



the **ANNUAL**  
2011 **REPORT.**



**Young Urban Farmers, CSA**  
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# vision and mission

building community food sheds



## our mission

Young Urban Farmers is an urban community shared agriculture (CSA) program that reconnects communities with locally grown food.

## our team

### Board of Directors

Christopher Wong  
Outreach Manager

Elaine Howarth  
Operations Manager

Jing Loh

### Senior Staff

Stella Woo  
Project Manager

Andrea Chan  
Intern Coordinator

Sarah Plummer  
Marketing Coordinator

Madeline Boyce  
Volunteer Coordinator

### Coordinators

Jennifer Shea  
Hub Coordinator

Kate Raycraft  
Hub Coordinator

Zandra Zalucky  
Hub Coordinator

Nicci Iaizzo  
Hub Coordinator

# our organization

a team of dedicated volunteers

## a message ...

Young Urban Farmers CSA began with the idea that food should be grown in the community, for the community, by the community. From that initial idea back in 2010, armed with little more than our youthful spirit and enthusiasm, we went to work figuring out how our organization would run - from finding enough land and deciding what crops to grow, to figuring out how our organization would be structured and who would help run the program.

In 2010, after canvassing the community, talking to other community groups, and getting ourselves organized, our program began with 15 shareholders across three neighbourhoods. Despite our modest numbers, we saw that our project could be used as a catalyst to further engage our volunteers, shareholders, land-sharers, and the greater community to eat locally and with the seasons. We were thrilled to see that people were excited about eating food they knew was harvested that same day; excited to walk, bicycle, or take public transit to the gardens; and excited to learn about how different plants grow and watch the gardens transform from week to week.

In 2011, we broke ground on seven new urban gardens, started an internship program to teach young people the basics of urban farming, and expanded the number of participants in our CSA program. Our list of community partners grew, we brought on more people to our executive team, and we continued to see a strong and positive response from all of the communities that we worked in.

Along the way, we learned many lessons, including: which crops worked well and which ones not as well, how to deal with pests and diseases, finding time to weed and keep the gardens looking presentable, and how to effectively manage our growing number of team members and volunteers. But, with every challenge comes opportunities and potential to reconnect people with their food. To that end, we have been very fortunate to receive a warm and positive reception at every volunteer fair, farmers market, or community event that we've attended.

I would like to thank all of our supporters, shareholders, land-sharers, family, and friends who have dedicated so much time and effort to our organization. We would not be where we are today without your love and support. I also want to thank all of our volunteers, interns, hub coordinators, portfolio managers, and executive team for going over and above the call of duty on countless occasions both in and outside of the gardens.

As we look toward the future, we will continue to engage more people and more communities in growing their own fresh produce and in building community food sheds. This is just the start of the good food revolution in Toronto - indeed, across North America - and I am excited to see what is in store for us over the next several years.

*~ Christopher Wong & Elaine Howarth*



# highlights

from our events and programs



## harvest season

The harvest season was very successful in 2011. YUF CSA grew over 18 weeks of fresh produce to distribute to our homeowners and share holders. Despite a cold start and early slug damage, our gardens were quite successful in producing a variety of crops from string beans, snap peas, chard, and kale to tomatoes, basil, and squash. We were fortunate enough to be backed by a knowledgeable group of hub coordinators, as well as an enthusiastic volunteer base who toiled through hot summer days in order to bring a bountiful harvest to our participants.

## internship program

2011 saw the birth of our urban farming internship program. Recognizing an increasing demand for learning food growing skills among young people - especially those who are not able to participate in a World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) program outside of the city - we designed this internship for urban youth with a busy schedule. Interns in our program committed to two garden shifts per week; one on a weekday evening and the other on harvest Sundays in the late afternoon and early evening. From April to October, YUF CSA's internship participants started seeds, prepared beds, built garden structures, transplanted seedlings, fertilized, watered, trellised and staked, pruned, weeded, managed pests, maintained soil health, and harvested produce.

Over the course of the first year of the program, eight young people participated in the internship: two in Wychwood, three in Lawrence Park North, and three in Riverdale.

Although the program was designed for those living in Toronto's core, two interns were willing to travel all the way from suburbs, Ajax and Richmond Hill, to take advantage of this learning opportunity. From their feedback, it's not hard to tell why that was the case from their feedback on the next page.



# highlights

from our events and programs



"The gardens came to be a place where excitement about food was commonplace. I was part of a community. Additionally, the experience was great for all of the knowledge I gained about the variety of plant species and how to care for them."

-- Laura, 2011 internship participant,  
Wychwood hub

"I came away feeling that I learned a lot about gardening and a lot about myself. The work also enhanced my appreciation of farmers and all the hard work that they do."

