



COMPOST EDUCATION  
CENTRE

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022

# Where we are now

The Compost Education Centre (CEC) is a project of the Victoria Compost and Conservation Education Society, which is a not-for-profit, charitable organization.

Started in 1992 by the Fernwood Community Association, the CEC provides composting and conservation education to Capital Regional District (CRD) residents with the goal of reducing waste, improving local soils, and partnering with others to make our communities more sustainable.

The CEC promotes and teaches organic gardening and other climate resiliency techniques as a means of supporting local waste diversion, local food and ecosystems, and communities within the CRD.

Our mission: to cultivate resilient communities, which support the land and all living beings to thrive.



Neighborhood Composting Program participant dropping off food scraps.  
Image Credit: Jeffrey Bodset



The Compost Education Centre is located on unceded and occupied Indigenous territories, specifically the land of the Lekwungen speaking people—the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. These nations are two of many, made up of individuals who have lived within the porous boundaries of what is considered Coast Salish, Nuuchah-Nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw Territory (Vancouver Island) since time immemorial. At the CEC we seek to respect, honour and continually grow our own understandings of Indigenous rights and history, and to fulfill our responsibilities as settlers, who live and work directly with the land and its complex, vital ecologies and our diverse, evolving communities.



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# 2022 by the numbers:

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Founded in

**1992**

**30**

Years teaching  
composting,  
conservation, and  
organic gardening

**366**

Programs  
Delivered

**6,923**

Workshop  
Participants

**1,060**

Hotline Calls

**85**

Healing City Soils  
Participants

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# Letter from the Executive Director

I joined the Compost Ed Centre as Executive Director in February 2023, and I'm constantly learning about who we are and what we do. Let me begin by saying that I am so grateful to work with Elora, Jeffrey, Kayla, and Zoe-Blue. Earlier this year in anticipation of our strategic planning retreat, we sent out a survey to gather data from our community as to what they view as the Compost Ed Centre's strengths and what they might want us to do differently in the next three to five years. Consistently, the responses highlighted knowledgeable, engaging, and passionate staff as our core strength. And for the future? For us to keep doing what we have been doing - and possibly some expansion! The responses highlighted for me how well-established and well-loved the Compost Ed Centre is after 30 years of operation.



Claire Remington

What has resonated for me most in this role is how the Compost Ed Centre creates impact through education and research. On one level, we transfer technical skills that empower workshop participants, site volunteers, university students, and schoolkids to take on climate mitigation and adaptation action. But on another - and more profound - level, we integrate folks into our community of plants and people. The Compost Ed Centre cultivates an increased sense of connectivity and reciprocity, and we do it by sharing knowledge in a welcoming way.

I can speak personally to how welcomed I have felt to this role and to the Compost Ed Centre's community. I want to highlight how fortunate I've been to work with Alexis so much over the past few months as she has transitioned out of the Executive Director role. The pandemic and post-pandemic inflation has hit nonprofits hard, but Alexis's steady and wise tenure as Executive Director made it possible for me to step into this role with a confident rather than crisis mindset. Amidst so much change in the world, I feel reassured that the Compost Ed Centre will continue to thrive in the same way for the next 30 years by catching and mixing folks right on into our community - just like the browns and greens in a hot compost pile.

# 2022 Highlights

## 30 Years of Composting & Conservation!

2022 marked the Compost Education Centre's 30th anniversary as a composting, conservation, and organic gardening resource center. This commemoration provided an opportunity to engage with stakeholders and larger community. We scaled up the August Plant sale, held a raffle, and continued the expansion of the Child & Youth Education Program.



Staff (left to right):  
Jeffrey, Claire, Zoe-Blue,  
Elora, and Kayla

## Connecting Through Soil Health & Food Security

Since 1992, the CEC has reached over 4,446,228 CRD residents with information about composting, waste diversion & reduction, organic gardening practices and ecological conservation. Through a contract with the CRD, the CEC offers presentations, workshops, and educational demonstrations at our on-site gardens and throughout the community. The CEC engages an active team of volunteers, publishes a monthly e-newsletter, and provides free factsheets about topics ranging from the benefits of backyard composting to mitigation of heavy metal soil contaminants in urban gardens. The CEC also maintains a website, a telephone hotline, and social media channels that offer on-demand information and support.

