

BOUQUET GARNI



Whistler Recap
What's Going on in BC
AI is my Co-Author
In & Out Chefs
N. F. T. B. O. H.

Volume 27 -- Issue 3
Spring 2025

THE BOUQUET GARNI

Newsletter of the British Columbia Culinary Arts Specialist Association

President's Message



As always, it's hard to believe that another school year has come to an end. This is the time when I take a moment to pause, reflect, and appreciate the past ten months—the successes, the challenges, the meaningful conversations, and the many projects we've taken on together. It's also a time when I consider how I can continue to grow in my own teaching practice and, just as importantly, how we can strengthen and support the BCCASA community.

My philosophy for BCCASA has remained consistent over the years: our primary purpose is to grow and support our PSA by uplifting culinary educators and programs across the province. I believe the most effective way to achieve this is by creating meaningful opportunities for connection, learning, and collaboration. When we support culinary educators, BCCASA becomes stronger as a whole.

This year, I truly feel we've lived up to that mission—both through our well-known initiatives and the quieter, behind-the-scenes work that helps everything function. We successfully hosted two conferences, one in Maple Ridge and the other in Whistler, both of which were met with excellent participation and engagement. We introduced our new Milk Crate Socials, and we continued producing incredible editions of The Bouquet Garni. Each of these projects speaks to the vibrant and supportive network we've built.

Behind the scenes, BCCASA has been involved in important discussions about the future structure of PSAs, including the potential move toward becoming individual societies. This process has involved numerous meetings—both virtual and in-person—to help us determine the best path forward for our members. Additionally, we've continued to foster strong relationships with industry organizations such as the BC Chefs' Association and the Chefs' Table Society, with the shared goal of creating more opportunities for our students.

I share this reflection not to highlight individual efforts, but to emphasize how rewarding and inspiring it is to be part of such a unique association. BCCASA will only continue to thrive if we all grow together—by sharing our successes and by speaking up about the challenges we face. Your voice matters, and your input helps shape the direction of our organization.

Each year, I review and approve annual goals that guide our budget and planning. I strongly encourage all members to provide feedback on where improvements are needed, so that we can continue to evolve and serve you better.

Thank you for the time, dedication, and passion you bring to culinary education. I hope you have a restful, rejuvenating, and well-deserved summer break. I look forward to reconnecting in the fall as we continue this exciting journey together.

With appreciation,

Trevor

Editor's note:

Hi BCCASA Collective! Man, this issue is a BEAST! My idea for the new article highlighting the first year of a new Chef Teacher juxtaposed with highlighting the careers of a retiring Chef Teacher really took on a life of its own. Who would have thought Chefs liked to talk about themselves 😊 I hope you enjoy reading the life experiences of some of our fellow BCCASA members.

In honour of our recent Whistler Conference at the Squamish and Lil'wat Centre, and for the upcoming Indigenous Peoples Day, I had my AI co-author write an article emphasising food traditions on BC's Indigenous folks. Very interesting output.

Look out for our October Conference flyer, this time in seaside Nanaimo! Register and book that hotel now, to get the best deal. Also, we got SWAG! The order is in the final stages of being set-up but I'm currently trying get a handle on numbers and interest. Let me know if you're into ordering something!

Have a great summer folks!

Your friendly neighbourhood editor,
Stephen Schram

BCCASA Spring Conference 2025

A Day of Cultural Learning and Culinary Inspiration in Whistler

Words & photos by Trevor Randle



On May 24th, BCCASA had the privilege of once again hosting our Spring Culinary Educators' Conference at the breathtaking Squamish

Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC) in Whistler, BC. Nestled in the heart of the Coast Mountains, the SLCC offered not just a stunning setting but a profoundly moving day of learning, cultural connection, and culinary creativity. We were honoured to be joined by 28 members from across the province for this enriching experience.

The day began with a warm welcome and introductions, setting the tone for what would become an unforgettable journey. We quickly divided into two groups to make the most of what the Centre had to offer.

One group was ushered upstairs, greeted with a traditional song before embarking on a private guided tour. Through captivating stories and the sharing of treasured artifacts, our members



gained a deeper appreciation for the heritage and lifestyle of the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations. From the spiritual and practical roles of the canoe to the traditional uses of red and yellow cedar, the tour offered powerful insights into Indigenous ways of life, community, and stewardship of the land.

