

2017-2018 GRATITUDE REPORT



Common Threads connects kids to healthy food in the garden, in the kitchen, and at the table. We want kids to grow up making food choices that are good for their bodies, their communities, and the environment.

OUR VISION

All children have the resources, information, and experiences they need to make healthy food choices every day.

All kids are exposed to foods that set them up for a lifetime of healthy eating.

Healthy food and healthy food education become an expected norm, simply part of a basic education.

When kids eat better, they learn better, act better, and feel better.

Yet the overwhelming statistics around hunger, obesity and diabetes tell us that healthy eating is not yet the norm.

Barriers to making healthy food choices include time, money, geography, and experience.

At Common Threads, we're in the business of creating experiences that help kids (and their families) learn to choose healthy food.

Not because they should, or because they have to, but because they want to.

In 2017-2018—close to 6,000 kids across 21 schools in 4 school districts in Whatcom County—joyfully, curiously, and willingly gardened, cooked, and ate healthy food with Common Threads.

This wouldn't have been possible without your support. Thanks for everything that you do to help grow good eaters!

Laura Plaut,
Executive Director

Common Threads' programs have broadened my kids' palettes in ways I wouldn't dared have tried... Now cabbage slaw, kale, lentils, and curry are just a few of the healthy foods they not only want to eat but can help prepare as well.

*Franchesca,
Birchwood Elementary Parent*

WANT TO GROW GOOD EATERS?



Make it fun! *"It's good for you" almost never works. "We made this, and now we get to eat it!" almost always does.*



Keep it simple. At Common Threads, we focus on teaching kids gardening and cooking skills that they can use at home.



Connect the dots. Gardening and cooking are not just "fun extras"—they're a great hands-on way to learn math, science, language arts, and more. Teachers will invest instructional time when they see clear curricular connections.



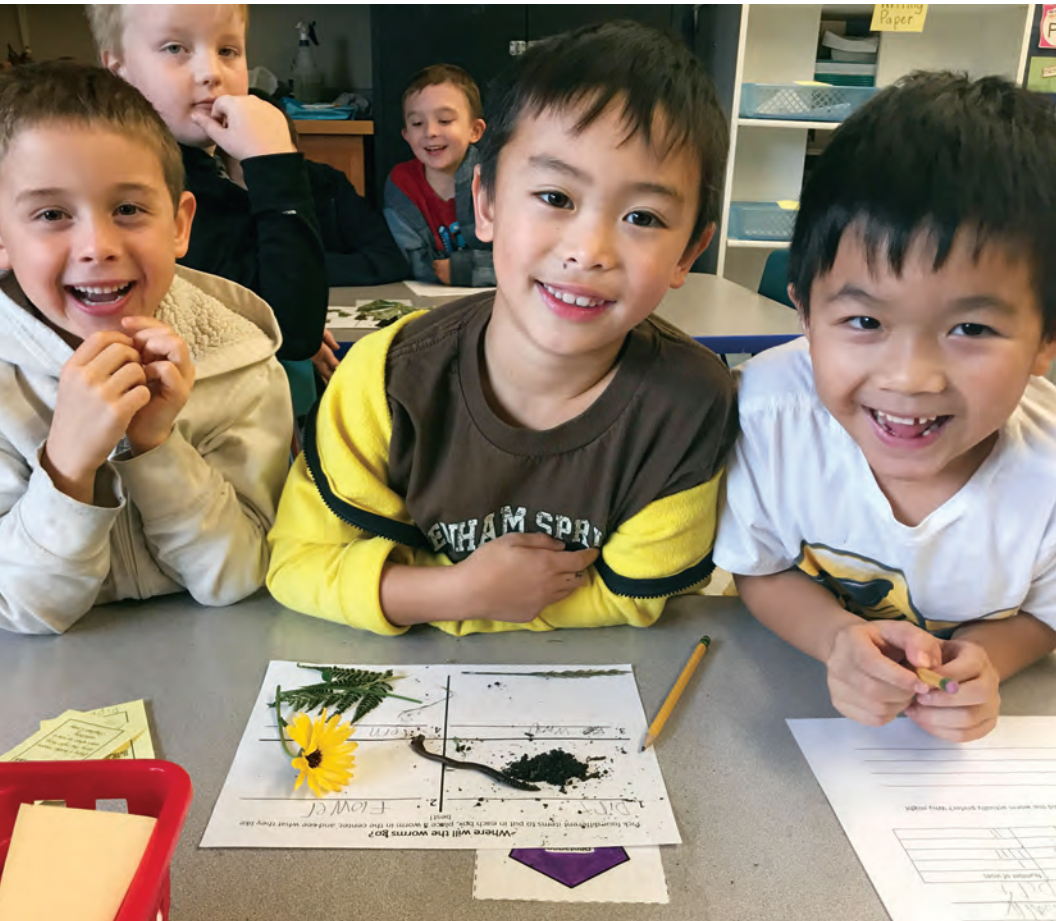
Students understood our math unit on measurement, fractions, and decimals much better after our cooking classes. Applied math in the garden was highly engaging. Brilliant work!

