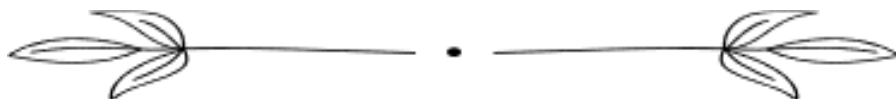
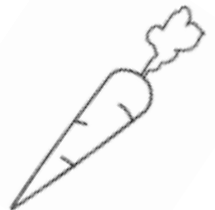
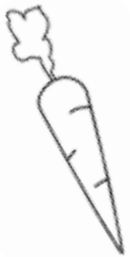
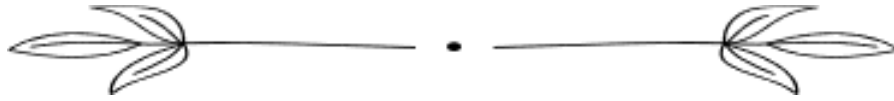


Young Roots Farm Report 2021



Introduction

In 2021, despite a global pandemic, Young Roots Farm provided programming for around 300 participants throughout 28 days of camp, 6 days of farm camp, an Indigenous group day, and a harvest event. Using only ⅓ of actively gardened land, 740 kg of food was produced and used for lesson plans, farm camp, a fall harvest event, farmers markets, and preserved for both markets and healthy, organic vegetables for farm staff to eat this coming spring. Although there were significantly less people on site contributing to the composting system this year, as compared to other years, 1731kg of food waste and brown paper towels were composted. Removing this organic waste from the landfill spared the atmosphere of 173kg of methane greenhouse gasses (McGill, 2020).

In 2021, the goals of the farm program were to:

- Develop a farm curriculum and streamline lesson plan animation
- Provide programming for campers that is adapted to Covid-19 restrictions
- Develop assessments to understand our impacts on campers
- Begin Camp Amy Molson's journey to become the first carbon neutral camp in Canada
- Enhance farm infrastructure for efficiency and more lesson plan opportunities
- Grow heritage varieties of vegetables for seed saving
- Manage the forest that surrounds the garden for safety, optimal growth and lumber

Most goals were achieved to completion and brought forward many learnings, challenges, and sparked many new ideas that could contribute to the farm program in the coming years.

Curriculum Development

Reflecting on previous years' experiences, we were able to create a curriculum with specific themes in mind, which also aims to encourage and engage children to think about the relationship between the environment and their future. We delivered lessons that ranged from gardening and composting, to food sovereignty and seed keeping, to plant medicine, cooking and survival skills.



Leaders in Training Program

C.A.M.'s Leaders in Training (LIT) program is a great opportunity for youth to learn new life skills through things like workshops, camping trips, and generally, more responsibility. Young Roots Farm ran our annual entrepreneurship program with the LITs where, together, we made our famous pesto and harvested our produce for local markets. Throughout this program, we were very transparent about the costs of our pesto and produce versus market prices, and allowed

the LITs to decide how to price our products. The quirky local markets were always a blast as we took shifts to walk around and barter with other vendors.



This year, Young Roots Farm introduced a program where LITs could learn homesteading skills through a role playing game. This was a post-apocalyptic game where LITs chose their characters and fulfilled their roles as either medicine person, farmer, builder, and/or mediator. Throughout this program, the LITs designed and built their own community garden as well as harvested and processed medicines from both the forest and the farm.



Salad Bar

Thanks to funding received by Tremplin Sante, we introduced an interactive salad bar. Every day, a different age group helped harvest and prepare produce from the farm, which included cutting, seasoning, portioning our local vegetables, as well as repurposing leftovers, such as chopping up hard boiled eggs or making croutons out of leftover toast. Every dinner, a different camper would choose the salad for their table, which made them excited about the salad bar

through their sense of responsibility and contribution to that meal. Memorable quotes include “I look forward to the salad bar every day”, “I didn’t want to try the seeds but now I love them, do you have any extra?”, and “can I help you with the salad bar today?”. Their involvement in this process gave campers cooking skills, a sense of ownership, pride, and knowledge in that they were able to see the full life cycle of vegetables.



Enhancing Infrastructure

This year, our goal was to build a cob pizza oven for our outdoor kitchen, a gazebo that doubles as a grape vine trellis, and a new forced-air composting system that could handle all of C.A.M.’s kitchen waste. Campers learned what it meant to compost, how it reduces greenhouse gasses and landfill waste, and how it produces a nutrient-dense plant growing substrate. Younger kids always enjoyed running around and collecting brown paper towels from all the bathrooms in order to put them in the compost.



