



Plant a seed. Harvest a dream.

Hope Blooms Inc.
Canadian Registered Charity – No.83285-8377-RR0001

Mandate:

Hope Blooms engages youth in marginalized communities in actualizing their full potential and becoming positive agents of change in their communities and building bright futures through experiential education in creating innovative youth driven impact in food security, social inclusion, education, and environmental stewardship. Since 2007, Hope Blooms has provided a safe space for youth in Halifax's inner city to grow their own food, contribute to community development, and produce and market their own signature brand of herb dressing with herbs they grow themselves with 100% of proceeds going into scholarships for the youth involved.

Within a context of long term impact for generational change, youth join Hope Blooms when they are 5 years of age and graduate when they are 18 years at which time they receive a yearly renewed scholarship from the proceeds of their salad dressing social enterprise. What began with a small plot of land has grown into a youth-driven movement with over 50 youth from diverse ethnicities, including Syrian newcomers; 4000 square feet of organic food gardens where youth grow food for their community and mentor over 60 community members in their garden plots; an award-winning off-the-grid greenhouse designed by one of our youth; and a small commercial kitchen and food hub where culinary training, community suppers, celebrations, and salad dressing production takes place.

Hope Blooms has found that when people come together to create a positive impact in the communities in which they live, the social determinants of health are directly impacted, particularly education, food security, social inclusion, and safety support networks. We have created a social entrepreneurial environment where people, regardless of age or socio-economic status, can work together to build capacity, friendship, inclusion, and employment while giving back to the community.

We have outgrown our space over one year ago and community participants continue to increase beyond space capacity.

The North End of Halifax has recently become home to over 150 Syrian newcomers coming to Canada as refugees with many joining Hope Blooms in growing and sharing food. In Hope Blooms we also have over 30 African Nova Scotian families as well as over 20 immigrant families from around the globe. Hope Blooms has proven the effectiveness of building strong culturally and generationally diverse relationships through food growing, inclusive sharing, and together building spaces of empowerment and unity. Even though we serve a community which for generations been marginalized and underserved, our

collective organic food gardens and greenhouse in the heart of the inner city have become a central point of the community both socially and therapeutically. Our food hub on Cornwallis St is 1000 sq ft and has become a full time food security and food innovation space with full time, year round programming for youth and their families. Over the past year we have become unable to hold our expanding community at Hope Blooms. In this space, we now serve over 360 meals and snacks each month and offer year round full time programming that we now have to do in shifts with limited time frames and restricted capacity. We have had increased demand from 20 Syrian families to have increased food access at the garden site and to be involved in cooking at our food space. We have a waiting list now for Syrian women in our community who want to learn about starting their own social enterprise and use our commercial kitchen (we now have 2 families we share our kitchen with). This year we have grown to include 63 youth, all from within inner city Halifax. We have increased collaborations to now include Mi'kmaq Early Child Development Centre and Cunard Street Preschool Program to provide programming but can only provide for 1 day weekly. In our food hub we now have had to limit programming to our Junior and High School youth due to space capacity limitations. We have had 2 large community consultation visioning sessions facilitated by Dalhousie Management Without Borders Team where it was repeatedly stated that a Hope Blooms large commercial kitchen where families could cook together; where community members could learn how to run their own food based social businesses and give back to their community; and where all youth can participate in year round programming would be a much needed and valued space to have.

Proposal for Desired Outcome

Hope Blooms Global Kitchen for Social Change

An urban Global Kitchen for Social Change. Bringing people of diverse ethnicities, cultures, and generations together around food to build community for creating social inclusion, safety support networks, food security, social innovation and agri-food based social entrepreneurship development...with youth leading the way.

We believe when families reclaim the kitchen as a place to bond with and educate their children, communities become stronger and more equipped for the struggles of daily life. Bringing people together around food is one way to build community for creating social, racial and economic justice and change.

Vision: Location: Outer edge of Murray Warrington park next to our greenhouse.

2000 sq ft green energy urban community kitchen adjacent Hope Blooms gardens and greenhouse with shared community spaces – built for community social inclusion, social impact, food security and innovation; and building relationships across generations, across cultures and ethnicities, across barriers to language, through food in safe, inclusive, vibrant spaces. This would provide:

- 1. Youth led programming including STEAM based programming (Science, technology, engineering, arts, and math), mentorship, leadership, changemakers (creating social impact) and urban agriculture;**
- 2. Community dinners and culinary classes where a variety of local Chefs come in to share our kitchen and host dinners that are culturally diverse and innovative; sharing these spaces with other community groups, organizations in the North End.**
- 3. Social entrepreneurship to be taught experientially in collaboration with Canadian Food Inspection Agency, National Research Council, Retailers and serving youth, newcomers, and other vulnerable populations. ; offer kitchen space for developing social entrepreneurial agri-food products, taking them to markets and taking on a social issue to impact in community through this**

venture.

4. Host cultural foods and film in the space, all with celebrating the rich diverse ethnicities in this community; creating special community events around different cultural cuisines – appreciating our increasingly diverse community while also appreciating the historical hardships of this marginalized community – building bridges.

5. Hold garden to table cooking with growing your own food, harvesting, cooking and sharing community meals and recipes together;

6. Host Community “Dragons Den” style pitch events for youth social entrepreneurship ideas and have mentors from bigger community involved. Having Jr Master Chef events – where all Haligonians may take part in.

