

## GRANDVIEW WOODLAND FOOD CONNECTION 2015: A YEAR IN REFLECTION

Each year at this time as we reflect back on our work over the past year, we are reminded that food security for all remains an elusive right and many community residents do not have access to nutritious food in amounts necessary for good health.

2015 stands out as the year that climate change caught up to us here in Vancouver. With this past summer's drought and stage 3 (almost a stage 4) water restrictions, we faced an enormous concern and challenge to keep our school food gardens, our largest food program, properly watered.

This drought was our wake up call and a reminder that our food security is highly vulnerable, contingent on the ability of California and Mexico to supply us fresh produce despite droughts in those areas. The consequence of these droughts is seen in the steadily rising food prices and unaffordable fresh produce for many people on limited incomes.

But, on a positive note, the Grandview Woodland Food Connection continues to offer engaging and meaningful food programming for the community and here is my top 10 highlights list for 2015.

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### 1. **Britannia Potato Farm.**

For the first time this year the grade 3s (then in grade 4) planted, harvested, prepared and ate their own potatoes (previously the kids did not prepare the food in the classroom as a group). We cooked up a wonderful roasted potato and veggie dish, which the kids loved, providing them the full cycle experience of growing and eating their own fresh food.

### 2. **Off the Grill Youth Meal Program.**

A fantastic group of Britannia teens made possible a successful communal meal program for all youth and community members to share in the Britannia Plaza. With the help of our wonderful volunteer chef mentors, we were treated to twice weekly dishes such as steak and eggs, chicken pesto, and Brazilian fajitas. Thank you to our funders the Rotary Club and Nutrition Link. Check out our digital story at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XCDB5J8DMs>





**3. Britannia School Garden Fundraiser.** Our most successful fundraiser to date and great community support saw us raise \$8,000 for both the Britannia school gardens and SEGA Girls School garden in Tanzania (our twin garden) thanks to matching funds from Scotia Bank.

**4. Food Workshops.** We produced a number of new and well attended food workshops attracting 106 participants. Our Latin American Pupusa workshop was brimming full with 16 participants. We had to organize a second Kimchi workshop due to demand while our Sausage Making workshop was also full.



**5. The First Nations Carving Pavilion Garden.** With support from a Neighbourhood Matching Fund grant, the GWFC is taking the lead on a new First Nations food and medicinal garden at the Britannia Carving Pavilion. Thanks to donated excavation from Octiscapes Landscaping, we dug out the old gravel and replaced with new soil. With student help, we have also been mulching like crazy preparing the soil for spring 2016 planting.

**6. Food Recovery.** With support from Choices Market, we have helped reduce food waste on the Drive by reusing cosmetically inferior produce for our meal programs that would otherwise go to waste. A total of over 500 lbs of food was recovered, some of it used in the Off the Grill program.



**7. Stone Soup and the Latin American Corn Festival.**

What can I say; these much loved community festivals remind us of the importance of celebrating good food and community arts. Best of all, both festivals were blessed with glorious sun.

**8. Saskatoon Berries and Quince.** The Vancouver Fruit Tree Project delivered several full boxes of these unexpected and rare treats providing us some fantastic smoothies, jam and pie making fruit.





### 9. Garden 2 Plate.

9 youth, most from the Britannia Streetfront alternate program participated in a fun summer gardening and cooking program, preparing amazing lunches with food directly from the Britannia school garden. We also built a fabulous Mason Bee “motel” and installed a rain barrel.

### 10. Montecristo Article.

Last but not least, it is nice to be recognized for our work and thank you to Montecristo Magazine for their full page spread of our work. Read the full article at: <http://montecristomagazine.com/magazine/autumn-2015/grandview-woodland-food-connection>