In 2020, one of our campers wanted to help the farm design and build a gazebo/grape trellis using local and recycled materials. They started by finding and placing durable cedar posts, and in the spring of 2021, the farm team completed their design. It has been used as respite from the sun for both humans and chickens, a stage for theater activities, and a photo booth. We were also able to finish our outdoor kitchen visions by completing a pizza oven and touching up the grill. All the clay and sand were harvested from our local river bed. With the help of our community we now have a fully functioning cob oven!



Carbon Neutrality

One of our larger projects included taking major steps to become the first carbon neutral camp in Canada, while including our campers in the conversation. We did this by introducing our interactive Visual Garbage Display that would represent the amount of garbage that we produce as an organization versus our efforts to mitigate that through composting and repurposing materials. We had conversations with both campers and staff about what it means for us to be responsible to the land and its original people. In order to keep our campers engaged in this process, we made it interactive so that cabins would compete by picking up doggy bags of garbage around camp and hand them into the farm in exchange for a plant on their section of the wall. The cabins who won the competition would get to take their plants home.



Aside from the Visual Garbage Display, we grew trees from seed collected from our local forest in 2020. We planted them with our youth to incorporate shade around the sunny park for sweltering summer days. We are waiting on more of our trees to mature to plant around cabins for cooling effects in the future.



Moving forward, we would like to take responsibility for offsetting our own carbon footprint by healing small plots of land in the neighbourhoods of our campers in Montreal. We will be doing this by using a practice called bioremediation, which involves using plants, bacteria, and fungi to bring plots of land to a state of health that could support gardens, or creative refuge meadows for our youth to feel a connection to land in the city.

Events

Farm and Wilderness Camp



Throughout the 5 days of our annual Farm and Wilderness Camp (FWC), 13 campers between the ages of 11 and 15, and 15 staff, cooks, and workshop leaders bonded over amazing food, early morning farm chores, wholesome workshops, and the creative personal projects that our youth participants chose for themselves. Although the participants' personal projects were the main focus of FWC, both campers and staff alike learned about each other and the land through workshops about the original peoples and traditions of the Laurentians, music making using the sounds of nature, a mushroom foray, and a respectful chicken butchering. Creative personal projects were developed by the campers and included incredible ideas such as jewelry made with invasive species, pots made from locally harvested clay from our river bed, story-telling using inspiration from the land, art made with locally found materials, digital music production using recorded sounds from nature, lots of delicious dishes and more. With the help of generous grants, and a fundraiser created with our campers, we managed to make this opportunity completely free for our youth participants, and hope to keep this tradition going for years to come.



Indigenous Group Day

We hosted our first Indigenous group day with Nations Garlic and Deerhouse Farms in the hopes to make our 180 acres of forest, rivers, farm, cabins and a lake more accessible to the Kanienke'ha of this region. Together we enjoyed hiking in the woods, swimming in the lake, cooking together, and overall relaxing together as we all understood what it meant to be hard working farmers.



Harvest Event

The harvest event was a great way to end the summer. With activities like a natural crafts station, a chicken photo booth, a fresh drinks station and the grill going, we ended the summer by

celebrating our abundant harvests. We enjoy making this event free for our community and giving away baskets of our vegetables and products through a raffle.



Budget 2021

[The 2021 budget can be found here](#)

Reflections

Throughout the summer, it was very clear as to why the Camp Amy Molson and Young Roots Farm are such an important place for our families and participants. With an abundance of positive feedback from both campers and staff, it was clear that our programming was inspiring our campers to feel connected to the land, their food, nature, and each other. This year, we implemented surveys and feedback forms to understand just how much our programming was influencing these connections for our campers. Our reflections around our programming lie in the feedback given by both our staff and participants.

Through the *Nature Relatedness Scale* and *Children's Perception of Nature* surveys, the highest rated answers were "my relationship to nature is an important part of who I am", "we need to take better care of plants and animals", and "people need plants to live". Even though most of the children that come to C.A.M. are from the city and do not have much access to nature, the surveys showed us that nature is an important part of their lives. Our Young Roots Farm feedback forms showed us that most of the campers (88%) really enjoyed the farm, and for those that didn't, efforts were made to make the programming more engaging for them as well. Some quotes about what they learned were that "we should protect the environment", "chickens are not always food", and "farming is good for your health", aside from composting, natural perfume making, cooking, shelter building, and more. One memorable quote from the feedback forms was "I want the farm to be there for 100 years, it is very special".