k^wik^wəλəm* (Kwikwetlem), *qícəy* (Katzie), *stó:lō* (Sto:lo), *x^wməθ k^wəyəm* (Musqueam), *selílwitulh* (Tsleil-Waututh), *qíqéyt* (Qayqayt), and *s_kwxwú7mesh* (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.

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Alexa Pitoulis (she/her)



Letter from the Board

2020 was nothing short of exceptional. I was continuously astounded throughout the year at the adaptability, creativity and motivation of the Fresh Roots team. The pandemic brought many challenges and at every turn, the team found ways to keep growing food, modifying programs, developing safety protocols, and having fun along the way. We did what Fresh Roots does best: getting community hands in the dirt to help grow, share and celebrate good food. We served 73,653 nutritious meals and supported 2,650 kids and youth through 20,055 program hours—remarkable! None of this would have been possible without our supporters, partners and volunteers. We are especially proud of the LunchLAB: Chefs for Families program developed in partnership with Growing Chefs and in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Centre, Ono Vancouver and the Vancouver School Board. The program offered families in Vancouver delicious, healthy, chef-prepared meals that provided nourishment and care.

The end of 2020 also marked an important moment as we shared the news that founder, executive director and poet-in-chief Marc Schutzbank decided to pursue new adventures beyond Fresh Roots. Marc has been an invaluable part of our story, and made Fresh Roots into the leader in the school food movement that it is today. Marc's contributions to Fresh Roots are immeasurable and we wish him all the best.

We are grateful for what we have achieved, proud of how we have weathered the pandemic, and very much look forward to the future. We cannot wait to see you at the farm and at the market!

Matt Breech
Board Chair
On behalf of the Fresh Roots Board of Directors (Scott, Tracy, Heather and Karn)

Letter from the Executive Director

There's an eagle nest at the farm site that Fresh Roots stewards with Delta Farm Roots—a farming mini-school program located on the unceded and traditional territory of the Tsawwassen and Musqueam First Nations. Perched high above in its treetop nest, I wonder what the eagle observes of us. What does it see that we can't—in how we go about working on the land, and how we navigate working with each other? 2020 was a year that forced new ways of being, but also encouraged new points of view.

At Fresh Roots, this has meant examining what it means for our work to be regenerative. Working from a regenerative approach means to be constantly re-assessing and mindfully evolving. We already know our work is more than just growing food—it's engaging with and building our community. With that in mind, it's important for us to learn and listen, to become better allies, and to be stronger and louder advocates for anti-racism and justice. As an organization, our goal is to develop those values and ways of being in our team and in the youth with whom we engage. We are all training to be our own observant eagles, looking out

for ourselves and each other. We're committed to noticing, addressing, and evolving systems that were created with colonial, racist and oppressive mindsets.

At Fresh Roots, we've always known the richest learnings for kids and youth (self-confidence, self-awareness, sense of belonging) have come through the medium of growing, preparing and sharing food. Our path to becoming a regenerative organization reinforces the "roots" we have been nourishing. Every moment out on the schoolyard farms is precious. We are so excited for this growing season and invite you to join us!

Alexa Pitoulis
Executive Director

TOGETHER, WE:

Create and steward schoolyard farms.

Facilitate outdoor experiential learning with teachers and students.

Mentor youth through field trips and classes on the schoolyard farms, after school clubs and summer programming.

Host work experience opportunities for high school-aged youth and young adults.

Connect the community to growing food through our volunteer opportunities.

Share food with the community through food access programs, farmers markets and our CSA veggie box program.

Provide support for school gardens and associated programming through summer support and teacher professional development.



FRESH ROOTS: ABOUT US

Our Vision

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, and to grow and share healthy food for themselves, their families, and the planet.

Our Mission

We cultivate schoolyard farms and programs where students dig into meaningful connections with land, food, and each other, inspiring communities to build just food systems.

Why We Do It

In British Columbia, one in six children live in households experiencing food insecurity. 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. And B.C. youth are reporting an increase in mental health conditions, including anxiety disorders, depression, and PTSD.

We create and cultivate spaces where youth can get outdoors, learn new skills, connect with peers and adult role models, and stay off-screen. Youth who have access to adequate and nutritious foods are healthier and better able to learn, and the benefits of youth going outside and getting their hands dirty growing, preparing, and sharing food are plentiful and powerful. 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.