In 2022, approximately 1,165 residents visited the CEC's demonstration site, nearly 13,255 participated in an educational or community event, and over 484,880 CRD residents communicated with the CEC online, by phone, or in person. The centre began to develop tools and resources for further addressing soil degradation in the CRD via the Healing City Soils program and initiated the Neighborhood Composting Pilot Program, which aims to divert food scraps from CRD waste streams and reduce civic usage of resource-intensive collection programs.

## Growth through Collaboration

In January, former Executive Director, Alexis Hogan, gave presentations to different student groups at the University of Victoria and Camosun College. At UVic, an environmental studies course had students create permaculture design mock ups with the aim of incorporating bioremediation and Garry Oak ecosystem restoration. We hope to use these designs as visual aids for CRD residents to incorporate ecological restoration and stewarding of indigenous plants. A marketing course at Camosun College conducted market research analyses on our organization's offerings and audiences. These findings were presented to us with recommendations for how we might expand our reach.

# 2022 Highlights

## Growth Through Collaboration (con't.)

In 2021, Fairfield Bikes generously donated two cargo e-bikes. Child & Youth Education Coordinator, Jeffrey rides one bike to and from workshop around the CRD, offering a sustainable way to travel to workshops. We used the second e-bike as the prize in a summer-long raffle. Through community support, we raised \$2,937. This fundraiser raised our capacity to develop more relevant and exciting science and environmental resiliency workshops for children and youth.



E-bike raffle at the August Plant Sale

Scale Collaborative created a six-year Scope of Service report. This document provided insightful analysis of how the CEC achieves its waste management and food security education. Additionally, the report included recommendations of how the organization can improve our services in the years to come.

In March 2022, Office Manager and Communications Coordinator, Zoe-Blue sat down with Paper Heart Films as part of their documentary series. Sustainably Wed is a collection of conversations with wedding industry professionals who offer insights into how we can celebrate love while being mindful of our environmental impact. In Episode 5: Managing Waste, Zoe-Blue provides a basic overview of how our food waste is processed on Vancouver Island, why compostable plastics are not the solution to our plastics problem, and how adopting a zero/low-waste approach to an event can have a big impact. Our organization aims to use education as a tool for cultural shift away from waste towards one that is less impactful, but also approachable for the average person. We hope to see more projects like Sustainably Wed in the future.



Behind of scenes of Sustainably Wed



The winner of the e-bike raffle



# 2022 Highlights

## Healing City Soils Program

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted Healing City Soils because laboratory work was halted for students at Royal Roads University (RRU). In 2022, our collaboration with RRU's Environmental Science Program resumed. Student teams began testing the soil of waitlisted CRD residents for levels for heavy metal such as lead, arsenic, and copper. In November, mycologist, applied environmental scientist, and HCS program creator, Danielle Stevenson held two "Understanding and Addressing Soil Contamination" workshops where program participants learned how to interpret their soil test results and what steps to take to remediate their land. We added these test results to the online Victoria Soil Quality map that anyone can access on our website.

2022 was the first year of the Ground Beneath Our Feet Project, which aims to create plain-language resources like workshops and factsheets to support community members' remediation of low-to-moderately contaminated soils using native plants, compost, and fungi. A student team from RRU installed and observed test plots at the Compost Education Centre, a Capital Regional District home, and SNIDÇEL, the first village site of the WSÁNEĆ people.

Healing City Soils was a finalist for the Eco Star Awards in the category of Community Leadership.



Applying compost to test plot at SNIDÇEL



The Ground Beneath Our Feet Student Team  
at SNIDÇEL

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# 2022 Highlights

## Adult Education Programs

In 2022, the Adult Education Program earned \$20,700 in revenue, the most revenue this program has yielded since at least 2016! In 2022, CEC taught 2,301 adults in 102 workshops.

