



2018/2019 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.

Message from the Executive Director

If you're like me, you sometimes wonder if what you're doing with your time and money makes a difference.

With only so many hours and so many dollars - how do we invest in the things that matter most?

How do we decide which problems to tackle and how best to approach them?

This past year, Common Threads undertook a comprehensive evaluation of our school-based programs. At the start, we were nervous. After investing so many resources into school-based food education, what if we learned our impact wasn't what we believed it was?

As it turns out, Common Threads really is helping kids become more adventurous eaters (pew!) We knew this anecdotally, but it sure is nice to have the data to support it.

Far more touching, however, was hearing one teacher after another speak to the joy, the bravery and the willingness to take risks that they saw in their students during Common Threads programming.

We've always known that "we grow good eaters." The truth, it turns out, is bigger and more beautiful than that: gardening, cooking, and eating in community grows good humans and good community.

Thank you for your investment, your confidence and your support. Kids in this community are living tastier, healthier, more joyful lives because of you!

Laura Plaut,
Executive Director

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.



BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT...

AmeriCorps Food Educators serve as teachers and role models

Imagining Food Education without AmeriCorps service members is like imagining huevos rancheros without eggs, or veggie stir fry without vegetables.

Each year since 2010, a growing team of smart, passionate, dedicated AmeriCorps service members have made it possible for kids in our community to experience the taste of healthy food and the feel of dirt under their fingernails.

This past year, we launched our state-wide AmeriCorps team—extending our food education reach far beyond Whatcom County. A huge thank you not only to our 2018-19 service members and also to our first-ever state-wide partner sites - Concrete Farm to School, Coupeville Farm to School, Lower Columbia School Gardens and Oxbow Farm & Conservation Center!



Low income kids have good food and good activity during out of school hours

When school's out, too many children spend time in environments where there is not enough to do, not enough to eat, and not enough loving contact with peers and adults.

This past year, thanks to support from Share our Strength and the Chuckanut Health Foundation, Common Threads piloted *Kids Cook!*: an after-school and summer meal program.

Kids are learning to prepare and enjoy healthy meals together while also enjoying the company of their peers and positive role models (the AmeriCorps team!)

103 kids prepared and ate 768 reimbursable meals!

(Fun fact: Common Threads is an official USDA reimbursable meal provider. The meals prepared in Kids Cook! are not only delicious but also meet federal guidelines for a complete meal.)

"The reason I'm such an advocate of Common Threads is that you all are an example of health equity in motion."

—Katie Stanford,
Whatcom County
Health Department



More kids attend camp on scholarship than ever before

When school's out, it's time for camp! The beautiful 5-acre grounds of the WWU Outback Farm is the perfect spot for exploring nature and healthy food.

From the beginning, Common Threads' has been committed to never turning a child away for lack of funds. This year, 52 of our 196 campers received need-based scholarships, totalling over \$7000 in scholarships awarded.

Supporters like you make it possible for all kids to have an outdoor summer camp and food education experience.

I love that Common Threads camp teaches our kiddos to be good stewards of the earth. I want my daughter to see that as an important value in her life as she grows up. To me, summer camp shouldn't be "fancy"- it should be about disconnecting from everyday routines (and screens), trying new skills, and learning to live harmoniously in nature. That's exactly what my daughter experienced at Common Threads camp. She came home covered in dirt, talking excitedly about eating new vegetables! Thank you for offering the opportunity for children in our community to experience this kind of nature-oriented camp! —Parent of child attending CTF summer camp



Common Threads programs grow so much more than good eaters!

In the 2018-2019 school year, **over 6700 kids in 21 schools** across four school districts in Whatcom County gardened, cooked, and ate with Common threads.

But so what? What changed because of our programs?

In the spring of 2019, we conducted an evaluation of our school-based gardening and cooking programs to see if we were achieving our intended impacts. What we learned was pretty gratifying. You can [download this summary document](#) or [read the full report](#). If healthy, happy, brave, curious children are “your cup of tea”*, it turns out that investing in school based food education programs is a good choice. *Thank you, again and again, for your support!*

*Common Threads’ way of talking to kids about food preferences



“You might expect me to say, ‘I wish this matched my curriculum better’ - but honestly, I just want them to get outside. I want them to try something new and feel brave about that. I want them to get their toes wet and have fun doing it with someone who really cares.”