OUR IMPACT



10+
acres of land stewarded



73652
Nutritious Meals served
*Includes 69,768 meals from LunchLAB:
Chefs for Families Program



21,053
kids, youth and
individuals supported



150+
varieties of produce, native
plants and flowers grown



274
hours of community markets



\$65,788
of produce sold





PROGRAMS

Good Food

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fragility of long food chains. But Fresh Roots was able to create safe procedures for our farmers, and we produced more food than ever before.

In 2020, we created two new Pop-Up Markets: one at Suwa'lkh School in Coquitlam, and another at the Italian Cultural Centre in East Vancouver, which also became the home of our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Veggie Box pickup. These markets physically distanced and socially connected community hubs, where isolated neighbours could connect weekly in person to pick up ultra-local veggies and other market goodies. We also staffed the Sharing Garden at Norquay Park in Vancouver encouraging neighbours and park-goers to visit, harvest, and take local produce home.



274 market hours

150+ kinds of produce, plants and flowers



68 CSA Veggie Boxes produced

Schoolyard Farm and Garden Locations

Vancouver:

Van Tech
David Thompson
Norquay Park
Grandview ுuqinak'uuh
Elementary

Coquitlam:

Suwa'lkh School

Delta:

Delta Farm Roots Mini School

“ To me Fresh Roots is the definition of supporting local. I first learned about the CSA boxes and the farms when I went on a field trip with the high school I was working with at the time. We spent the day at David Thompson learning about farming and the SOYL program. I joined the CSA that day and have been a member ever since. This year will be my fifth year receiving a box and I am always amazed at the assortment I get.

— Jaclyn Wallace, CSA Veggie Box Member

On Saturdays during the summer, we continued running our stand at the Riley Park Vancouver Farmers Market. Our five incredible farm team members, led by our farm manager, grew over 150 varieties of vegetables, flowers and native plants, and produce sales increased by a whopping 38%.

Increased production and sales meant more opportunities for our SOYL youth program participants to learn. SOYL contributed to the harvest and worked at the markets, deepening their understanding of food production and gaining valuable skills in customer service, sales and marketing.

Thanks to these sales and our generous donors, we were able to improve our infrastructure and even better support our local community.





PROGRAMS

Experiential Learning

Despite the closure of schools during our spring program season, the Experiential Learning team taught lifelong lessons about food, food systems, ecology, cooking, and more to learners from age 3 through university.

In 2020, Fresh Roots hosted over 1000 in-person learners. We spearheaded 45 farm programs in Vancouver and Coquitlam, including field trips, field classes, and teacher-led farm tours. We also ran 13 community programs composed of both classroom workshops and teacher Pro-D events.

In addition to in-person programming, we reached out to new learners in new ways. Throughout the spring, we created videos of the farm to share with our Year on the Farm classes. Additionally, we wrote a total of 12 weekly blog posts sharing resources for home-based learning from Fresh Roots, our partners, and beyond.



Summer Camp

Camp Fresh Roots 2020 welcomed 125 campers over seven weeks of camp programming, including our first ever camp at Suwa'lkh. Participants planted, harvested, cooked and ate delicious food. They took walking field trips and visited chefs and knowledge keepers. They played with old friends and made new ones, all while staying COVID safe. Our diverse camp staff included a former SOYL participant, a current high school student, and university students working toward degrees in global resource systems, landscape architecture, dietetics, and more. Based on our success running fun, safe, and educational camps during COVID in 2020, we are expanding our summer offerings in 2021.



A Year on the Farm is our school year-long program for grade K-3 classes. Each class has the opportunity to visit the farm monthly from October through June with Fresh Roots facilitators or with their own teacher, and gets to plant, grow, and share in their own harvest.

 125 campers

1000 in-person learners 

 45 farm programs



SUWA'LKH

Suwa'lkh school is an alternative educational program based on Indigenous ways of knowing. In partnership with Suwa'lkh and with School District 43, Fresh Roots aims to increase availability of native plants to our urban community, create leadership capacity for youth, restore the salmon stream and work with youth, staff, and knowledge keepers to build community connections to the land.

Suwa'lkh is home to outdoor space for food production and education (including a farm, forest, trail and orchard)—and with COVID-19 and physical distancing measures in mind, we were especially thankful for this big, beautiful site. We were able to run our youth leadership program, host a summer camp (find more information about those programs on the next page) and grow more vegetables than ever before, all while keeping safe.