Some of these were on our public weekly workshop schedule held on site, and others were booked privately by municipalities, community groups and businesses. This is an 18% increase in the amount of workshops taught over 2021.



Solstice Wreath Making Workshop

In 2022, we kept some workshops available online to increase local and global accessibility - some workshops had participants attending online from as far as Belgium and Australia! A lot of seasoned favourites were offered again with instructors the CEC has developed long lasting relations with, for example Fruit Tree Pruning, Indigenous Plant Walk, Gardening in Garry Oak Ecosystems, Fermenting Kimchi, and many more. Interest in our core free workshops on topics of waste reduction, composting and soil health remained high in 2022, and we were happy to continue providing these important educational workshops to residents of the CRD.

New workshops that were extremely well received were Bird Language Interpretation, and a very popular new five-part Grow the Best Garden workshop series taught in house by Kayla Siefried, which gave gardeners 5 talks over 5 months to plan, prepare, seed, tend and preserve the bounty of their organic garden!

The CEC maintained strong partnerships with Panorama Recreation and the City of Victoria Parks and Recreation, as we taught special interest composting and gardening workshops through their recreational offerings. Beyond this, the CEC provided expert education and resources at all of the public seedling distribution days for the City of Victoria's Get Growing Victoria! events (an award-winning program that supports underserved populations through the distribution of vegetable seedlings and soil building materials twice a year. In the role of gardening experts, CEC staff and volunteers attended twenty-two seedling distribution events with free composting and gardening resources. Community Education Coordinator, Kayla, also taught two, sold-out, online "Grow Your Own Food 101" workshops to over 200 Get Growing participants. Overall, this collaboration provided the CEC with an opportunity to engage with more residents, particularly those who historically have not had the financial means to grow vegetables.



# 2022 Highlights

## Child & Youth Programs

2022 was a successful year for the Child & Youth Education Program. The Schools Program earned \$17,751.56 in revenue and presented 272 school programs to 3,886 students and 810 teachers, parents, and/or guardians.

Jeffrey Ellom was hired permanently as a secondary child & youth educator, allowing for a growth in the number of workshops taught and new workshops developed. Parent-Child workshops were expanded from July and August last year to April to September for ages 3-12 on a variety of topics like soil exploration, and worm composting. The Education Team continued the development of new workshops including modifying “Spectacular Seeds” for daycare, preschool, and kindergarten and creating “Under the Microscope” a workshop for high school aged youth to learn about soil ecology through microscopy.



Jeffrey Ellom was hired permanently as a secondary child & youth educator

From February to August 2022, the CEC teamed up with educators at Seedlings Forest Education to offer weekly workshops for a cohort of twelve preschool-aged children. Each Friday, the group would join our Child & Youth Educators for 45-minute sessions involving books, songs, puppet shows, exploration, crafts, and activities relating to food cycles, ecology, pollination, and more. Children got hands-on experience with compost, learned how to plant, and care for seeds, observed animals like worms, insects and birds in the garden, and created art with recycled materials. Sessions built on each other, activating prior experience, and scaffolding new knowledge as we observed the environment of the garden change week to week. We also sampled fresh plant foods from the garden as a way of engaging with the changing of the seasons. Children partook in fully supervised exploration of the site, and workshop content was catered to their areas of interest and developmental stages. This partnership also greatly benefitted the CEC educational team as we gained experience working with children ages 3-5 and were able to trial new program content with a familiar group.