—Janelle Karney
5th grade teacher
at Alderwood Elementary



2018/2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Fred Berman, Chris Casquilho, Nolan Davidson, Candace Kessel,
Gail Knops, Kayla Schott-Bresler, Amber Thorsen

**And to the 200+ interns and volunteers who contributed over 2100 hours:
THANK YOU!**

2018-19 PROGRAM TEAM

Rainey Aberle, Sara Bauer, Maddie Breza, Sarah Brown, Joey Crotty,
Jenna Deane, Julia Gray, Margo Heffron, Sydney Latas, Carly Markowitz,
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THANK YOU

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PARTNERS

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

Assumption Catholic School
Beecher's Foundation (Pure Food Kids)
Bellingham Public Schools
Cascadia Elementary (Ferndale School District)
Concrete Farm to School
Coupeville Farm to School
Everson Elementary (Nooksack Valley School District)
Fisher Elementary (Lynden School District)
Foothills Community Food Partnership & FESGI (the Food Education & School Garden Initiative)
Lower Columbia School Gardens
Mount Baker School District
Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
Northwest Youth Services
Opportunity Council
Oxbow Farm & Conservation Center
RE Sources – Sustainable Schools Program
Regency Park Apartments
Skyline Elementary (Ferndale School District)
Sterling Meadows Apartments
Western Washington University
WWU Outback Farm
Whatcom Family YMCA
Whatcom Farm-to-School
Wild Whatcom

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** indicates our growing circle of monthly donors*





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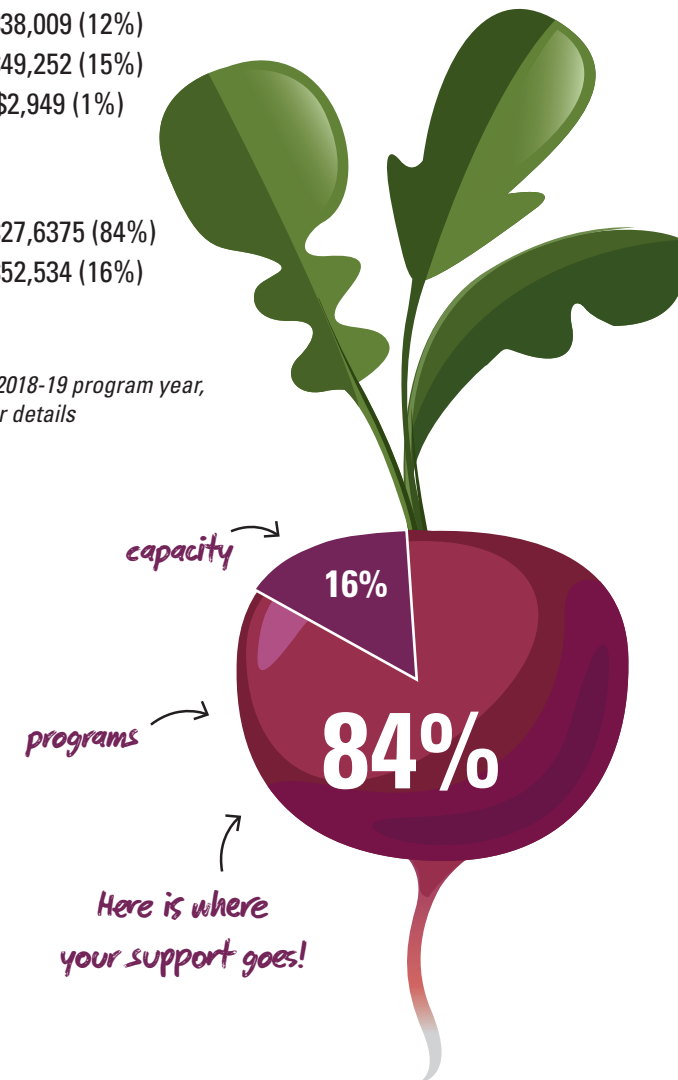
REVENUE: \$322,379

Fee for service.....	\$111,277 (35%)
Grants.....	\$120,892 (37%)
Public Support.....	\$38,009 (12%)
State & Fed. Support ..	\$49,252 (15%)
Other Revenue.....	\$2,949 (1%)

EXPENSES: \$328,909

Program	\$27,6375 (84%)
Capacity.....	\$52,534 (16%)

**Note - this represents our 2018-19 program year,
[click here](#) for 2018 fiscal year details*





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