—Kendall 5th grade teacher



I can't believe my son willingly ate an entire veggie spring roll! We will DEFINITELY be making those at home! Thank you!!

—Parent of child at DirtFest celebration



BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT...

School garden grown food is making its way into school cafeterias (and kids are gobbling it up!)

Thanks to a partnership with Slow Food USA and the Whole Kids Foundation, Common Threads and the Bellingham Public Schools are among the leaders, nationally, in making sure that school garden grown food is served in the cafeteria.



New School Gardens are springing to life!

Fisher Elementary (Lynden) and Cascadia Elementary (Ferndale) joined our family of school partners this year. We're so glad to be supporting 21 school gardens in four school districts!



The Kids Supper Club is giving kids in low-income apartment complexes something fun to do, and something wholesome to eat after school.



Kids Supper Club participants at Regency Park Apartments prepare and eat dinner with Common Threads once a week. Not only is it fun, it also puts the healthy food in their tummies so that kids can show up at school the next day ready to learn. Plans are underway for expansion of this pilot program in the coming year.

AmeriCorps service members are making a big impact

This past year, 13 passionate AmeriCorps service members made it possible for close to 6,000 school kids to garden and cook on school grounds, during the school day. Common Threads' partnership with AmeriCorps and our choice to focus our service in public schools help ensure that cooking and gardening are accessible to all kids—not just the ones whose parents are already supporting good choices at home.

Read on to see stories from two of Common Threads' dedicated AmeriCorp Food Educators: Bree and Blair.

BREE'S STORY:

This winter I have witnessed elementary school children tasting varieties of local and fresh vegetables and trying new recipes within the classroom. They are learning about what grows around them and how they can be a part of taking care of it all -- and taking care of themselves.

I have heard students admit that they never liked broccoli before but now they absolutely love it, or that they'd previously been forced to

eat kale but now they know a kale recipe they enjoy and want to share with their families at home.

I have noticed that, once students are able to use their own hands and minds to make decisions about what they consume, their attitudes toward healthy food shift toward acceptance.

After our cooking lessons, I hear many students planning to make the salad recipe for their families and community events. They stand ready to share their experience and lead some significant change toward

community reliance and sustainability. I am grateful to have played a small part in helping them claim their future.

—Bree Farmer, 2017-18 AmeriCorps Food Educator



Bree getting a good hug in the garden

BLAIR'S STORY:

Our job as Common Threads Educators is to teach children to make responsible food choices, not only for their bodies but for the environment. Sometimes I can't help but wonder, "Am I making a difference? Are these kids truly hearing me?"

I recently asked a group of kindergarteners how they could show respect to their garden classroom:

"Don't step on the garden beds!" shouted one little girl.