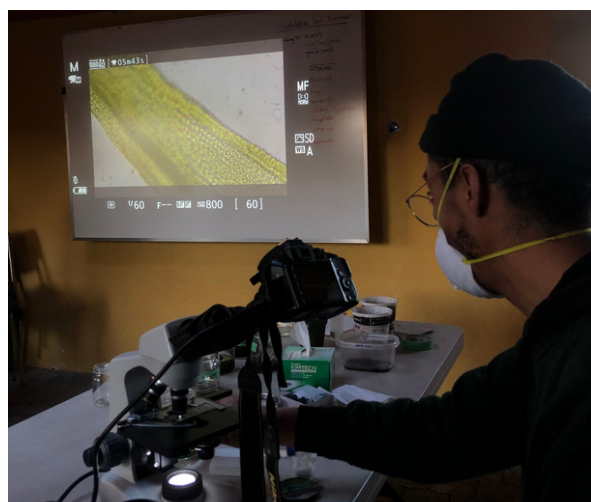
# 2022 Highlights

## Child & Youth Programs

In addition, the CEC continued collaboration with the Greater Victoria Public Library and created several videos for their all-ages programming including “Super Seeds!” and “Let’s Make Compost!”

The CEC’s youth program Let it Rot! Began in February 2022 with a group at the Compost Education Centre and a group of students at SJ Burnside. Let it Rot is an initiative offers youth ecological and climate-resiliency education. Prior feedback from student learners and teachers indicated that teens needed longer periods of time and relationship building to more fulsomely connect with the resources that the CEC has to offer. We heard from students that they want to get their hands dirty, to apply their knowledge and skills, and to build community around the intersections of food and climate justice. We are extremely excited about this new program!

The CEC’s Office Manager & Communications Coordinator, Zoe-Blue, published a fourth volume of BioDiversity through funding from the City of Victoria’s “Everyday Creativity Grant”. This volume highlights Stories of Black Ecological Stewardship, featuring people like Fanny Lou Hamer, Dr. Charles Henry Turner, and Booker T. Whatley. The project aims to uplift people who are often left out of dominant agricultural and environmental history who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour (BIPOC), these publications have earned acclaim from the international and local community as many people continue to learn about systemic and individual racism and grow their awareness of the important contributions of BIPOC land stewards to environmental, food and social justice. So far, the CEC has distributed over 1,500 copies of these publications to local bookstores, families, and organizations.

