



**EcoCooks**

Elements Society &  
Unbounded Canada Foundation



# 2022 Annual Impact Report

Plant-powered. Planet-positive.



Unbounded  
Canada  
Foundation

Dear friends,

The power of partnership has been a key ingredient in the success of our inaugural year. Together Unbounded Canada Foundation and the Elements Society have complemented each other's skills and honoured the strengths of both teams, to become a collective force for plant-powered, planet-positive choices.

It takes a community to get a program like EcoCooks up and running, let alone in the middle of a global pandemic. We feel tremendous gratitude towards our staff, volunteers, advisors, community partners, funders, and most importantly our empowered EcoCooks youth.

Thank you for your kindness and support in making our EcoCooks dreams a reality.

— *Pamela Murkin & Samantha Rogers*  
*Lettuce take climate action together!*



**Pamela Murkin**

Executive Director  
Unbounded Canada  
Foundation



**Samantha Rogers**

Executive Director  
Elements Society



# Who We Are

## Our Vision

A thriving planet supported by environmental leaders and sustainable food systems

## Our Values

**To act with Integrity:** We let science speak first

**To be Innovative:** Like our programs, we're continuously evolving

**To be Collaborative:** We work together with the community to strengthen learning opportunities and action

**To be Inclusive:** We pursue equity in the development and delivery of programs

**To be Interdisciplinary:** We believe environmental conversations are relevant in every subject

## Our Goals

**1. Enhance Knowledge:** Enhance environmental and food literacy

**2. Develop Skills:** Develop culinary skills and confidence

**3. Inspire Action:** Inspire personal environmental leadership

**4. Build Community:** Build a community of locally and globally responsible citizens

## Our Mission

To empower youth to take climate action by connecting how our food choices impact the planet



# Why We Exist

Though we often feel powerless in our individual ability to address climate change, a switch towards environmental food practices presents an empowering and effective action that we can all take for the health of our planet.

“...diet is probably the single biggest way to reduce your impact on planet Earth, not just greenhouse gases, but global acidification, eutrophication, land use and water use.”

~ Joseph Poore, University of Oxford Lead Researcher, *Science Journal*

The scientific community is in consensus that food-related climate solutions, such as eating plant-rich diets and reducing food waste, are some of the most impactful ways that individuals can reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

EcoCooks was created out of the necessity to help youth understand this impact, conquer eco-anxiety, and become eco-empowered to take practical climate action through their food choices.



EcoCooks Spring 2022 program in partnership with Elevation Outdoors, a non-profit designed to enhance the lives of local youth who face significant socioeconomic challenges.



# How We Approach Program Development

Believing all youth, regardless of age, culture, or financial means are deserving of quality environmental programming, EcoCooks is committed to working with community partners to provide financially accessible programming and removing barriers for traditionally underserved youth populations.

EcoCooks curriculum developers and peer reviewers include educators from environmental, science, social studies, sustainability and food studies backgrounds as well as a dietician, data scientist and more.

These experts' diverse backgrounds are represented in our interdisciplinary curriculum, which provides youth participants with a strong foundation to develop lifelong sustainable food practices through fun, hands-on activities that support planet-positive action.

# Where We Started

## EcoCooks Club

An afterschool program for youth in grades 4-7, piloted and delivered in Kelowna



## EcoCooks School

A classroom-based program for youth in grades 8-12, piloted and delivered in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, and Surrey



BRITISH COLUMBIA



# What We've Accomplished

## EcoCooks Collective Community Impact

373 youth participated in EcoCooks Club and EcoCooks School programs, for 119 unique sessions on topics ranging from food waste to water use.

Youth cooked 367 dinners at home using the take-home meal kits provided, they explored 6 field trips with hands-on-experience, and interacted with 7 guests chefs.

By using planet-positive foods throughout the programs, youth saved over 8480 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e in direct emissions!