To have this Urban Global Kitchen adjacent our gardens will integrate food culture, food access, food systems and create long term and innovative sustainability for a marginalized community to directly impact determinants of health, in particular food security, social inclusion, support networks, education and economic development, all in the heart of the community they live in. It will create an innovative, holistic approach in a close, assessable location for members to come together and build a strong vibrant community that honors environmental stewardship, cultural heritage, empowerment from within, and capacity building in being the creators of positive change and sustainability.

Hope Blooms has the support of NS Mainland Building Trades, NS Construction Safety Council, and other organizations and donors who want to contribute to bringing this project to fruition. Hope Blooms would be responsible for all operational costs, stewardship, management, insurance, delivery of programming.

Without building this Urban Global Kitchen, we will not be able to serve the greater North End community; will not be able to further build food security; will not be able to share social entrepreneurship hands on education with the many Syrian newcomers and immigrants who want to work with us in addressing social issues; creating positive social impact and contribute to building an inclusive, vibrant healthy community for all; we will not be to offer year round food programming to more youth. We also are unable to afford spaces in community due to the significant increases in rent, which is making it harder to have a place for community food initiatives, and social change within the community we serve.

Appendix:

Hope Blooms Core Values:

- **Youth growing to be inclusive and impactful community leaders in a marginalized environment-** more than 50 youth grow over 3000 pounds of organic produce in and for their community; grow pride and a sense of belonging in community; grow a social enterprise that builds brighter futures, from the ground up, while giving back to the community.
- **Fostering culturally relevant and collaborative ecosystems with integrity-** Inclusivity and embracing diversity are core to everything we do, from welcoming new neighbors with open arms to inviting friends from all walks of life to take part in our programming. We collaborate with mentors from our local universities, community college, junior high and high schools, as well as many local restaurants, businesses, and organizations.
- **Innovation in urban agriculture education-** From hands-on skill-building in agriculture to designing and operating an off-the-grid greenhouse, youth have access to a suite of non-traditional educational programming. Working with mentors, youth take the lead in being stewards of our environment; learn best practices in organic food growing, ecosystems, and permaculture gardening; and sit on committees related to food and the environment.
- **Coaction-** Hope Blooms has found that when people come together to create a positive impact in the communities in which they live, the social determinants of health are directly impacted, particularly education, food security, social inclusion, and safety support networks. We have created a social entrepreneurial environment where people, regardless of age or socio-economic status, can work together to build capacity and employment while giving back to the community.

Some of our recent awards:

- Ernst and Young Special Citation Social Entrepreneur Of The Year Atlantic Canada – 2016
- Social Innovator of the Year – 2017. Halifax Assistance Fund
- Governor General – Meritorious Service Medal - 2016
- Lieutenant Governor’s Architecture Award for Outstanding Design in Greenhouse - 2016
- The Coast - Gold Winner Best Community Initiative - 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017.
- CBC’s Dragons Den top pitches of all time -2016 (youth who pitched were 10 years to 14 years of age)
- Halifax Urban Design Award of Merit for Community Initiatives 2018

Impact:

Food Security:

- Over the past 7 years youth have grown over 21,000 pounds of organic vegetables and fruit for community members, all free of charge.
- We have a small community food hub where on a monthly basis we serve 260 healthy meals and 306 healthy snacks.
- We have a farm exchange program throughout the Annapolis Valley and collaborated this past summer in bringing another 500 pounds of organic produce that our youth donated to the 110 Syrian refugees that now live in their community. The youth also gave 15 garden plots to Syrian families this past summer in order to grow food for their families.

Community Confidence & Inclusion:

- In a survey completed last year, 100 % of respondents indicated that they believe that having a plot in Hope Blooms garden has increased their ability to provide healthy food for their families.
- 99% of respondents felt a greater sense of belonging in their community since participating in the Hope Blooms garden and programs.
- 92% of respondents indicated that their level of community involvement has improved since joining the garden.
- We now have 53 youth, 12 seniors, 35 families (including 15 newcomer families from Syria) all volunteering with Hope Blooms and growing food, relationships, and community.

Education:

- In June 2016, our first Hope Blooms member, Mamadou Wade, graduated from high school and enrolled in the commerce program at the University of Toronto. He received an \$8,000 Hope Blooms scholarship, provided through sales of our dressings, and also won a \$70,000 TD Community Leadership Scholarship award. Mamadou is the first in his family history to undertake post-secondary education.
- All Hope Blooms youth graduating from high school this past year and all are in post-secondary education. Like Mamadou, all of them the first in their families to undertake post-secondary education. One of these youth, Bocar, has been involved in Hope Blooms since 10 years of age and has said, "Beauty and brilliance do not know a postal code. I want to be a role model for my younger sister and prove that where we live is not what defines us." Bocar is going to Stanford University to study computer science.

- In 2016, four of our youth received their Masters Organic Gardeners Certification - the youngest in Canada to receive this University credit. Alvero, one of the recipients who has been involved in Hope Blooms for the past seven years, stated, “I have learned so much about life from agriculture and from ecosystems where everything thing from a micro-organism to a tomato plant has equal value and reverence.”
- Our Youth Council was represented at York University February 10th with speaking with international delegates interested in having more involvement of youth in social enterprise. Our youth made connections with agents of change globally and have been invited since to speak in New York in 2017
- University of Toronto has studied Hope Blooms; published a case study on At Risk Youth and the benefits of social enterprise and has been incorporated into Social Finance curriculum for Social Finance at University of Toronto for 2017. Our youth are credited with this research.
- Dalhousie School of Health Promotion has conducted research this past year to measure impact through the lens of the youth parent (s)/ guardians. This research is being published in Spring, 2018.

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn”

Benjamin Franklin