



Final Program Report
October 2020

Program Title: Community Sustainability and Resilience Youth Program
Phase 1: Summer Food Security Program (June 9 - Aug 1)
Phase 2: BC Community Services Youth Program (Aug 4 - Oct 31)

Program Duration: June 9, 2020 - Oct 31, 2020

Program Team:

Charlotte Fesnoux	Program Coordinator / Facilitator	Phase 1 & 2
Connor McCrae-Pharo	Community Ambassador	Phase 1 & 2
Aislinn Cottell	Community Ambassador	Phase 1 & 2
Lara Jesen	Community Ambassador	Phase 1 & 2
Alex Spacek	Community Ambassador	Phase 1
Crimson McClellan	Community Ambassador	Phase 2

Partners:

Thetis Island Residents' and Ratepayers' Association (TIRRA)
Thetis Island Community Farm Cooperative (Farm Co-op)

Funding:

Thetis Island Residents' and Ratepayers' Association (Phase 1)
Thetis Island Community Fund (Phase 1)
Stewart Fund (Phase 1)
Canada Summer Jobs (Phase 1)
WorkBC (Phase 2)

Program Summary

In response to COVID-19, ThINC reworked its summer plans to allow for social distancing and other safety measures to take place. Partnering with local organizations, TIRRA and the Farm Co-op, ThINC pivoted its activities towards addressing food security on the island, which has been an issue highlighted by the pandemic. Guided by the program coordinator, a small group of youth (known as the ThINCpod) were hired to carry out various activities to support local food production and distribution, as well as to design and implement several food-related projects pitched to the group by community members. During this time, the ThINCpod also engaged in trail maintenance and invasive species removal activities with TIRRA. Funding from the BC Community Youth Services Program (phase 2) allowed the group to build on the successes of the Summer Food Security Program (phase one), and continue into the fall, developing and broadening their activities to include waste management and small environmental restoration projects. Throughout the entirety of the program, the students developed numerous critical skills, project specific skills, and knowledge about sustainable systems and ways of living. In return, the Thetis Island community received a boost of youthful energy and creativity, and the catalyst for several sustainability projects.



Program Goals and Objectives

Program Goals: To increase food security and community resilience on Thetis Island whilst providing youth with jobs and learning opportunities.

Objectives:

- To support operations at Jollity Farm, helping to grow and harvest fresh produce for Thetis Islanders (Phase 1 & 2)
- To design and develop a community medicinal garden (Phase 1 & 2)
- To learn alongside community experts from diverse backgrounds (Phase 1 & 2)
- To share experiences with the Thetis Island community (Phase 1 & 2)
- To develop an online interactive tool that helps connect residents to local food producers, distributors, and food education facilities (Phase 1)
- To create a COVID-safe recycling proposal for the Island's recycling centre (Phase 2)
- To assist in the restoration of St. Margaret's Cemetery (Phase 2)

Methods and Approaches

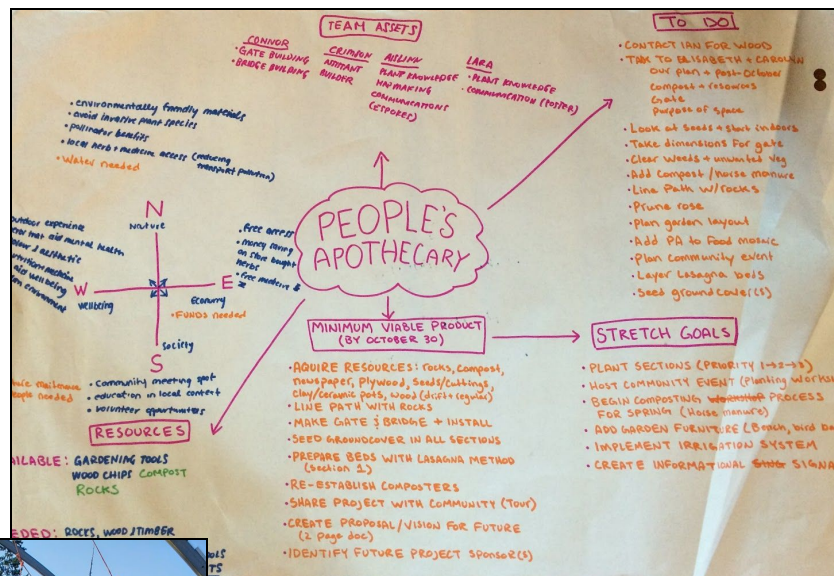
Collaboration, between students, as well as with the community, was a key factor of this program. As such, numerous strategies had to be put in place to ensure true collaboration was maintained. Some of these included:

