



### From our Board Chair

As I reflect on 2025, I am filled with gratitude for the continued growth of Green Thumbs Growing Kids. This year affirmed what is possible when community comes together with intention, care, and a shared belief in the power of garden based learning.

To the staff, volunteers, students, teachers, coordinators, donors, funders, sponsors, and collaborators who have shown unwavering commitment to nurturing spaces where children and youth can learn and explore. Thank you for standing with us, both in the metaphoric garden we cultivate together and in the literal garden where children and youth learn, grow, and thrive.

With utmost gratitude, Charlene Lord, Board Chair

### Board of Directors

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### Our Mission:

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



## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



### In 2025....



We had 2,970 participant opportunities for children, 345 for youth and 1,266 for adults and seniors, in over 400 program hours.



We were joined by 13 placement students who contributed over 450 hours of program delivery and development.



65 teachers and program leaders booked our programs, and we cultivated 9 different school and community gardens in Toronto.



We planted 600+ sweet potato slips and harvested over 400 pounds of sweet potatoes at Eastdale CI. See video: <https://bit.ly/4qQtM9O>



We purchased an overhead portable camera to improve our indoor worm bin programs, so everyone can see the worms and their habitat on the big screen in their classrooms



We got our largest single donation ever from the wonderful Serena Rykert - thank you Serena for keeping us solvent in 2025 and even part of 2026! We love you!

2000-2026



**Green Thumbs Growing Kids**

Charitable Number: 806962353RR0001

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# Green Thumbs School Programming

## Garden-based learning

Thanks to our partnership with the Toronto District School Board, especially its Sustainability Office, we continued offering land- and garden-based learning programs in a cluster of schools, some on a weekly basis, like Sprucecourt PS, Rose Ave. PS and Eastdale CI. Others were served in one-off or a series of workshops.

*"Every school and every student should have the opportunity to work with Green Thumbs and the type of holistic programming they provide."*  
Jason Kenemy, teacher, Grade 10/11, Eastdale CI.

A big thank you to Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Training and Employment for funding another year with Aiden Crosby, (right) our Program Coordinator. Aiden provided solid, well-presented programs to grades from Kindergarten through Grade 12, and developed many new programs this year..

*"I learned not to step on baby plants. This is the best day of my life!"*  
Grade 1 student

## School Gardens Land Back

Thanks to the Peter Gilgan Foundation and Rebecca Davis Scott co-ordinating, we had a successful cohort of the School Gardens Land Back program from May to August. This program trains volunteers to set up and manage their own school gardens, informed by Indigenous mentors. Together we learned how to set up a school garden for the best chance of success and endurance. We had Isaac Crosby and Ella Laforme join us for a few sessions to impart indigenous teachings - Miigwetch!

Ella Laforme (right) also offered a series of garden-based learning workshops at Frankland PS and at a new Indigenous-themed garden in Downsview Park. We are grateful to Ella, to the Frankland school community and to Terence Radford at Tropic Design for the opportunity!

## School Garden to Kitchen

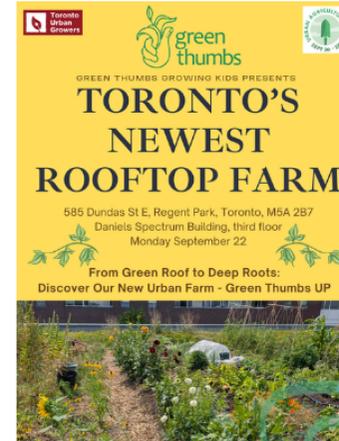
Green Thumbs launched our brand-new program this year called Slips to Chips, where we planted over 700 sweet potato slips at Eastdale Collegiate and harvested over 400 pounds of sweet potatoes, to be sliced, air-fried and enjoyed as chips! The variety used was developed by Vineland Research Station, and is a hardy, Ontario variety of sweet potato, fondly known by us as Elbows Up but actually called Radiance. Our heartfelt thanks to Chef-Teacher Sean Meikle at Eastdale CI, who has helped select the best equipment for the Slips to Chips project, and to Gary Hoyer, professor emeritas from the Hospitality school at George Brown College, for celebrating and naming the project!

Thanks to the School Food Infrastructure Grant provided by Farm to Cafeteria Canada, we are in the process of expanding the sweet potato project to other schools in Toronto, as well as installing light units, providing seeds and soil, and continuing educating on microgreens production - especially the Pea Shoots, for which we've found the highest ratings from children and youth.