Meanwhile, the second group had a hands-on cultural culinary experience – Bannock making in the Centre's kitchen. Chef Steve led the demonstration with reverence and enthusiasm, emphasizing the cultural importance and respectful process behind Bannock preparation. Maggie, the SLCC's primary Bannock maker, generously shared her wisdom and technique, working through feel and intuition rather than



measurements, and making the process look effortless.

After both groups swapped experiences, we came together for a lunch that can only be described as extraordinary. Chef

Steve curated a menu that blended traditional Indigenous ingredients with modern culinary techniques, resulting in a feast that was both rooted in heritage and inspiring in creativity. Highlights included:

- Cranberry Rosemary Bannock with Honey Dandelion Butter
- Tomato Salad with Quinoa, Dandelion & Apple-Sherry Dressing, topped with Caramelized Duck
- Root Down Green Salad with Maple Berry Vinaigrette
- Warm Potato Salad with Braised Venison and Mustard Dressing
- Porcini and Pine Risotto with Smoked Elk Tenderloin
- Cedar Plank Steelhead
- Finished with: Bannock Bread Pudding, xuseum (Soap Berry) Cream, Cranberry Cookies, and "Love Me Tea"

Every element of the meal reflected a deep respect for local, seasonal, and traditional ingredients – from the fresh-foraged dandelion leaves to the smoked elk tenderloin.

Following lunch, our members enjoyed a thoughtful presentation from Natilyn on the traditional foods and holistic ingredients used by the Squamish Lil'wat people. We explored how their close relationship with the natural world influenced everything from medicine to daily sustenance. This theme of mutual respect between people and nature resonated deeply and underscored the cultural teachings of the day.

For our final adventure, Natilyn took us outdoors on a guided nature and foraging walk. Here, we explored the land through the senses, learning about the medicinal use of plants like "Old Man's Beard" and the many uses of cedar bark for clothing, blankets, and ceremony. The tour concluded in the Longhouse, where we participated in a lesson on traditional language – but the day still had one more powerful experience in store.



As a beautiful closing to the conference, our hosts gathered everyone for a traditional song and group dance. Divided into three groups, BCCASA members took part in a celebratory dance that culminated in a joyful, unified finale.

WHAT'S GOING ON

...around British Columbia

Delta Secondary Students Visit Hawksworth for Culinary Education and Fine Dining Experience

by Jesse Ridgewell, Sydney Wesley, Carmen Varela Fontoira, Jovan Rai

On Wednesday, May 7th, the DSS Culinary Arts and Baking Program had the incredible opportunity to visit Hawksworth Restaurant in Vancouver. Previous to the trip, our classes learned about Chef Hawksworth's journey and took etiquette lessons to prepare for the fine dining experience. When we arrived, we were warmly welcomed by the Hawksworth team and brought to the York Room, where our visit began. We toured the restaurant's kitchen and wine cellar before having an incredible three course meal. One of the highlights was a Q&A session with Chef Hawksworth himself, where he shared his experiences, and advice for the culinary world. Throughout the visit we also got to explore the Cocktail room, Pearl room, and Art room each with its own unique atmosphere. The trip was an

unforgettable experience that gave us insight on what it's really like to work in the fine dining culinary industry.

Welcome to the Thunder Kitchen – Now in Cookbook Form!

Welcome to the Thunder Kitchen – Now in Cookbook Form!

by Brian Smith & Karen Carruthers



Creating the Thunder Kitchen Cookbook has been a dream come true for both of us. We've spent the past eight years working side by side in the Thomas Haney teaching kitchen, guiding students through the fundamentals of cooking and the joy of creating something meaningful with their own hands.

This cookbook reflects our students—their creativity, their energy, and the incredible work they do every day. It's filled with recipes that have become staples in our kitchen, many of which are frequently



requested in the Thunder Kitchen or hold special memories for our students and staff. Every recipe tells a story of connection, learning, and shared experience.



We structured the book around the four key stations in our kitchen: hot side, cold side, bakery, and sanitation. These areas form the backbone of our program and help our students build real-world culinary skills in a professional environment. We hope this offers a glimpse into the incredible work our culinary students do every day, and how our shared teaching philosophy extends far beyond simply preparing and serving great food.

With the help of our school's photography teacher, Randy Dickin, we were able to bring this project to life. More than just a collection of recipes, this book is a celebration of the learning, connection, and shared experiences that happen in our teaching kitchen every day.