In summer 2020, we ran our own market at the Suwa'lkh site for the first time, selling native plants and fresh produce from the Suwa'lkh farm while providing opportunities for youth to connect with

neighbours. Youth participants also created interactive signs for forest exploration and removed a lot of invasive plants like Japanese knotweed, English Ivy and Himalayan blackberries making a lasting impact on the site.

Supporting Suwa'lkh School in the successful applications for a Farm to Cafeteria Grant allowed us to begin planning for a weekly salad bar lunch program that will also incorporate more Indigenous knowledge by inviting Indigenous educators to teach youth about food and medicine plants. In addition to that, we are currently working on another cycle of visioning with our partners at the Indigenous Education Department and Suwa'lkh School.



Suwa'lkh Medicine Garden



In partnership with Fresh Roots





PROGRAMS

Youth Empowerment

After School Clubs

Fresh Roots supports after school clubs that encourage students to connect—with the community garden, and with each other. Both the 2019-2020 **Carrot Club at David Thompson Secondary School** (run in partnership with the Table de Chefs Program) and the 2020 **Garden Club at Vancouver Technical Secondary School** provided participants with the opportunity to grow, cook and learn in the garden and in the kitchen. We collaborated with educators to host farm-to-fork workshops that built foundational food literacy and teamwork skills.

Unfortunately, after school programs were shut down with the closure of schools and cancellation of extra-curricular activities due to COVID-19, but we are looking forward to our continued partnerships with teachers and youth.

Young Adult Programs

This past year, we extended our offerings to include our first ever Young Adult Programs. Through farm tours and workshops, we engaged with folks aged 18-24, teaching them about urban farming and lending valuable insight into every part of our local food systems. We provided participants with hands-on experience that not only increased their farm knowledge, but also broadened their horizons regarding future, food-focused employment possibilities.

“ I have been involved in a community garden close to my house since I was two years old, and I heard about the SOYL program through my mom. I applied as soon as I was old enough—I usually didn’t do too much during the summer, and it was pretty boring. I remember after my first interview, I wanted to do it so bad. I fell in love with it right away. I’ve been with Fresh Roots for three years now: I started as a crew member, then came back as a crew mentor, and last summer I was a junior staff member.

— Maria, age 16





Youth Empowerment

Sustainable Opportunities for Youth Leadership (SOYL)

Despite COVID-19 challenges, Fresh Roots succeeded in running our 5-week SOYL program in summer 2020, and provided important leadership opportunities for diverse youth across Metro Vancouver. Through SOYL, participants learn how to grow and sell food. They are involved in every step of the process, from planting to harvesting to providing customer service at farmer's markets. Youth Crew members develop valuable farming and entrepreneurial experience, but also foster their self-confidence and ability to work effectively as a team.

In partnership with school districts and community partners, 44 students became SOYL Youth Crew members in 2020. The SOYL program is unique in that Youth Crew students can choose to return the following year and become mentors for new participants, and this year, we welcomed back 13 students as SOYL Youth Mentors, for a total of 57 program participants.

Youth Mentors provide guidance and support for the Youth Crew while expanding their own abilities to adapt, problem-solve and become empathetic, effective leaders. The fundamental leadership skills that SOYL participants gain are valuable not just on the farm and at the market, but at school, work and in their community.

This outdoor program was particularly rewarding in 2020, as it gave students the chance to contribute to their community in a meaningful way—and get some much-needed sunshine.



Our goal is to introduce youth to agriculture and to make them feel that they are an important part of that system—that they matter, and that their decisions matter. We build skills around communication and teamwork and customer service, but those are all secondary to having fun!

— Nicole (right), Youth Program Facilitator

SOYL:

Locations:

Vancouver Technical Secondary
Suwa'lkh School
Delta Farm Roots Mini School

Programming:

9,177 Program Hours
57 program participants



Schoolyard Harvest Dinner: At Home Edition

Our fourth annual Schoolyard Harvest Dinner, like most things over the past year, was adapted in 2020. We pivoted from an in-person event to an online one, attendees receiving a Summer Harvest Box packaged with locally produced and sourced goodies and components for a six course meal prepared by Chefs TJ Conwi and Tasha Sawyer. Our goals were to connect and celebrate with our community over food and stories, and to raise sustaining funding for the upcoming year—and we accomplished both.

We wouldn't have succeeded in this unique event without our generous in-kind donors who provided products and prep space, incredibly talented chefs who proved they were stars both in the kitchen and on camera, and our dedicated staff and SOYL youth who pulled everything together. Our thoughtfully composed Summer Harvest Box was complete with flowers for the table, and the live online cooking class and celebration ignited a sense of community in uncertain times.