-- Tara, 2011 internship participant,  
Lawrence Park North hub

"I think the greatest benefit for me was the exposure to the functioning of a community garden in the broadest sense. I had very little previous experience, and I found it an excellent way for me to build confidence for future gardening endeavours."

-- Mike, 2011 internship participant,  
Riverdale hub

"The greatest benefit I gained was the friends I made and an increased desire to become more connected to the foods I eat."

-- Romtin, 2011 internship participant,  
Lawrence Park North hub

# highlights

from our events and programs



## social events

The YUF CSA team is diverse in function. We embrace those who love to get their hands dirty, as well as those whose hands are more at home typing formulas into spreadsheets, or whose hands never stray very far from buttons on a camera. Nevertheless, we are a tight-knit group, and when we've all been working hard and need a break, we plan fun activities to unwind and recharge. In 2011, we made a campfire in Dufferin Grove Park, planned a field trip to the Toronto Botanical Gardens, held a potluck picnic on Toronto Island, and celebrated another successful season with a thank-you party in October. It seems that our volunteers are highly proficient not only in getting the work done, but also in relaxing and having fun!

## workshops

In order to connect with our participants as well as the Toronto community at large, we host workshop events with a focus on local food. We held two workshops this year: a movie screening of the documentary *King Corn*, and our popular Canning and Preserving workshop.

*King Corn* is a Peabody Award-winning documentary that explores issues surrounding modern food production and its effects on health. The screening was intended to bring perspective to where our food comes from and how it has changed from generation to generation.

Our Canning and Preserving workshop was led by chef Joshna Maharaj. Participants preserved

savoury carrot jam, strawberry freezer jam, kimchi, and pickled asparagus. The workshop yielded 45 jars of preserves that will tide participants through the off-season.

## newsletter

Our team published a weekly newsletter that was distributed to more than 300 recipients for 16 weeks, spanning much of the harvest season. The informative emails contained garden updates from hub coordinators and interns, articles on various topics surrounding access to locally grown food and healthy eating, recipes, and listings for local events.



# highlights

from our events and programs



## growing urban farming ventures

As a result of our volunteer and internship program, we saw one of our previous volunteers start their own urban farming venture, and a few of our interns have taken steps to start their own urban farming projects in their own communities. These volunteers have indicated that it was their work with YUF CSA that motivated them to do something similar - be it a community garden on a university campus, a private urban farming service in their own neighbourhood, or their own for-profit venture. We believe that educating and empowering young individuals to start their own ventures through our programs achieves our goals of establishing community food sheds and bringing sustainability into the food system in Toronto.

## community connections:

### centre for social innovation

In 2011, through its executive member Chris Wong, YUF CSA received one year of free workspace and meeting room bookings. In addition, the Centre for Social Innovation has provided a number of networking opportunities for organizations also working on social change within the city. As a result, we believe this organization can help to facilitate future partnerships and opportunities.

### davis LLP

Davis LLP is a leading full-service, international law firm with nearly 50 practices. Towards the end of 2011, YUF CSA engaged Davis LLP on a pro-bono basis to provide legal advice on our horticultural operations and legal documents with our shareholders, land-sharers, and volunteers. This partnership gives us further confidence in the opportunity of our program and the necessary confidence that all of our operations are in compliance with all regulatory levels and we are legally protected in the event of any accidents that may take place over the course of our operations.

### food forward

Food Forward is an advocacy alliance that provides a peoples' voice for a better food system. We have engaged with them as guest speakers for their events, and, in return, they help to promote our events and volunteer opportunities.

# our awards and accolades

finalist for climate spark competition



In December 2012, YUF CSA became finalists for the Climate Spark competition.

In July 2011, YUF CSA participated in the Climate Spark social innovation competition. Sixty-two Toronto-based community organizations with a common focus of reducing greenhouse gas emissions competed for a \$50 000 grand prize, as well as investment opportunities from other granting organizations, venture capitalists, and angel investors. After two rounds of online voting and expert judging, YUF CSA was announced as one of 10 finalists. YUF CSA then participated in a two-day accelerator session, meeting expert resources in order to hone our financial skills, business planning, and pitch presentation skills. The final five-minute pitch presentation for the prize and for any additional funding will occur in 2012.