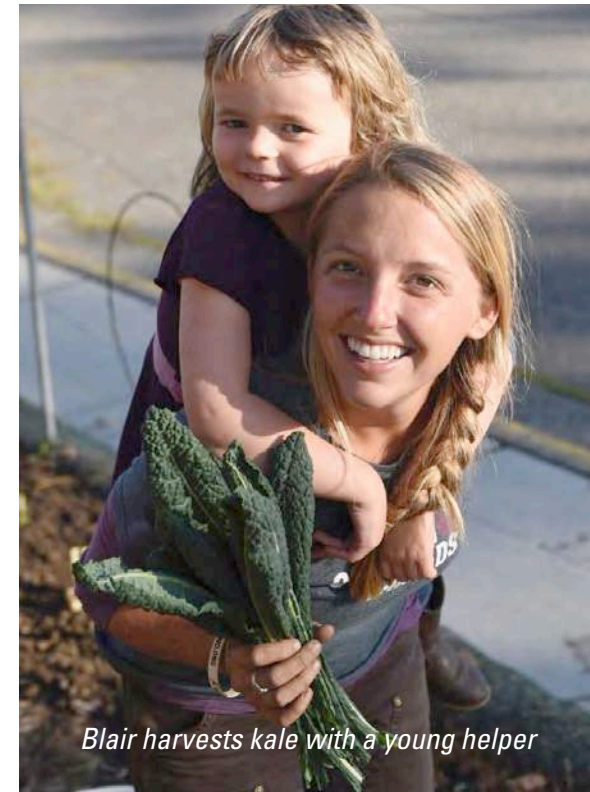
"Hold your tools below your waist!" exclaimed another.

But it was the sweet boy in the back of the room who won my attention. His hand was quietly raised in the air and his body was calm. I called on him.

"We need to make sure that we don't hurt the worms because when we hurt the worms we hurt the soil. If we don't have soil, we won't have plants, and plants make the world better" he declared.

In an instant, my doubts and questions were washed away: Just when you think they aren't listening, a very small person sends a very big message.

—Blair Sando, 2017-18 AmeriCorps School Farmer



Blair harvests kale with a young helper



IT'S ALL HANDS IN

Thanks for helping us grow good eaters!

FOUNDATION FUNDERS

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Chuckanut Health Foundation
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Eleanor and Henry Jansen Foundation
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Whole Kids Foundation

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Whole Foods Market
Wild Acres Farm

PARTNERS

**Connecting kids with healthy food is a team sport!
We're so grateful to be on the same team as these
fabulous organizations.**

AmeriCorps/Washington Service Corps
Assumption Catholic School
Bellingham Food Bank
Bellingham Public Schools
Cascadia Elementary School (Ferndale School
District)
East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (Opportunity
Council)
Fisher Elementary School (Lynden School District)
Foothills Community Food Partnership & FESGI (the
Food Education & School Garden Initiative)
Mt. Baker School District
Pure Food Kids (Beechers Foundation)
Regency Park Apartments

SNAP Ed (Supplemental Nutrition
Assistance Program Education
– a joint effort of the USDA,
Washington Department of Health,
Washington Department of Social &
Health Services, & WSU)
Western Washington University & the
Outback Farm

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Olivia Yates O'Donnell
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Nicole Zickler

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All County Properties Management
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Bellingham Pasta Company
Bellewood Acres
Boundary Bay Brewery
Cedarville Farm
Ciao Thyme
Drizzle Olive Oil & Vinegar Tasting Room
DUPI Garden Club
Erin Baker's
Experience Momentum (in honor of Lauren
Corboy)
Flying B Ranch
Foothills Farm
Gluten Free Angels Bakery
Goat Mountain Pizza
Good Food Jobs
Great Harvest Bread Company
Grow Northwest
Growsource
Honey Moon Mead & Cider
Joe's Gardens
Mallard Ice Cream
Mariposa Farm
Miller Environmental Services
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Organic Valley
Pioneer Potatoes
Pollen Folly Farm
Rabbit Fields Farm
The REStore
Slanted Sun Farm
Smith Gardens
Starbucks Coffee
Sunseed Farm
Terra Organic and Natural Foods
Terra Verde Garden
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Threshold Documents
Village Books
Wanderwood Farm
Wildwood Farm

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**And to the many interns
and volunteers who watered,
and weeded, and helped
grow good eaters:
THANK YOU!**