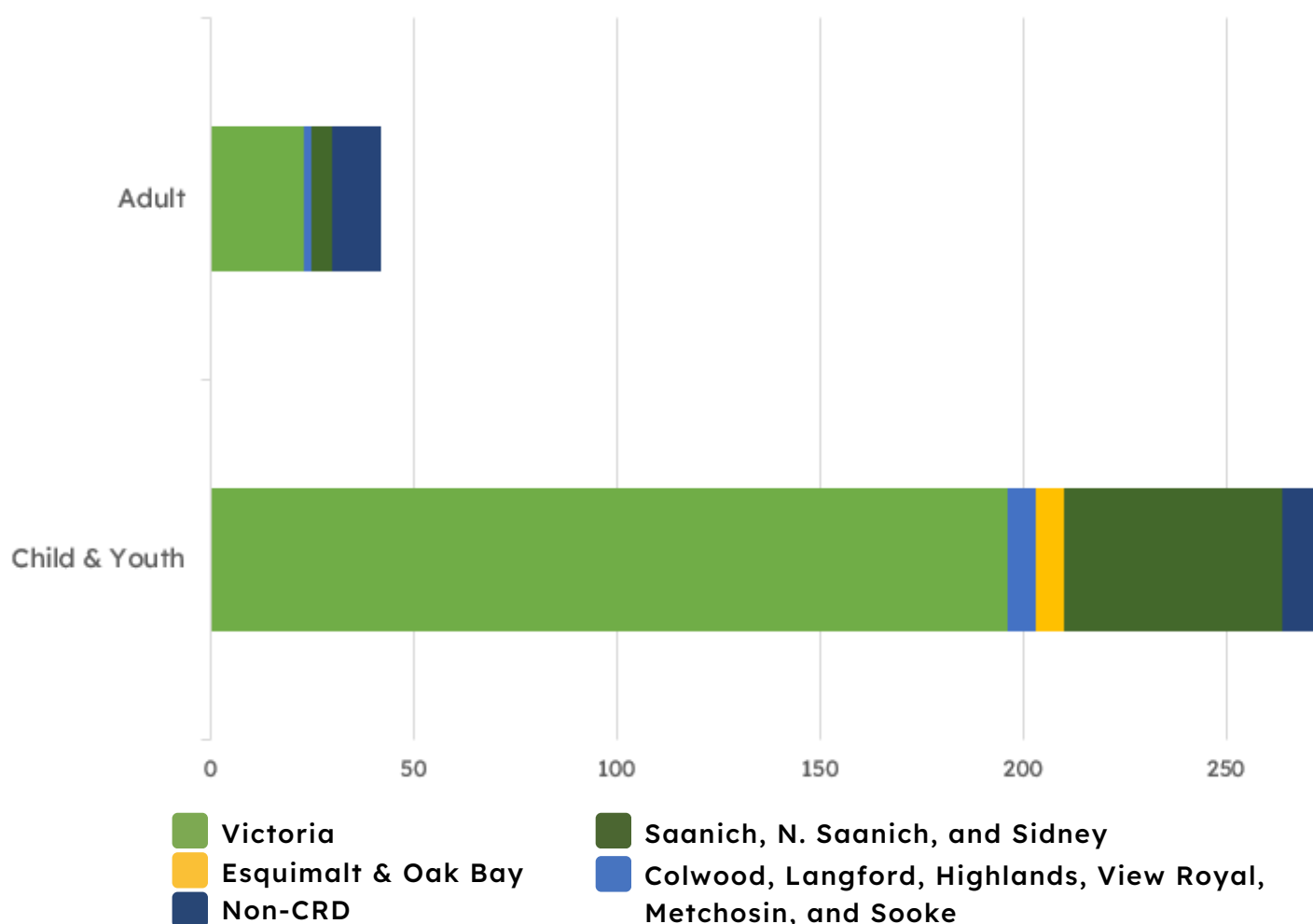


Jeffrey facilitating an “Under the Microscope” Workshop



Elora facilitating a Parent-Child Workshop

## 2022 Workshop Delivery



## Testimonials

“The kids had a great memory retention about what they’ve learn from the workshop about Corey’s story, last week I overheard 2 children talking about making compost stew, this week a boy and a girl put on a puppet show while we were playing at the oak tress they asked me to watch them, the puppet show was about Corey and Brownie and doctor wiggles making compost stew. They used a green leaf for Corey, brown leaf for Brownie and a stick to be doctor wiggles.” - Primary school teacher

“I loved the holistic & sustainable approach practiced by the CEC. It has inspired me to think along these lines if we are able to expand our community garden (located in a city park).” - Workshop attendee

“Seeing the demonstration gardens in action allows people to envision their own sustainable garden, one that creates from what we waste, and gives haven to all the different types of life that go into supporting a healthy ecosystem.” - Longtime volunteer



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# 2022 Highlights

## Demonstration Site

The CEC continued to steward and nourish productive gardens at our demonstration site. With the help of 10+ regular garden volunteers, Kayla created 4 hot compost piles, and harvested 4 earth machines, created 3 batches of compost in the tumbler and saw plentiful amounts of worm castings coming from our vermicompost bins. In 2022, we saw the fruits of a sheet mulch and hugelkultur soil building experiment as we harvested many punnets of berries and offered them for sale in our very popular farmstand. The site has saw 1,165 number of visitors coming to self tour the gardens, and it serves as a city magnet – drawing people in to experience a highly productive garden and conservation site, and learn about ways they can incorporate these practices into their own lives.

## Social Enterprise

The Compost Education Centre continued to expand its capacity through new avenues of social enterprise. Since it's creation in summer 2020, our farmstand has been rising in popularity. Through this initiative, we are demonstrating compost's ability to grow organic nutrient-dense produce at a lower cost than what you find in most grocery stores. Site Manager Kayla increased our cauliflower harvest to three this year. Each cauliflower was larger than her head!