# our awards and accolades

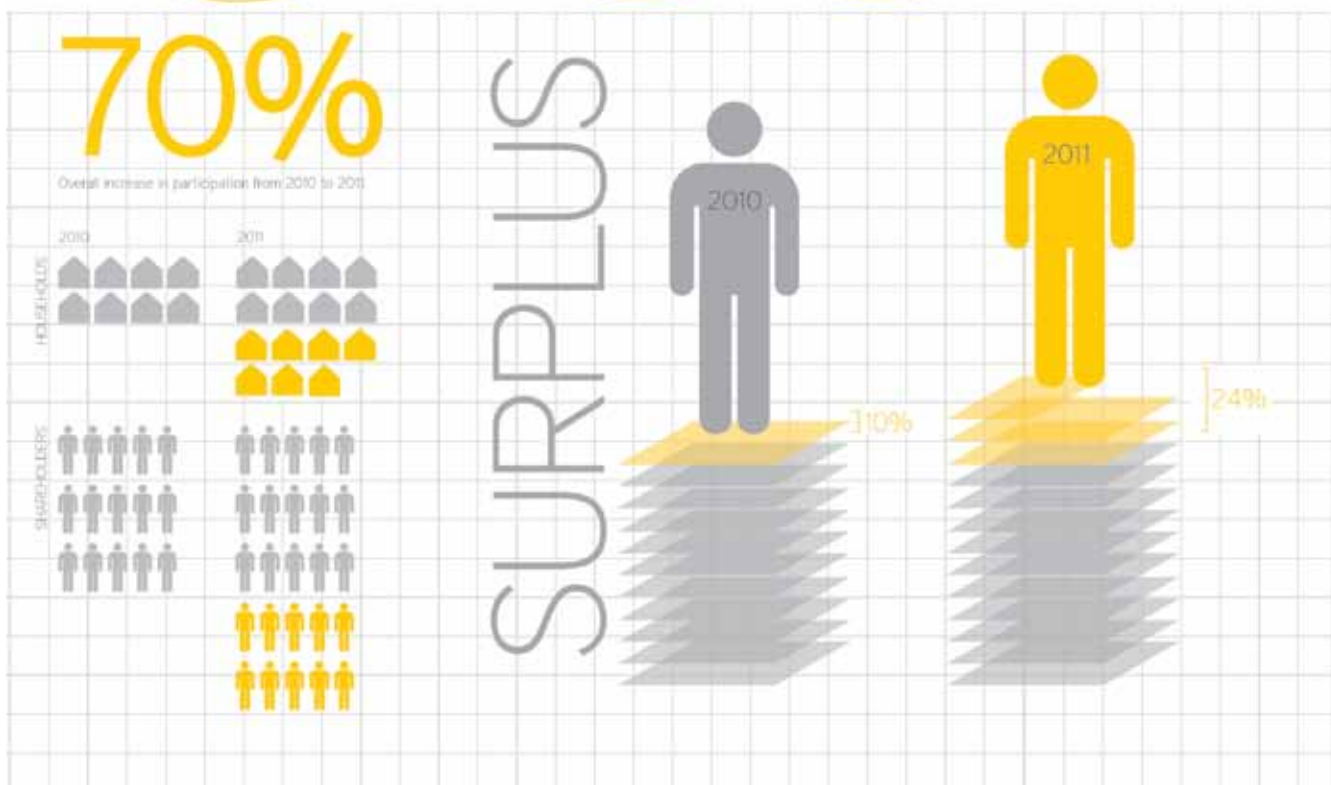
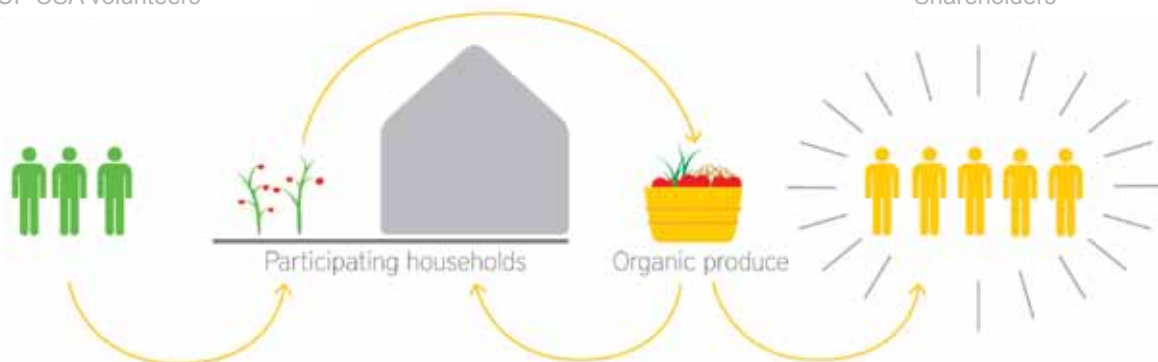
increase in landsharers and shareholders

## YUF CSA's Impact

In 2011, YUF CSA increased the number of households sharing their yards from 8 to 15.  
We also increased the number of shareholders bringing home fresh vegetables from 15 to 25.

YUF CSA volunteers

Shareholders





# our plans for the future

looking forward on a three-year plan



Our three-year plan, from 2012-2014 focuses on four main goals.