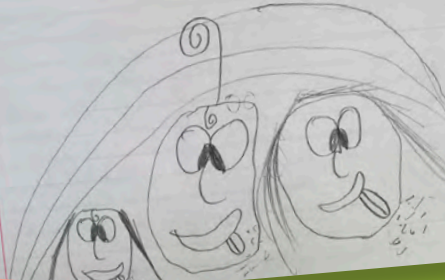
2017-18 PROGRAM TEAM

Back row, left to right: Marit Olson, Alyssa Stewart, Anna Beebe, Bree Farmer, Carlos Morales
Middle row: Blair Sando, Claire Engelen, Gabby Mednick, Rebeca Bonilla-Myers, Renae Keep
Front row: Laura Plaut, Priyaka Anand, Amy Blom, Clara Vannice, Angela Moran, Julia Gray
Not pictured: Jessica Moermann, Robyn Garratt





We LOVE the
Common Threads program
at Sunnyland. The
teachers are great and
the food too! All five
of our kids absolutely
♥ cooking class and
can't wait to show us
the menus. Thank you
for what you do! *Michael*

Oct. 16, 2017
Dear Mr. Carlos,
Thank you for taking the time
out of your day to come to me and
my classmates' classroom to teach us to
make the yummy in my tummy
chili. One thing I learned was how easy
it is to cut different things. My favorite
thing was cutting up the garlic.
I hope you can come to our
classroom again to help us cook
something else!
Sincerely,
Nimue (Wim-away)



Dear Mrs. Bree,
We thank
you for helping
us learn
a bout PLANTS!
We
♥!
From: Penny



It costs close to \$15,000 per school, per year to run strong gardening and cooking programs. Schools currently cover about 20% of that cost. The rest comes from generous donors like you.

Common Threads has never turned a child away from our summer programs due to lack of funds. This year, 34 kids received need-based scholarship support.

FINANCIALS 2017

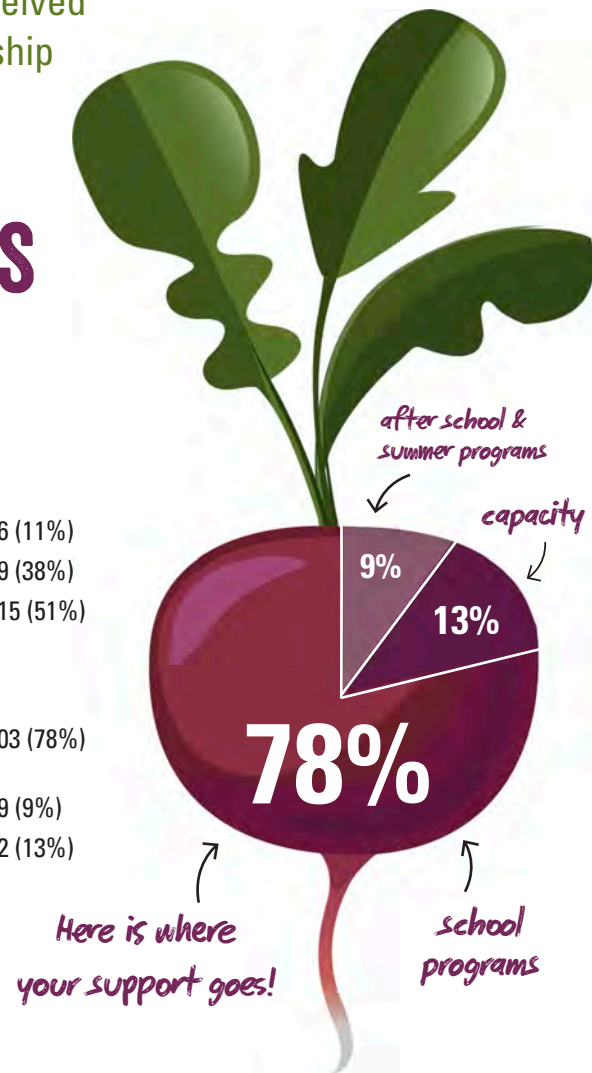
INCOME:

Contributions	\$26,926 (11%)
Program Fees	\$92,559 (38%)
Grants/Foundation	\$125,715 (51%)

EXPENSES:

School Programs	\$177,503 (78%)
After School & Summer Programs	\$20,399 (9%)
Capacity (overhead)	\$30,762 (13%)

**Note: these financials reflect our 2017 fiscal year*





there will be the
and see what they like



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