



This program is supported by the Province of British Columbia and the Provincial Health Services Authority.

Webinar: November 26, 2019

Speaker: Leah Seltzer, Program Manager, LifeCycles

SEED THE CITY is a summer program for high school students where they can gain work experience in urban farming and gardening while also earning credits towards graduation. This program is a partnership between LifeCycles, TOPSOIL Innovative Urban Agriculture, and School District 61.

Garden:

- TOPSOIL provided all of the containers and irrigation for a modular farming method. Very fast to install, 2 days. 750 square foot site, fenced, 200 containers (2'x2') with irrigation. \$12,000 to set up the site (water, containers, plants, fencing, irrigation, and TOPSOIL site management/consultation). Ongoing maintenance costs will be much less.
- Students planted and harvest greens throughout the program, selling them weekly at TOPSOIL's market stand.
- Also participated in field trips, workshops, and cared for school's raised bed garden.
 - Workshops (invited members of the public to present): Seed saving, fruit tree pruning, garden planning, sowing seeds, irrigation, compost building, and herbal lip balms (lavender and calendula).
 - Field trips: Variety of local farms and gardens (learned about different methods of urban food production and did some work there)
 - Preserved harvest: Canned, pickle, jams, pesto
 - Cooked: Cook together with produce from the garden,
 - School also had courtyard garden of raised beds that students took care of.
- By week 4 of program, students were harvesting, washing, spinning, and selling salad greens. Tuesdays were harvest day.
- In 6 weeks, students harvested 345 pounds of salad greens (about 60lb/week). Greens were sold, brought home by students, and sold to local restaurants.
- Students learned customer service skills selling at the farmers' market
- In September, school students are harvesting greens as part of their Food Studies class, for their weekly salad bar.

Program:

- Students received grade 12 work experience credit, or service hours toward graduation, through Career Education curriculum. Credit from employer (Life Cycles) and SD61. Ministry-approved, grade 12 work experience (grades 10-12 can take).
- This was the first year of the program, did not pay students. Are looking to create a social enterprise model and pay students an honorarium.
- 9 week program, mentorship, urban agriculture. Program was Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-3:30, and no one quit!
- SD61 support included saying YES, Career Pathways program, fast approval by facilities, water access, and other infrastructure support. Working closely with them to align with their vision and goals.
- Put together a proposal for the Careers and Pathways program, based on specific criteria. Worked with District staff.

Impacts:

- Useful skills
- Food literacy
- Mental and physical health

Next steps:

- CSA through school year, and CSA during summer (instead of restaurants, sell to families)
- Scale this up to other school sites, build enough that real employment opportunities are created. Alumni could then be hired as site managers.