## 1. Solidity ourselves as a community organization

Our goal is to have permanence within the Toronto community, and for the name YUF CSA to become synonymous with urban agriculture in our city. We want to increase our presence at relevant events and support Toronto neighbourhoods by bringing people together.

## 2. Raise awareness about urban agriculture

We want to reach and educate Torontonians about urban agriculture through workshops, talks, and other presentations. We strive to become active at a broader community level, not just with the minority of the Toronto population who already supports the urban agriculture movement.

## 3. Provide opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds to come together around food

YUF CSA cultivates an atmosphere of inclusiveness and anti-discrimination. We aim to market our activities in ways that reach a variety of demographics.

## 4. Build community leaders

We support champions of urban agriculture, and want to continue to incubate and support other urban agriculture projects.

# Young Urban Farmers CSA

## Unaudited Income Statement

For the year ended December 31, 2011

	Subtotal	Total
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Unit Sales		3,150.00
Farmer's Market		120.00
Grant Funding		4,000.00
Sponsorship Funding		2,500.00
Gardening Fee Funding		1,500.00
Land-Sharer Funding		200.00
Individual Donations		200.00
		<b>11,670.00</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Operations		
Seeds	431.34	
Transplants	915.50	
R&D soil testing	1,376.51	
Interest expense	90.00	
Materials	1,243.92	
Equipment	214.15	
Equipment rental	169.50	4,440.92
Workshops		
Venue rental	100.00	
Workshop Materials	188.67	188.67
SG & A		
Banking fees	181.67	
Event registrations	30.00	
Business cards	57.47	
Office supplies	107.36	
Meals & entertainment	257.17	
Insurance	810.00	
Management fees	940.00	
Other costs	260.08	
Inter gifts	29.47	
Design fees	125.00	
Socials	76.82	2,875.35
Travel		
Gas	823.80	
Transit	470.00	1,293.80
Marketing		
Promotions	17.93	17.93
Web and IT		
Hosting fee	142.20	
Domain name	12.28	154.48
Unrealized loss	44.61	44.61
		<b>9,115.76</b>
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>2,554.24</b>

# reflection

## our volunteer stories and testimonials



YUF CSA makes a difference in the city. Apart from the fact that everybody loves their basket of fresh fruits and veggies every week, their initiative brings people together in a social way. It makes them more aware of their direct environment, the foods they eat and where they come from. I have learnt a great deal about choosing and growing vegetables.

My interest and knowledge about them have increased considerably thanks to the activities of YUF CSA.

~ Irene Vandertop

As a professor of Environmental Studies, we try and instill in our students a passion for social justice and a deep appreciation for the ways in which our physical, social, and political environments are connected and intertwined. The ways that we cultivate, produce, and organize food systems in our society are a prime example of the ways in which very few of us are able to align our values with our purchasing choices. Local, sustainable, and community based options are few and far between. Options that promote health, well-being, community, education, and environmental action are exceedingly rare. YUF is innovative, creative, and successful in its vision for being a demonstration project about how growing and eating can be done differently. I think they should be applauded and supported for their efforts.

~ Sarah Flicker, York University  
Faculty of Environmental Studies

Last year, I had the pleasure of sharing my back yard with Young Urban Farmers CSA. This was a mutually beneficial relationship: the CSA was able to grow organic food in the city, my backyard was now put to productive use, and my family received a portion of the harvest. Not only was I able to enjoy eating produce that was fresher than anything I could find in a grocery store, or even a farmers' market, I also learned how to eat seasonally and discovered.

~ Diane Fehler











## partners and grants

YUF CSA would like to give a big thank you to the following partners and grants who have supported us in 2011.

### partners:

#### **Green Valley Farms**

For greenhouse space, expert growing advice, and horse manure.

#### **Hillesum Farm**

For farming expertise and horse manure.

#### **The Stop**

For access to their tool library and the “Yes In My Backyard” program.



### grants:

#### **The Big Carrot's Carrot Cache**

#### **Mountain Equipment Co-op**









# join us ...

how you can get involved with YUFCSA today

## how to get involved:

### 1. Share you yard.

For more details on how to get involved and start eating fresh and locally this summer:  
Visit <http://www.yufcsa.com> or email: [info@yufcsa.com](mailto:info@yufcsa.com)

### 2. Contribute to YUFCSA.

Help keep YUFCSA running by donating through PayPal or contact us to set up financial or in-kind support.

### 3. Volunteer with us!

Talk to us about how you can spend more time  
in our gardens, right in the heart of Toronto.



YOUNG URBAN FARMERS, CSA  
Building Community Food Sheds

[www.yufcsa.com](http://www.yufcsa.com)