**8480** kgCO<sub>2</sub>e direct emissions saved

That's like taking 2 cars off the road for a full year!\*

**373**  
youth



**367**

Take-home meal kits provided

**7**

guest chefs

**119**

unique sessions

**6**

field trips

\*Average gasoline powered vehicle (as of 2019) will emit "4.640 metric tons CO2E/vehicle/year



EcoCooks Club is an afterschool program consisting of 8 sessions, totalling 20 fun-filled hours. Youth (grades 4-7) are immersed in this science-based environmental cooking program which creates a strong foundation to develop lifelong healthy and planet-positive eating habits.

Through hands-on experiences, 74 youth:

- Cooked and ate over 42 delicious and nutritious meals together including lentil dal, tacos, tofu stir-fry, chickpea sandwiches, and more
- Prepared 68 meals for their families at home using their new cooking skills
- Connected with the local Kelowna community through 6 field trips
- Learned about topics such as land use, biodiversity, and oceans through engaging and interactive activities
- Are empowered to take planet-positive action!



# 84%

of EcoCooks Club families now consider the environmental impact of their food choices

After participating in EcoCooks Club, families reported:

70%

of youth participants are eating more plant foods

92%

of youth participants now help with cooking at home a few or more times a month





## Meet Aya



Born in Sudan, Aya and her family moved to Canada when she was 9 years old. It was difficult for Aya to get to know other youth, especially during a pandemic. As her first language is Arabic, speaking and writing English was one of her biggest challenges. Aya's family also experienced a significant cultural difference in Canadian food.

Connected through the Central Okanagan Family Hub, Aya was sponsored to join EcoCooks Club's Fall 2021 program. Aya was eager to develop her cooking skills and to learn new ways to care for the planet, especially with plant-based meals that her whole family enjoyed.

Aya was happily surprised that even her dad loved the Sweet Chili Tofu Stir-Fry dinner that she made using the provided take-home meal kits.

Aya's mother also had positive praises: "[EcoCooks Club is] a great in-person activity and way to get to know people...it helped [her] talk to new people that are in different grades".

Aya's highlights of the program were finding out about the **connections between the different aspects of food and climate change**, tasting all the different plant-based foods—**veggie burgers are now her favourite food**, and learning about the **small changes we can make for a better planet**.

**“By doing small stuff, we can change the planet!”**

~ Aya, Youth Participant,  
EcoCooks Club Fall 2021



**“EcoCooks Club is an awesome program. I noticed my son start to talk about the impacts of climate change about halfway through the course and he even mentioned it in some of his writing at school... The highlight for all of us, though, was when our 10.5 year old son confidently and proudly made us delicious, stir-fried veggies and tofu over basmati rice, from start to finish. Wonderful life skills, amazing teachers, fantastic program.” ~ Alexandria, Parent, Spring 2022**

**“I love EcoCooks Club. It's amazing and it teaches you how to make yummy food, make a balanced plate, how to save the environment, and teaches you things you would usually learn when you are older.”**

**~ Lily, Youth Participant, Fall 2021**

**“It was EXTREMELY FUN I did not dislike ANYTHING about [it], it is an amazing program and teaches kids a lot about how our food is connected to the environment. I would recommend this to friends 100%!”**

**~ Alex, Youth Participant, Spring 2022**



 Elizabeth Holly Photography



**EcoCooks**  
school

EcoCooks School engages teachers and youth (grades 8-12) in hands-on, student-centered learning that is connected to the science, social studies and food studies curriculum in BC.

To provide teachers with flexible options, EcoCooks School was developed in four modules (each with four sessions), which can be taken independently, as a series, back-to-back, or spaced throughout a semester.

In Spring 2022, the program was piloted in 12 classrooms across Metro Vancouver. Together, 299 youth prepared energy bites, spring rolls, waffles, tempeh BLT's, s'mores, quick pickles, granola and more!

299

meal kits were sent home with youth so they could cook with their families

## EcoCooks School Program Overview

### Module 1: EcoCooks 101



#### Turnip the heat on climate change!

This introductory module covers climate change basics, the role of food systems within the carbon cycle as well as an introduction to foodprinting and eco-recipe development.