# Green Thumbs UP (Urban Produce)

A 10,000 sq-ft. roof-sized thank you to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for believing in us and our vision of transforming a green roof into an urban farm! With their help through a Capital grant, we were able to install a safety fence around the third-floor green roof at Daniels Spectrum, allowing us to pilot our first ever volunteer group for Green Thumbs UP.



Our volunteers were incredible, many returning week after week to help us prepare the farm for winter. Here's what one had to say:

*"Thank you for providing us the opportunity to help out with Green Thumbs, and for sharing your wisdom and love for all things GREEN. I'm already looking forward to being with you again when the warmer days are here, and to work together with you and the other volunteers at Green Thumbs Up."*

Staff celebrating the news of Trillium funding for the safety railing. L-R: Sophie Mihev, Rebecca Davis Scott, Tristan Andrews, Aiden Crosby, Sunday Harrison



## ED Report

by Sunday Harrison

I could not be more proud of our dedicated staff and volunteers who believe in the power of gardens to bring joy, nutrition, science education, food systems awareness, indigenous pedagogy, climate education, and even math - to life. Even though our public education system does not fund the school grounds on a per-student basis like the Grants for Student Needs inside the buildings, we know that teachers and parents, students of all ages and stages instinctively know the value of garden-based learning. Our organization is a fractal - each part reflecting the whole - teaching and learning for life, about life. Thank you to our funders, our board of directors and our supporters, and special thanks to the teachers, caretakers and administration teams in our partner schools who create a welcoming environment for us as an educational partner. As we celebrate having served our community for 25 years, we plan to continue growing, building on success and branching out, as healthy organisms do!



Sept. 22: we hosted our first ever green roof event at Green Thumbs UP, where we took over 50 people on a tour of the farm, discussed the history of the space and what we hope to accomplish with it in the coming years.



Eastdale CI Co-op students (L-R) Berike Jeylani, Joshua Languigne Minott & Malachi Frasier, helping at an activity table at nearby Fred Victor, showing how to grow microgreens from seed, what they taste like, and the nutritional information



# Green Thumbs Social Enterprise

In addition to offering garden programs at schools for a fee, you can always find us at the Cabbagetown Farmers Market, every Tuesday from May to October, selling our produce and distributing books and other great information to support you in your urban agriculture journey.



Aiden and Ella managing market stall

All of our produce is grown within 1 kilometre of the farmers market – bringing the neighbourhood hyper local, fresh veggies and beautiful flowers. We are also selling our microgreens at Steak & Chops in Cabbagetown and Karma Co-op in the Annex- pop buy and pick up your Pea Shoots any time, all year round!



You can also find our edible flowers used in Zero Bar's cocktails!



## And speaking of flowers:

The Regent Park Boulevard was brightened by Green Thumbs in partnership with Enterprise Auto Rental and the nearby seniors from the Sumac residence, who came to help with planting!



# Guests of Honour

Green Thumbs had some high profile visitors this year- our MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam, the Honourable Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Gaming came to visit along with Bob Chant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. We also had a lovely lunch with folks from the Coalition for Healthy School Food, at Eastdale CI, thanks to Chef-Teacher Sean Meikle, Debbie Field and friends.



MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam, Trustee D. Williams, community supporters at Sprucecourt PS



# Eastdale CI



We had our first full growing season at this remarkable rooftop garden, in a special ed school and our first secondary school. Built up in 2011/12 in a partnership with FoodShare and the TDSB, this 16,000 sq. ft. space has produced thousands of pounds of produce. With the help of FoodShare this year, we built a new 3-bin compost system on the roof at Eastdale and are very excited to begin composting with the help of staff and students, who are learning culinary skills in the kitchen with Chef-Teacher Sean Meikle and supporter Gary Hoyer. The circular garden-to-kitchen pathway and back is developing well at Eastdale CI!



## And the Award Goes To...

Green Thumbs was the recipient of a Toronto Community Champion Award this year! This award, from the City of Toronto and the United Way of Greater Toronto, recognized our community service and "strong commitment to advancing equity, inclusion and social connectedness."