- Ongoing communication with the community regarding the Pod's activities and projects via eSpokes notifications, social media posts, articles, blog posts, surveys, and meetings. Community members were encouraged to provide feedback, which the group took into consideration and implemented where possible.
- Continual and open communication between partner organizations in the form of meetings, phone calls, and emails.
- The implementation of dialogue circles (aka. talking circles) to share ideas, feedback, questions, etc
- The use of Google Drive - Docs, Sheets, Forms, and folders, to help organize and collaborate on a shared platform
- Check-ins were established at the start of each week where students would share any questions, comments, and concerns about the program, as well as an update on their progress and if they were facing any challenges.



Throughout the program, students were engaged in either ‘Activities’ or ‘Focus Projects’.

Activities were tasks that required little to no planning from the students, and were organized by ThINC or the partner organizations (i.e. The Farm Co-op, TIRRA). These included: community excursions, activities at Jollity Farm, trail maintenance, and restoration projects at St. Margaret’s Cemetery. Focus Projects were student driven projects that required a high degree of planning, organization, and logistics. For these, the students implemented the **Design Process** in which a project was broken down into four phases: picture it (ideation), plan it, do it, and review it. In the ‘picture it’ phase, students produced a ‘project autopsy’ where they ideated on: goals (minimum viable product and stretch goals), objectives, project sustainability, team assets, steps to success, and a possible timeline. To help keep everyone on schedule,



tasks were delegated to each student on a weekly basis via weekly meetings and a shared online ‘To-Do’ list.

As this program was a learning program as well as a work experience, the coordinator and partner leaders sought to **facilitate** experiences rather than instructing. Students were encouraged to design and lead their own learning, however, support and scaffolding was provided throughout.

Due to COVID-19, new safety measures had to be established. These included:

- Small group work
- Largely outdoor work and meetings
- Social distancing and the use of PPE
- COVID safety training at program start

Outcomes

Community Projects and Activities

The ThINCpod:

- Provided Jollity Farm with over 1000 hours of labour to help support local food security. Students engaged in bed building, water management, animal husbandry, harvesting, etc.
- Designed and established the infrastructure and beginnings of a community medicinal garden (The People's Apothecary) on Carolyn Askew's property, lot 62, which is formally a part of the Thetis Island Food Cooperative. Over the 5 months, the students and the coordinator collectively committed approximately 200 hours of labour towards the garden. Activities included: ideation and planning, pruning, weeding, path digging, wood chipping/laying, bed building, rock collecting and placement, planting, and gate construction. Community members donated most of the materials (newspaper /cardboard, wood, rocks, plants, pots, manure/compost), tools, machines, and expertise. On October 22nd a 'community walkthrough' was held and 46 local residents visited to explore and learn more about the space. A similar event was held for the Thetis Island School.
- Established an online Food Mosaic (right) which includes an interactive food map (Q-GIS) showing food producers, distributors, and food education facilities on Thetis Island; a list of 'Food Champions' - locals engaging in self-food security; and documents to support sustainable food production, foraging, and waste management.
- Maintained a shared blog that showcases what the students did, their reflections and learnings, as well as a podcast (known as the 'ThINCpod'). Sixteen blog posts were uploaded.
- Developed a COVID-safe proposal for the recycling centre. For this, the students met with the TIRRA board multiple times, interviewed neighbouring island/community

Thetis Island Food Mosaic

Explore our interactive **Food Map** to learn more about local producers and distributors and read about our 'growing' community of **Food Security Champions**

Legend

- Food Producer/Distributor
- Nature Reserve

* Hover your mouse over or click on the map to read about each producer/distributor!