### Module 2: Our Food + the Planet

#### Where food comes from and why we should carrot all!

Topics cover sustainable and unsustainable food systems and how our food impacts land and water resources.



### Module 3: How to Beet Food Waste

#### Encourage mint for zero waste practices!

Students learn the importance of waste prevention and preservation as well as creative ways to upcycle scraps into recipes and home-gardens.



### Module 4: Future of Food



#### Lettuce find solutions!

Where we've been, where we are, and where we are going. The Future of Food explores indigenous food practices, eco-action and innovative food growing and development practice that have the potential to reduce our footprints.



## Teacher Tori's Story



Since 2014, Tori has been a teacher with the Vancouver School Board. After learning about EcoCooks School program, she decided it was a great fit for Vancouver Alternate Secondary School's overarching theme of food security. She believes this interdisciplinary program will be of interest to teachers across many subject areas. In her own words, Tori has high praises for EcoCooks School:

“The team went above and beyond their commitment in the classroom... they were able to customize the programming to the unique needs of our complex students, and showed professionalism and resilience when faced with challenging classroom dynamics.

“The program was self-sufficient, in that all material were brought in by the facilitators and required very little support from the school staff to

provide fully experiential sessions where students were engaged in food preparation.”

In addition to the classroom sessions, Tori found the take home meal kits to be a highlight because they “encouraged students to bring their learning into the community and share it with their friends and family. The opportunity created a scaffolding for students to successfully expand their learning outside of the classroom. The program has been fantastic, and I am a firm believer in the strong impact that it can have on learners everywhere.”

**“The program served to inspire and empower the students toward future environmental action.”**

~ Tori, Teacher, EcoCooks School Spring 2021



**“It taught me that wasting food is not good for the environment and there are small steps we can take which can do a lot for the world.”**

~ Youth Participant, Spring 2022

**“Carbon footprint lesson on different foods was really informative. Delivery of lesson was excellent and well thought out.”**

~ Teacher, Spring 2022

**“Only positive, made me think a lot more about my food choices ”**

~ Youth Participant, Spring 2022



# Where We Are Going

In 2023 EcoCooks programs are expanding...

EcoCooks Club will be launching in Metro Vancouver and EcoCooks School will be crossing borders into Calgary, Alberta.

We look forward to seeing you in these communities and beyond!



BRITISH COLUMBIA

ALBERTA



# Thank You To All Our Supporters

EcoCooks is only made possible through our incredible advisory board, donors, funders, in-kind sponsors, community partners, staff, and volunteers. We are deeply grateful for your commitment and trust in our program and we recognise your vital role in all our achievements. Thank you for your gift of helping us to empower youth for our planet!

## Our Funders

The Milne Family | Stober Foundation | VegFund

## Our In-Kind Sponsors

Black Sheep Vegan Cheeze  
Bulk Barn  
Chickpea Zero Waste Refillery  
Elizabeth Holly Photography  
Fabricland  
MILA  
Okanagan Rawsome

Real Canadian Superstore  
Sorella Vegan Eats  
Staples  
Sydney Botting Design  
TMRW Foods  
Vegilante Tempeh  
Virtuous Pie

## Our Community Partners

Central Okanagan Family Hub  
Elevation Outdoors

Okanagan Fruit Tree Project  
Salvation Army

## Our Advisory Board



**Nicholas Carter**  
Ecologist  
MA, Environmental Practise



**Gabrielle Edwards**  
PhD Candidate  
Curriculum Studies  
MA, Human Development  
& Food Security



**Dr. Pamela Fergusson**  
Registered Dietitian  
MA, International Health  
PhD, Nutrition



**Dr. Mary Jung**  
Associate Professor School  
of Health and Exercise  
Sciences, UBCO  
PhD

For more information please visit:  
[ecocooks.org](http://ecocooks.org)

For inquiries please contact:  
[marketing@unfc.ca](mailto:marketing@unfc.ca)

Follow us:



Plant-powered. Planet-positive.