City of Toronto

# Foundations, Grants, Sponsors, Donors and Partners

## \$10K+

- Air Canada Foundation
- Aqueduct Foundation - Serena Rykert
- Service Canada - Canada Summer Jobs
- Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Fdn
- Doane Grant Thornton Foundation
- ECHO Foundation
- ECO Canada
- Farm to Cafeteria Canada
- Lush Handmade Cosmetics
- Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training
- OTF Capital Grant & Ontario Trillium Fdn.
- Peter Gilgan Foundation
- Telus Friendly Future
- The Willowood Foundation
- Marjorie and Joseph Wright Foundation

## \$2K-\$10K

- Aqueduct Foundation - Quinn Family
- AXIS Capital (Toronto)
- Catherine Moffatt
- City of Toronto/United Way (award)
- Jackman Foundation
- Janice Lewis and Mitchell Cohen Fdn.
- Julia Coey Memorial Foundation
- Lloyd Carr-Harris Foundation
- McLean Foundation

## Up to \$2K

- The Benevity Community Impact Fund
- Canadian Online Giving Foundation
- Charities Aid Foundation Canada
- Davis Consulting Inc.
- Miinikaan Innovation and Design Inc
- Nicola Wealth Private Giving Foundation
- Unite for Change

## In-Kind Partners



## Affiliate Partner

- Composting made possible by Compost Toronto and HAWKER
- FoodShare
- JOCELYN'S SOIL BOOSTER

- Up to \$2K
- Sabrina Adamski
- Liz Armstrong
- Nicholas Arrigo
- Kary Atkinson
- Louis Barbier
- Naomi Benoist
- Rachel Berman
- Susan Blagg
- Janice Bossmin
- Susan Bostwick
- Sean Brathwaite
- Manuel Buchwald
- Elizabeth Burridge
- Robin Buyers
- Maja Cardinale
- Barbara Cardona
- Brandt Champion
- Marydith Chase
- Andrew Christie
- David Clandfield
- Mitchell Cohen
- Ingrid Davis
- Doug Davis
- Ben Davis
- Joshua Davis
- Daniela Dias dos Santos
- Sarah Dobec
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- Bridget Dunphy
- Wren Dunphy Yudelman
- Rosa Duran
- Joseph Durand
- Joselyne Dusabiyumva
- Kate Franklin
- Michelle Garrow
- Martha Girvin
- Zehra Goawala
- Richard Gotlib
- Samantha Green
- Amy Gullage
- Simone Gronlund

Special Thanks to Endeavour Consulting for a great round of Strategic Planning, and to Evenings and Weekends Consulting. Paul Taylor, Rickesh Lakhani and Diana Bronson

- Sunday Harrison
- Celia Harte
- Jessica He
- Kim Holt
- Nathaniel Howell
- Sasha Howell
- Abbey Huggan
- Dorothy Hwang
- Darren Ibrahim
- Francesca Imbrogno
- Todd Irvine
- Jason Jagger
- Sally Jagger
- Saqib Jawed
- Lisa Jayne
- Madison Jones
- Nicole Jones
- Karen Jull
- Virginia Kairys
- Iris "Ike" Karuna
- P Kaur
- Shenice King
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- Nicole Land
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- Jesse Levine
- Zora Li
- Jenny Lin
- Alexandra Lincoln
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- Clare McGinnis
- Erin McGinnis Dunphy
- Megan McGinnis-Dunphy
- Maeve McGinnis-Dunphy
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- Peter Trifonas
- Rose Tuong
- Jane Veit
- Sailaivasan Vettivelu
- Chelsey Wilson
- Diana Wong
- Kristyn Wong-Tam
- Philippa Wood
- Ruo Yang Yu
- Richard Yuan
- Elle Yudelman
- Rachel Yudelman
- Mohtasim Zafar
- Vahid Zaki

## Staff & Contractors

- Tristan Andrews, Youth Program Co-ordinator and Summer Staff
- Aiden Crosby, Indigenous Program Co-ordinator
- Sunday Harrison, Executive Director
- Ella Laforme, Program Leader & Indigenous Mentor
- Sophie Mihevc, Summer Staff
- Abdirahman Mohamed, Communications Co-ordinator
- Rebecca Davis Scott, Program Co-ordinator
- Tsering Tashi, Administrative Co-ordinator

## Placement Students/Volunteers

- Emmanuel Adefoye Adejuwon, Youth Thrive Volunteer
- Kelsey Docherty, B.Ed., York U
- Sullivan Dymont, M.E.S., York U
- Malachi Frasier, Secondary Co-op
- Meesha Grant, Youth Thrive Volunteer
- Berike Jeylani, Secondary Co-op
- Zoe Kende, Community Garden Volunteer
- Joshua Languigne Minott, Secondary Co-op
- Romeo Gringo Jr Mones, Community Devt., Centennial College
- Nikita Nanda, Community Devt., Centennial College
- Jennifer Phovixay, B.Ed., York U
- Liberty Wynn, Youth Thrive Volunteer
- Lincoln Stone, Secondary Co-op
- Hannah Thorne, B.Ed., York U

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