Our students played a huge role in this project. They helped format the recipes, participated in editing, wrote blurbs, and shared their perspectives on what it's like to be part of our kitchen community.

This cookbook is our way of honouring their creativity and encouraging more students to explore the culinary arts. Our motto is to come into the kitchen

with a willingness to learn, even on the hard days. We aim to keep things engaging, safe, and educational, and we hope this cookbook spreads that spirit beyond our school walls.

The Thunder Kitchen Cookbook is available for purchase through our teaching kitchen, and all proceeds go directly back into the program.

Culinary Students Shine at the 2025 Chef Daniel Lesnes Chowder Competition

by Brian Smith & Karen Carruthers



Maple Ridge, BC – May 29, 2025 — The rotunda at Thomas Haney Secondary School was filled with the rich aromas of seafood, spices, and simmering

creativity as twenty culinary teams from Maple Ridge and Abbotsford gathered for the 22nd annual Chef Daniel Lesnes Chowder Competition.

The annual event, a highlight for local high school culinary programs, brought together passionate student who showcased their skills, teamwork, and flair for flavour. The competition was judged on three key criteria: Flavor & Seasoning, Texture & Consistency, and Presentation & Appearance.

The atmosphere was filled with excitement and camaraderie as students served up their chowders to a panel of eight distinguished judges:

- Teresa Downs – Superintendent of Schools, SD42
- Ned Bell – Co-owner of Hatch Hospitality, Chef Ambassador at Ocean Wise and Buy BC, and Co-Chair of Sustainability at the Chefs' Table Society
- Jean Jacques Kabuya – Chef and owner, Salt and Sear Catering
- Lee McCaw – Russell Hendrix Food
- Julia Broda – Sous Chef, Browns Socialhouse
- Patricia Wong – Founder and Creative Director, Chef & Co Canada
- Hudson Campbell – SD42 Trustee and former chowder competition champion



The judges were not only impressed by the culinary talent on display but also moved by the stories and inspiration behind each dish. Patricia

Wong shared, “Even though I am lactose intolerant, I enjoyed all your chowders and the stories behind them! Truly impressed by everyone’s talent and effort.”

Chef Ned Bell reflected on the event’s deeper impact: “It reminded me of why I love what we do. It all began in high school for me as well. Thank you for inspiring these kids—maybe future cooks, and who knows, maybe even chefs. The work you do is so important!”

🏆 Top Three Teams:

1. Jeannie & Lakshita (THSS) – Thai Coconut Spot Prawn Chowder
2. Nanaka & Pitcha (MRSS) – Thai Bucket Chowder
3. Duncan & Finn (MRSS) – Bird’s Nest Chowder

Each team brought something unique to the table, but these top three stood out for their bold flavors, thoughtful presentation, and innovative use of ingredients.

The Daniel Lesnes Chowder Competition is more than just a contest—it is a celebration of youth, creativity, and the power of food to bring

people together. Congratulations to all the participant and culinary teachers for making this event a delicious success



A Series of Q & A's aimed at getting to know new Culinary Arts Teachers in BC, while at the same time saying farewell and thank you to Chef Teachers at the end of this journey.



IN

Hunter Schaeferle – First Year Teacher, Riverside Secondary, Port Coquitlam



Tell us about yourself; where are you from, did you do cook training, what led you into a career in cooking professionally?

I was born and raised in Vancouver British Columbia. I did not go to cooking school; my culinary education was done exclusively on the job over the last 20 years. What originally led me to cooking was to pay the bills while doing my undergraduate degree at UVic. It wasn't long until the fast paced, fun, and exhilarating experience of cooking in the food and beverage industry had me hooked! I then knew I wanted to be a chef. I completed my Red Seal much later, in 2015, by challenging the tests.

Where did you work as a chef? Can you talk about a major highlight from your career?

I worked my way up the old fashion way; starting in the dish pit of the Hunting Suites and Hotels in Victoria British Columbia. Slowly but surely, I moved from the dish pit, to scrubbing mussels and cutting mirepoix, until I got my break when the restaurant was short staff one evening, moving into a line cook position. At the time I was working to finish up a bachelor's degree at UVic I didn't really care for. By the time I was 22, the inviting maelstrom of cooking had me in its grip and there was no turning back. I finished up my degree and moved back to Vancouver to work in various restaurants. My major highlight, and where I got my big break, was at Rogers Areana. Though a lot of very long shifts, late nights, and hard work I promoted up the ladder until I got to sous chef, which at this large-scale establishment was running a sports bar with 500+ seats that flip each night. This is where I got the majority of my management experience and where I learned how to run an operation.