Startups Care Third Party Fundraiser

Together, the Vancouver Tech Startup community rallied through the month of December to support our SOYL program. Through this online Peer to Peer fundraiser, 38 dedicated individuals and companies raised funds which will provide 5 youth with the opportunity to participate in SOYL. They spent a greatly appreciated 6 weeks outside growing, learning and leading on our schoolyard farms and markets.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

UBC Community Partnerships

For undergraduate students in UBC’s faculty of Land and Food Systems (LFS), Fresh Roots acts as a valuable community partner. Through work placements and student projects, we stay connected to the ongoing dialogue around food systems at the university. Just as importantly, our collaborations provide hands-on experience for students passionate about sustainability and community food security.

In spring 2020, as universities were abruptly shifting to online-only courses, Fresh Roots worked with an LFS cohort to design marketing material for our new pop-up vegetable market at the Italian Cultural Center. Students conducted research on the demographics of the neighboring area, and created posters and other marketing information to advertise the market.

In the fall, another LFS group worked on a project called “Decolonizing History of Partner Sites.” Students collected archival statistics, photos, and documents relating to our two Vancouver secondary school sites: Van Tech and David Thompson. The group synthesized the information into infographics and a short video that helped deepen our understanding of the places we farm on, supporting our continuing effort to decolonize our work.

“What a year it has been, and the world is truly better because of the contributions Fresh Roots makes to equity, food, dignity and opportunity. Thank you for your generosity of spirit, time, energy and willingness to collaborate and teach our students. Thank you, too, for the incredible work you do with and for our communities year-round, but especially this year in the time of COVID.”

— Leticia Pamela Garcia, Community Relations Coordinator, UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems

Volunteering

Fresh Roots honoured the tradition of the annual fall East Van Apple Press Fest with a modified event at Norquay Park. An amazing team of volunteers from the Bosa Family Foundation, Fresh Roots staff and community members pressed 700 lbs of apples—generously transported from the Okanagan by Pemberton Distribution and donated by BC Tree Fruit Tree Cooperative—into 35 gallons of juice! Our small but mighty team of volunteers has been an integral part of our work this past year, and we look forward to expanding our community engagement and volunteer opportunities in 2021.



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



DONORS

Grants and Partnerships



\$5000-\$9,999

Carol and Art Bomke
 Duke Family Charitable Fund
 GMR Foundation
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\$1,000-\$4,999

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LunchLAB and LunchLAB Chefs for Families Supporters (\$500+)

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 United Way of the Lower Mainland Vancouver Foundation
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 Vancouver Foundation
 Vancouver Sun Adopt A Classroom
 Vivian Cruise
 Whole Foods Market
 Will Valley

Supporters — Schoolyard Harvest Dinner 2020

We are grateful for the generous support of growers, sponsors, media and the entire community who came together to help us adapt this year's long table dinner to our first-ever at-home live virtual event.



33 Acres Brewing Company
 Bosa Foods
 Bucha Brew
 Cedar Isle Farm
 Coho Commissary
 Crophorne Farm
 Dinkydoo Fabrics
 Fife Bakery
 FoodPak
 Scout Magazine
 Chef Tasha Sawyer
 Italian Cultural Centre

Legends Haul
 Lori Snyder
 Manson Communications
 Marquis Wine Cellar
 Odd Society Spirits
 Olera Organic Farms
 Ono Vancouver
 Organic Ocean
 Saltspring Harvest
 Susgrainable
 Tsawwassen Farm School
 UBC Farm
 Zaklan Heritage Farm

Supporters — Monthly Donors

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FINANCIALS

Revenue

Foundations	\$390,636
Government	\$538,449
Private Donors	\$28,179
Program Revenue	\$54,339
Food Sales	\$68,176
Schoolyard Harvest Dinner	\$64,875
Other	\$888
Total: \$1,145,541	

Expenses

Youth Empowerment	\$314,900
Exp. Learning	\$140,227
Good Food	\$283,935
LunchLAB	\$235,747
Fundraising	\$44,585
Admin	\$89,997
Total: \$1,109,390	

Get Involved

Support kids and youth learning, leading and growing on schoolyard farms and in the community.

Donate
Volunteer

Attend Our Events
Host a Fundraising Event





2020

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@freshrootsfarms

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Fresh Roots Urban Farm Society is a
registered charity: 844249680RR0001



Growing food.
Growing communities.

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