Kayla's cauliflower harvest

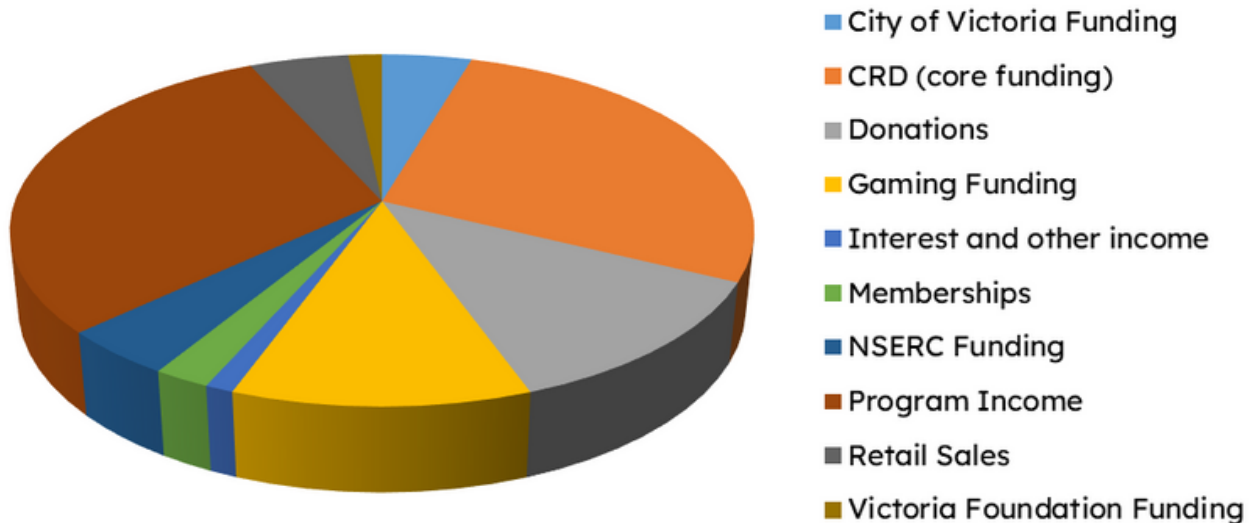
In March 2021, we launched a new tiered system for our membership structure with increased prices. The system is based on the growing cycle in a garden as the member tiers move from a seed through to a fruit. The fruit membership comes with a pay-it-forward membership, giving our members the opportunity to give the gift of education to a community member. The new system has added benefits of free kitchen catchers and bring a friend passes. We continued with discounts at local businesses and added new partners such as Anian, Fern Café, Satin Flower Nurseries.

Our thirtieth anniversary was a year of firsts. The August Plant Sale and 30th anniversary celebration was a successful day that raised \$3,000 in sponsorships and saw an over 50% increase in revenue compared to any other August Plant Sale before. We welcomed non-plant vendors and held the event in Haegert Park. This environment provided a space for avid gardeners, and community members to gather.

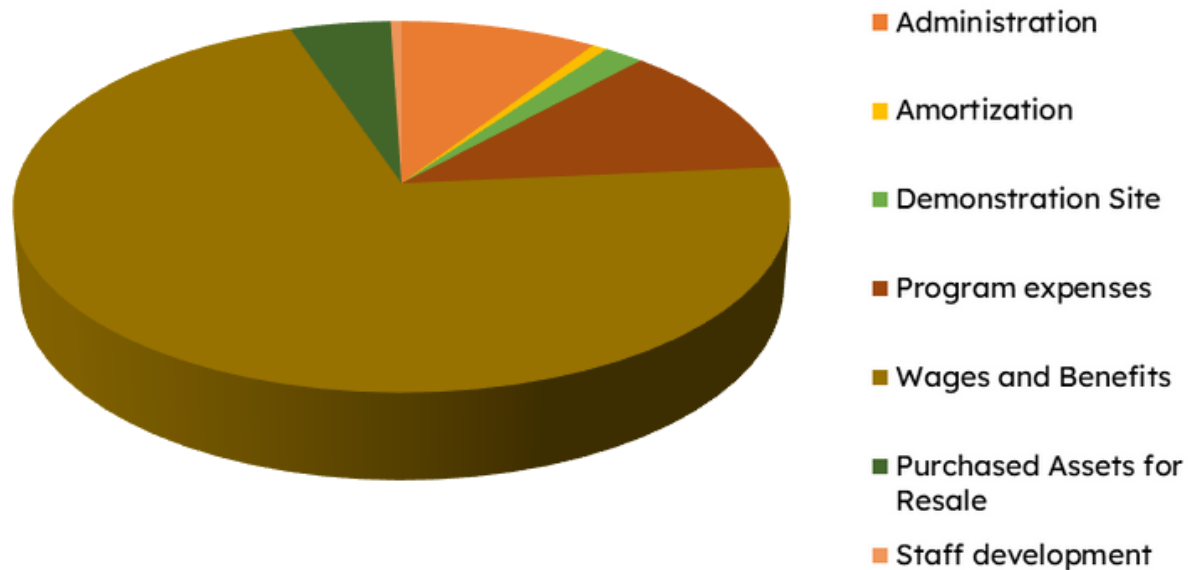
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# 2022 Financials