Was there an 'aha' moment where you knew you needed a new career? What led you to teaching? Did you look at any other careers?

What led me to wanting to teach was honestly striving for a better work life balance and the opportunity to spend more time with my wife and kids. The long hours, late nights, and heavy stress was beginning to wear on my family life and I needed to make a decision. For the last 5 years of working in food and beverage I was constantly trying to find other avenues for a change. I thought about health inspector, butcher, Front of House manager, sales rep, consultant, and probably more I have forgotten about. I found out about teaching at the high school level from a friend on a golf course.



What was the year in the education program like? How did it influence your path as a chef teacher?

The education program was helpful in that taught me expectations, realities, and gave me the opportunity to see 3 different teaching cafeterias as well as spend 10 weeks at Burnaby Central's teaching cafeteria to really understand what I was getting into, before that it was all hypothetical. The most useful part of all of it was a reintroduction of what high schools were actually like and what to expect from grade 11-12. I did find very few people, all of which were well meaning and helpful to the extent they could be, at UBC actually understood what culinary arts in high school actually was, and how the program is run.

Tell us about the new role you are in, what is your new program?

My new role is teaching Culinary Arts 11-12 and Train in Trades Professional Cook 1 at Riverside Secondary School in Pico. I love where I am at, not just that I have much more time to be with my family, which was my primary goal, but that I am actually enjoying teaching way more than I thought it would. My students, my sous chef, and my program has been better than I could have expected and I feel grateful for the opportunity to spend my time at Riverside.

How has your first year as a teacher been? What real time lessons have you learned? What has been the biggest learning curve?

Teaching has been a dramatic life change at 38 years old, especially considering I have been in the same industry since 15 years old as my first part-time summer job. Needless to say, there has been a lot of work, especially with the new Train in Trades program now at Riverside Secondary. I have learned to adapt to unpredictable situations and most importantly, and my biggest learning curve, is that nothing will ever be perfect, and as time goes on my classroom and kitchen will get better and better.

What advice would you offer other new chef teachers?

To new chef teachers I would strongly recommend trying to visit as many teaching cafeterias in as many different districts as possible. No two classrooms, districts, or school cultures are the same or even similar. When you do get a job offer, which will be fast, make sure to ask about expectations and what the Chef before you did, because there will be expectations to do things far beyond what is stated in the job description.



OUT

John Buist – Retiring Teacher, Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary, Surrey

Tell us about yourself, where are you from, where did you do cook training, what led you into a career in cooking professionally

In High School I worked at a restaurant called The Plainsman, I worked as bartender, but I liked the kitchen better and remembered that experience with fondness. Later while working at a pet store and in the Army Reserves, my friend called me and asked if I'd like to work in the Hilton Hotel kitchen. I took a day off work and went to the Toronto Hilton Harbour Castle for the interview, and I started on the following Monday. I spent 6 years

at the Harbour Castle, it had changed to a Westin in the last year I was there, and it was a good experience to see a different approach.

Where did you work as a chef? Can you talk about a major highlight from your career?

I did my apprenticeship at the Hilton. As a young person that loved Rock & Roll music and playing bass guitar, I worshipped the rock stars-especially Eric Clapton. One time he was in town and was staying at our hotel. The room service waiter came down to the kitchen and said: You made Eric Clapton's breakfast- Clapton told the waiter that he really enjoyed it. BOOM-done! I could have quit then and gone to heaven, as far as I was concerned, that was the top!

A couple years later moved to the King Edward Hotel in Toronto. While there a friend for apprentice days came to visit and asked me if I would like to move to Quebec for a job at a posh golf club. It sounded like fun and off I went to spend 6 awesome and fun years in the West Island of Montreal at The Royal Montreal Golf Course on Ile Bizard. My Chef was Joseph Stephens, was a major influence on me. He had a Hilton background as well (as many other places) and was a survivor of many tours of Duty in the Super Clubs of Jamaica.

