



2023 IMPACT REPORT

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Land Acknowledgement

The Alberni Valley Food Security Society operates within the ancestral, unceded and traditional territory of the Hupačasath and Tshesah First Nations. We seek to increase our understanding of Indigenous food systems and respectfully acknowledge the keepers of this land.

From AVFSS

As winter settles in, it is time to reflect on the year and prepare for the one ahead. The AVFSS has had an exceptional year, one that is worthy of recognition and celebration. Our focus has been on building a robust organizational framework and fortifying our internal structures.

I came onboard with AVFSS in April, as Stephanie stepped back to a more defined role in order to balance her time with her growing family. Together, Stephanie and I enjoy the best of both worlds and enjoy coleading AVFSS.

We held our first AGM summarizing our programs, looking at future focus areas, voting on workshop topics and sharing a delicious local supper. Collaboration and connection with other community service providers played a big part in our year, ranging from organizing and participating in public events to developing shared community resources, such as the new Community Food Offerings brochure.

2023 was the inaugural year of the Edna Cox Social Justice Bursary. This \$800 bursary is awarded to a student with a demonstrated interest in community development and local food security.

We want to extend our gratitude to everyone who committed their time and energy to AVFSS and our work. Our board of directors, members, liaisons, volunteers, and other community organizations have all played a significant part in helping us make strides towards a food-secure Port Alberni.



In food and community,

Anna Lewis
Manager

Stephanie Stevens,
Communications



AVFSS Staff - Anna & Stephanie

Our Work

Our Vision

A Food Secure Alberni Valley: When all people, at all times, have access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable and culturally appropriate foods, produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just.



3986

pounds of local fruit gleaned



food skills workshops offered

19



73% increase in AVFSS membership

Value of awarded bursary

\$800



Our Year

629%



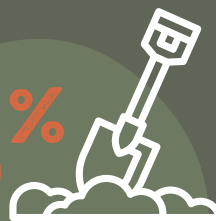
Increase in Facebook visits

participation in public events



21

75% of community garden beds refurbished



Hours of volunteer work

755



Grow Local

Grow Local Lead, Candyse



Grow Local includes a large variety of projects that aim to encourage and assist local residents with backyard food production and skills through programs and events.

In 2023, AVFSS was part of Farm 2 Schools' new Alberni-Clayoquot School Food System Working Group to strengthen school garden programs, infrastructure and support curriculum implementation. AVFSS hosted a District ProD Day with Candyse providing hands on learning for exploration with herbs for thirteen teachers.

AVFSS revived the Grow Local e-newsletter, a quarterly update on all projects and programs, opportunities to participate and practical information on various food skills topics. The newsletter had 315 subscribers in 2023.

Rogers cancelled all community programming so our Grow Local Shaw TV program was cut short but we would like to thank Nancy Wilmot for her time spent filming and producing content on local agriculture and gardening techniques. Videos can be viewed on www.youtube.com/@growlocalalberni1599



Farmers' Market Outreach

AVFSS partnered with the Dock+, City of Port Alberni, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District and Community Futures to offer food skills workshops in the Winter and Spring of 2023.

Program topics included:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Local Chef's Soup</i> | <i>Kombucha Brewing</i> |
| <i>Filleting a Salmon</i> | <i>No-Knead Bread</i> |
| <i>Oyster master Class</i> | <i>Worm Compost</i> |
| <i>Knife Skills 1 and 2</i> | <i>Local Foraging</i> |



Food Skills Workshop

The Gleaning Project

4

The Gleaning Project connects volunteers to pick fruit and property owners who have excess produce in the Alberni Valley. Harvests are shared amongst pickers, pick hosts and local organizations that facilitate food security programming.

Thank you to Jenna Sawyer who was our summer student and took on the coordination of the Gleaning Project this season.



Summer Student, Jenna



A gleaning pick in progress

The 2023 fruit picking season saw 41 volunteer pickers and 60 pick hosts signed up. 40 properties were picked and we collected just shy of 4000 pounds of fruit.

This year, the third of the harvest dedicated to support local food initiatives was donated to the Bread of Life, Salvation Army, Sage Haven Society, the Hupačasath Community Farm, and the Port Alberni Shelter Society safe injection site.