2022 Total Revenue: \$350,250



2022 Total Expenses \$330,187



2021 Total Surplus: \$20,063

To request a full copy of the CEC's unaudited financial statements please email [info@compost.bc.ca](mailto:info@compost.bc.ca)

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# 2022 Staff

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Alexis Hogan & Kayla Siefried  
**Executive Director**

Alexis Hogan  
**Healing City Soils Coordinator**

Kayla Siefried  
**Community Education  
Coordinator & Site Manager**

Elora Adamson  
**Child & Youth Education Manager**

Jeffrey Ellom  
**Child & Youth Education  
Coordinator**

Jamie Jacobson  
**Summer Education & Site Assistant**

Zoe-Blue Coates  
**Administration & Communications  
Coordinator**

Cleome Wilkinson  
**Communications Assistant**

# 2022 Board

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Khalila Bell  
**Chair**

Lisette Chevalier  
**Vice Chair**

Janeen Sam  
**Treasurer**

Alison Ramsay  
**Secretary**

Ly Sui  
**Member at Large**

Kate Masters  
**CRD Representative**





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# Fundraising & Donor Recognition

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support from our funders, community partners, volunteers and membership base who help us deliver quality educational programming within the Capital Regional District. While the Capital Regional District and Community Gaming Grant provide ongoing essential support for the Centre, we are able to do all that we do only through the generosity of all those who have given:

## Monthly & One-time Donors

Michael Large · Melissa Bedford · Canada Helps · Jeanette Bedard · The Eco Pea Company · E. Ann Smith · Janice Thompson · David Grieg · Leslie (Ruthie) Wicks · Shannon Charlebois · Gregg Ashby · Tracy Laramée · Zoe Jackson · Kathryn Genereux · Katrinka Karpes · Neal Yonson · Wendy Pottery · Christiane Joubert · Chandra Young-Boyle · Lynn Tanaka · Lee Porteous · Derek Powell · Alison Ramsay · Cara Gibson · Ben Ziegler · Daniel Tourigny

## Cash & In-kind Donations

Anian · Bolen Books · Borden Mercantile · Bucharth Gardens · Carmelle Lauren Acupuncture · Chek Media · Fern Café · Fernwood Coffee Company · Fernwood Inn · Gardenworks · Litte June Café · Luna

## Plant Sale Sponsors

Cold Comfort Ice Cream Company · Country Grocer · Hoyne Brewing · Paper Heart Films · Vancity

## Funders

Capital Regional District · Canada Summer Jobs · The City of Victoria · Hummingbird Foundation · Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council of Canada Promoscience · Urban Food Table · Victoria Foundation

## Community Recognition

CRFAIR's Good Food Champion Award in Food Literacy · Finalist for the Ecostar Awards in Ecological Stewardship

## Additional Revenue

Farm Stand · E-bike raffle · Retail sales · Spring & Fall plant sales