Definitions

Food Producer (FP):
Produce food beyond their own subsistence use, for selling or trade within the community.

Food Distributor (FD):
Source food from various producers to be made available on site for selling or trade with the community.

Nature Reserve (NR):
Protected area of significant ecological value.

What is Food Security?

Food security is defined as "the state of having reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food."

Many factors come into play in determining whether a community is truly food secure. Is the food provided by these sources sustainable in the long term? Does this security end if a social or environmental disaster occurs? What is the ability of the community to source their own food, should large commercial options fail?

In this sense, food security also applies to the knowledge of a community concerning where and how they are procuring their food, and how capable that system is of weathering change.

What is a Food Mosaic?

A **food map** is a tool that shows the food sources of a region, and can include commercial food producers, distributors, and workshop facilities.

For the purposes of this project, ThINC has reimagined the concept of a food map to be more inclusive of the types of food sources in our community. Thus, the "Food Mosaic."

The **Mosaic** includes an additional element, "Food Security Champions". This section shares the stories of Thetis Islanders who are engaging in self-subsistence practices, with the aim to encourage others in their own food security journeys.

Importance on Thetis?

While not remote, Thetis Island is more removed from basic amenities than most communities. In the event of natural or economic disasters, Thetis has the potential to be isolated from mainstream food sources. However, the island is also fortunate in its potential for local food production.

Beyond this, it is important for all communities to be aware of their reliable food sources. Not only does awareness of food security increase personal confidence, it also helps foster community ties and local economic resilience. Last but not least, locally sourced food has significantly less impact on the environment, and can be more easily and ethically maintained than global food chains.

Food Security Champions

Thetis Islanders who engage in self-subsistence farming and gardening, building and inspiring local food security practices.

Hollyberry Hollow

Ellen Hrad and Jesse MacLeod with Crimson, Saffron and Alder; Hollyberry

We have been raising livestock for our own use since we moved to Thetis in 2000. We've raised poultry, goats, and pigs for meat, milk, and eggs. We do some gardening too but our focus is on ethical animal husbandry. We raised organic methods, but over the years have decided to open up to other sustainable methods.

As animal lovers it's important to us that our food is produced ethically. And as towards of children it's important we do it sustainably. Ellen was raised on a hobby farm so grew up as a kid milking

recycling centres regarding their operations, connected with WorkSafe BC, suggested modifications for the existing recycling centre, and surveyed the Thetis community about the re-opening of the recycling yard.

- Completed small restoration projects at St. Margaret's Cemetery. These included: prepared a culvert to divert water and prevent flooding; planted various tree species and shrubs to support the bank and reduce erosion; built a fence; and removed invasives.
- Met with and learned from 14 community experts from diverse backgrounds (below), including: sustainable solutions, conservation, marine/intertidal ecology, water systems, soils, plant identification and foraging, composting, and systems thinking.



Student Learning

Students developed:

- A host of critical skills, including: collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking, design process thinking, systems thinking, and adaptation
- Project specific skills, including: permaculture practices, construction, digital literacy, proposal writing, budgeting, implementing and managing irrigation systems, animal husbandry, etc.
and
- Knowledge about sustainable systems and ways of living through engaging in program activities, workshops, and meeting with community experts

Acknowledgements

This program was made possible through the collaboration of many individuals and entities. A special thanks to the funding organizations who made the hiring of youth possible; the community experts who graciously shared their time and expertise with us; Remy Fesnoux and Matthias Zapletal who on numerous occasions helped us with our projects, providing skills and knowledge, resources, and labour; Vicki Walker for regularly providing tasty treats to the Pod; Pamela McCarten, and Jim and Sue Hill who kindly shared their homes with the students for the duration of the program; and to the Thetis Island community for showing kindness and embracing the Pod and our goals throughout program. Lastly, thank you and with much gratitude to Ann Eriksson for her unending support and guidance.

