

In 2024....



We had 3,744 participant opportunities for children, 215 for youth and 722 for adults and seniors, in over 400 program hours.



We were joined by 13 placement students who contributed over 1,500 hours of program delivery and development.



62 teachers and program leaders booked our programs.



We planted 400 native tree seeds and saplings with 500 participants.



We purchased a new e-bike which allowed us to deliver our programs to new schools & get lots of produce to market



We cultivated 8 different school and community gardens in Toronto

Board of Directors

Chair: Charlene Lord

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Megan McGinnis-Dunphy

Taylor Millan

Tara Pearson

Sailavasan Vettivelu

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Key Volunteers

Zoe Kende

Donald Russell



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From our Board Chair

As I look back at 2024 I am immensely proud of the accomplishments of Green Thumbs Growing Kids. I am grateful for the trust and support of our community, staff, volunteers, students, teachers, coordinators, donors, funders, sponsors and collaborators which enables us to provide hands-on garden and food education to children and youth. Thank you for believing in the power of gardening and helping us grow.

With upmost gratitude,
Charlene Lord, Board Chair



From our Executive Director

I had such a great year with a fantastic team, and even though the Winchester PS saga felt draining at times, the upside was the new challenge at Eastdale CI where we started in the fall. Much gratitude to FoodShare, the TDSB and the Eastdale CI staff for creating and managing that amazing garden in the sky - no other rooftop can compare. I look forward to that project, as well as our continued success at Rose Ave. PS, Sprucecourt PS and our other engagements. School food is gaining ground!

Sunday Harrison, founder and
Executive Director



2024 Annual Report

Our Mission:

Cultivate environmental stewardship through hands-on garden and food education for urban children, youth & their communities.

www.greenthumbsto.org



Program Highlights

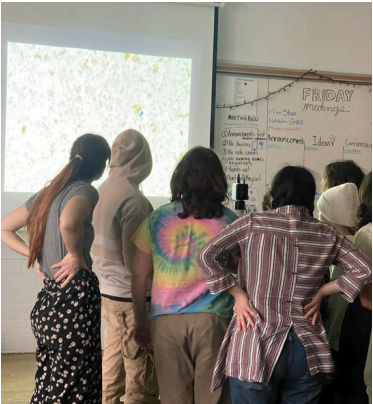
Allan Gardens welcomed us back in spring, giving us a place to start our seedlings with school groups. Big thanks to [Friends of Allan Gardens!](#) We also held our annual [Spring is In the Air](#) event with live music, plant sale, face painting, silent auction and kids’ activities, in April.



We continued our [Urban Trees from Seed](#) program, thanks to the [Urban Forestry Department of the City of Toronto](#), with new or expanded tree nursery locations at all of our school garden sites. We are excited for the future of these trees, as part of the City’s goal of getting to 40% canopy cover from the current 26%. Species include Red Oak, Kentucky Coffeetree and Pawpaw.

We continued programming at three primary schools, Rose Ave PS, Winchester JSPS and Sprucecourt PS. We also supplied programming to Frankland PS, George Webster PS, Forest Valley PS, Morse Street Jr. PS, Nelson Mandela Park PS, St. Maria Goretti PS (TCDSB), and Thorncliffe Park PS. Many programs were part of [Teaming With Life](#), (photo right) a new program, which introduced a microscope and a worm bin for elementary students, made possible by funding from [Telus](#). Thanks to our Teaming With Life contractors for making this a popular program!

We had post-secondary students from Toronto Metropolitan University learning in hands-on programs at Winchester JSPS and Rose Ave PS (photo right), from classes in the Early Childhood Education department such as Children and Nature (undergraduate) and Ecological Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Research (graduate).



TEAMING
WITH
LIFE



School Gardens Land Back

Cohort 2: March 2024 - June 2024

"The SGLB program has truly expanded my awareness of the potential value of school gardens. The program was a great opportunity to practice decolonizing my thoughts and actions in community and has assisted me in deepening my connection to the land and how I relate to other beings. I've begun to expand my awareness of our food system, ecology and our partnership with microbes, pollinators, weather systems, what consumption and reciprocity can look like. Other benefits I've experienced are the value of experiential learning, learning from the land ... I met and learned from so many wonderful people in the program (each of the participants, the Indigenous mentors and each of the GTGK team members)."

"The knowledge shared by the instructors has enriched my relationship with the garden spaces that I steward, and with all the beings within them."



School Gardens Land Back training program completed 2 full cohorts in the fall of 2023 and spring of 2024. We had the pleasure of learning with Indigenous mentors Jim Adams, Carolynne Crawley of Msit N’kmaq, Chef Johl Ringuette and Isaac Crosby of Crosby Gitigaan, in programs managed by Megan Bennett, funded by the [Canadian Red Cross](#). This program allowed 20 community members, mostly parents, to learn all about school gardens by participating as volunteers as well as joining in classroom and virtual learning time. The long-term goal of this program is to support a network of school gardens and gardeners, informed by Indigenous mentors.



Aiden Crosby supports a class to add compost to the garden beds. Other staff support students to harvest the compost at the back of the photo. This section of Winchester JSPS Public School Garden is slated for renovation in 2025. We hope that the trees will survive a move. The overall capital project will add a soccer pitch or two to the school grounds. These food beds were getting shaded anyway, so we’ll move the sun-loving beds to the southeast of the garden area. We plan to re-engage students in the garden as soon as possible!



L: students harvesting greens for garden snacks!

R: We had a grand time celebrating our 25 years with 25 (just so happened!) of our dear friends and family.



L to R: Ella LaForme braided so much sweetgrass she wore it and gave it away to Indigenous folks all through the neighbourhood. Rebecca Davis Scott sold stuff at the Cabbagetown Farmers Market, and Taylor Millan joined Kahik Growers and loved it so much she joined our board! Welcome Taylor to the Green Thumbs family!



L to R: Tristan Andrews holds down Cabbagetown Farmers Market table! Karma Co-op starts selling our Pea Shoots, and Gail Lynch from the local Zero Bar bought a lot of beautiful flowers to ornament her mocktails!