Dry Creek Community Garden

*2023 Garden Manager, Janette
(with assistant Perrine)*

Originally established in 2013 by the Young Professionals of Alberni Valley, Dry Creek Community Garden includes rental plots, communal growing allotments, social spaces and perennial & annual plantings.

Since the fall of 2022 AVFSS has been managing the garden, the rental plots, and communal beds which includes thriving herbs, raspberries, grapes and figs.

2023 was a busy year at the garden. We had four different garden work parties. Most garden beds were rebuilt with donated yellow cedar from Franklin Forest Products while most common areas and pathways received new cardboard and mulch. The fence was repaired through an insurance claim (shout out to Eli Demorest), and the broken water tap was replaced. The DCCG participated in Family Farm Day which saw interested folks come tour the garden site.

AVFSS would like to extend its gratitude to our past manager Janette (and her family) for coordinating the garden. Her expertise and dedication to the garden, its renters and community food production is so greatly appreciated.



*Refurbishing garden beds
at garden work party*



Community Events

Seedy Saturday 2023



In 2023 AVFSS cohosted the Seedy Saturday event which was a resounding success with over 450 people coming through the venue.

Opportunities to learn, grow and support a self sufficient, food secure and resilient Alberni Valley is one of the primary goals of AVFSS.



In January 2023 AVFSS co-hosted the event 'Eating Cheaper & Growing More' with the Alberni Climate Action group. This interactive panel discussion included topics on reducing household food costs and personal food production. Over 40 people attended the event.

*Eating Cheaper,
Growing More Event*



In 2023 AVFSS partnered with the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District to put on the 11th Annual Family Farms Day! We were able to showcase some of our fabulous farms located in the Valley and are grateful to the twelve sites that opened their doors and hosted the community.

This is a great opportunity for folks to experience and support local agriculture as well as get inspired with what you can grow in your own backyard.



Family Farm Day 2023



Sowing the Seeds for 2024



The Alberni Valley Food Security Society is poised to have a bigger impact on local initiatives with each passing year. This year we are excited start the year off by coordinating the Seedy Saturday Event. This year features guest speakers, additional learning opportunities - and in an expanded space!

We are actively pursuing funding opportunities to expand the Dry Creek Community Garden as we are currently only utilizing a third of the leased space. This would enable more folks access to space for personal food production in the Alberni Valley. AVFSS' community and educational plots are being developed for educational programming.

We are looking forward to hosting a monthly series of "Gardening 101" workshops the first Sunday afternoon of the month, 1:30-3pm from March to July. A nominal fee of \$10 with AVFSS membership will be charged. More information to come!

The Gleaning Project is going to be a focus as we look at ensuring that we are maximizing the potential of the program to harvest the available fruit. We are launching a pilot Prune-Along program to ensure that tree owners learn the basics of tree care. This program will offer an opportunity for folks to gain the skills to keep their trees healthy and productive for years to come.

The to do list of the AVFSS may seem long but it feels manageable with a fantastic Board of Directors and community advisors to help guide our trajectory. It is with a fair bit of excitement that we are stepping into 2024.

AVFSS is growing and wants to invite you all to come along for the ride. If you are interested in becoming a member this year, please contact us at info@avfood.ca. The membership fee (\$10 per individual & \$20 per household) directly supports AVFSS.



Ready, Set, GROW!!

Thank You



Canada

vancouver foundation



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District



island health



CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

Shaw)



clayoquot BIOSPHERE TRUST



eat west coast



FARM to SCHOOL BC



KUU-US Crisis Line Society



The Dock+ FOOD IN FOCUS



ALBERNI FARMERS INSTITUTE



HEALTHY BC SCHOOLS



BREAD OF LIFE CENTRE



SAGE HAVEN

Community Futures



WWW.AVFOOD.CA



FACEBOOK.COM/AVFoodSociety



INFO@AVFOOD.CA

The Alberni Valley Food Security Society would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to our partners for their invaluable support and collaboration. Their contributions have been instrumental in our core operations and the successful execution of our projects and programs in 2023. We remain dedicated to our community and look forward to continued support, so that we may make a positive impact for years to come.