

# Inclusive Engagement in Urban Farming and Food Initiatives

## Our Partner: Gordon Neighbourhood House (GNH)

- A space for Vancouver's West End community to thrive and stay active (GNH, 2019)
- Facilitates various programs, services, and initiatives
- Nourishes the community through free and low-cost food (GNH, 2019)



### Community Food Security

occurs when all members of the community are able to have a culturally acceptable, safe, and nutritionally sufficient diet through a food system that is sustainable, which enhances social justice and the community's reliance on itself (Hamm & Bellows, 2003).



### GNH Urban Agriculture Program

- Approximately 20 volunteers
- 4 garden sites, ranging from 50-150 square meters
- 10 herb boxes around the West End
- Food produced is used in other GNH food initiatives

### GNH Mission

"working alongside our friends and neighbours to facilitate connection, engagement and collaboration, while seizing opportunities for community development" (GNH, 2019)



## Our Approach

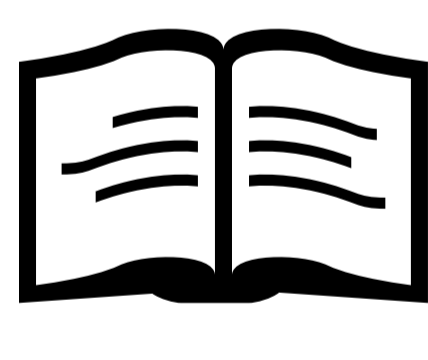
- ✓ Winterize 6 garden beds
- ✓ Plant 24 sq. meters garlic and fava beans for Spring 2020
- ✓ Volunteer at five GNH programs
- ✓ Revise 1 urban agriculture volunteer survey
- ✓ Research literature related to urban farming to understand current benefits and how to improve GNH's program

## Why It Matters

- Urban agriculture improves social and environmental sustainability and helps fight food distribution inequalities (Parece, Serrano, & Campbell, 2017)
- Community garden participants have been shown to consume larger quantities of fruits and vegetables than both home gardeners and non-gardeners (Litt et al., 2011)
- Our work with GNH supported the physical aspects of their initiatives through our time volunteering, while our academic research and survey inputs provided GNH with evidence-based direction for further improvement



## Our Results

 **6 Papers**  
reviewed and summarized

 **15 Volunteers**  
participated in discussion and feedback

**What Volunteers had to say...**

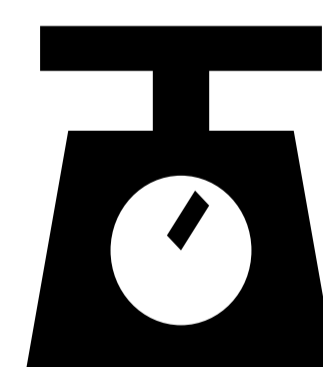
**The three biggest takeaways**

1. Gained gardening knowledge and skills

2. Encouraged volunteers to garden at home

3. Increased consciousness of food consumption patterns

 **30 hours**  
of volunteer work

 **630 lbs<sup>1</sup>**  
of produce harvested from 2 urban agriculture plots

 **50 bulbs**  
of garlic planted

 **16 m<sup>2</sup>**  
of fava beans planted

 **24 m<sup>2</sup>**  
mulched for winter

## Conclusion and Next Steps

Our overall outcome was to support GNH in developing a better understanding of their volunteers, winterize their gardens, and provide relevant literature that can help improve GNH's urban agriculture program. Future directions include: continuing volunteer and engagement, expanding to new sites, and collecting more quantitative and qualitative data about the urban agriculture program and its impacts.

### References

Gordon Neighbourhood House. (2019). *Mandate and vision*. Retrieved from <https://gordonhouse.org/about-gordon-neighbourhood-house/mandate-vision/>

Hamm, M. W., & Bellows, A. C. (2003). Community food security: Background and future directions. *Journal Of Nutrition Education And Behavior*, 35(1), 37-43. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mnh&AN=12588679&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Litt, J. S., Soobader, M., Turbin, M. S., Hale, J. W., Buchenau, M., & Marshall, J. A. (2011). The influence of social involvement, neighborhood aesthetics, and community garden participation on fruit and vegetable consumption. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101(8), 1466-1473. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2010.300111

Parece, T. E., Serrano, E. L., & Campbell, J. B. (2017). Strategically siting urban agriculture: A socioeconomic analysis of Roanoke, Virginia. *The Professional Geographer*, 69(1), 45-58. doi:10.1080/00330124.2016.1157496