I then moved to the West Coast and worked at Quilchena Golf & Country Club in Richmond, followed by Morgan Creek in South Surrey. It was nice to be opening a brand-new facility at Morgan Creek- I was the Junior Sous Chef, the Senior Sous, then banquet chef. I knew by then that I really wanted to do something else with the experience I had rather than spend the whole day and night away from my new wife (only wife). Teaching was just around the corner but at that time, I had no idea that it was coming. Some visiting teacher friends told me "you should be a teacher". That was it. There was a lot of work ahead to even figure out what that would look like, but I now had a focus.

When was the time when you realized that you had fully made the transition from professional chef to chef teacher?

I realized that I was no longer a professional chef but Chef Teacher when I was a TOC. I was taking classes at Kwantlen and subbing in for everything: Elementary Music, Social Studies, P.E., Dance, and of course, Culinary Arts. I was way out of my subject area but not necessarily out of my comfort zone. It was an adventure every day-but one you could walk away from and start over the next day. Once in the kitchen full-time you can forget that you're a teacher because everyone around you wants you to be "The Chef"; banquets/Principal meetings, etc.

When I did my PB +15 course at SFU it re-established my mindset to; I'm a teacher and will incorporate all of these techniques and strategies if I see them help my students to learn. We don't just "Feed the Beast" we teach kids how to cook and meet expectations.

What are some changes to the Culinary Arts classrooms you have seen over the years?

The main changes that I have noticed over the years, especially since Covid, is the way that we need such diversified instruction. We must make this class relevant to kids with so many different levels of ability and interest. It is difficult to set a bar that everyone can aspire to jump over. There was a time when the Food channel had created a bunch of wanna-be foodies and I was able to take advantage of that, it was fun and you didn't have to create the interest. Then the Culinary Arts class had more competition with other electives. Adding grade 10's for us turned out to be great because some of them were the most interested and motivated.



Can you tell us about one, or a few major highlights from your career as a chef teacher?

I have kids come back to visit a year after graduation, and some come by every year for a quick pop-in visit. Some kids have written emails about how the space we provided in the Culinary Kitchen saved them in high school. I just received an email last week, inviting me and the family to a past student's 30th birthday celebration. Those comments and visits mean more than any of the other stuff, ...even more than Clapton 😊.

Where do you see the Culinary Arts curriculum going? Is there an aspect that you think the Culinary Arts classroom could implement to make our classrooms better?

I think that the Culinary Arts curriculum will go wherever the next trends in food will take them. The money and budget shortfalls might have an influence over the ceiling for this course but hopefully won't limit the creativity of the teacher chefs and students.

What advice would you offer other new chef teachers?

Take whatever opportunities you have for professional development. Meet with other chefs to get that feeling of being part of something bigger than you. Meeting with others is great for your own development and feeling supported by colleagues. Too many people withdraw and miss out on the group dynamic that BCCASA has done such a good job of fostering. I am so thankful that Brian Roodenrys talked me into attending the first conference that I went to at the Pan Pacific. I have never wanted to miss one since.



OUT

Donna Frost, Retiring Teacher, Sardis Secondary, Chilliwack

Tell us about yourself, where are you from, where did you do cook training, what led you into a career in cooking professionally

I have wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember. I started off in Home Economics education and switched to Culinary and started up the culinary program at Sardis Secondary when a new school was built in 1996. I trained under Susan Leswel at Aldergrove Sec. when Trevor Randel was a student there! He was her star pupil; in case you are wondering. I loved it and did my Red Seal after that at VCC.



What are some changes to the Culinary Arts classrooms you have seen over the years?

I feel like some of the changes are dependent on the school or school district you are in. I have found the students to be more aware of culturally diverse foods and willing to try new things. I have found many of the students to be more entitled since I started teaching. I however have found them to be more respectful and better behaved than in the past.

Can you tell us about one, or a few major highlights from your career as a chef teacher?

- I loved all of the BCCASA conferences, always a highlight of the year getting together with other teachers in our fields! It has been such a great opportunity to learn, network, and enjoy amazing food and company!
- Working on the executive of BCCASA was also great, working with a fun, dedicated team. I recommend it!
- I enjoyed taking student groups to Europe at Spring break.

Where do you see the Culinary Arts curriculum going? Is there an aspect that you think the Culinary Arts classroom could implement to make our classrooms better?

I have always thought that keeping things fresh and new for yourself brings excitement in the learning process that you pass on to the students; don't do the same things over and over, keep it fresh. There are always great food trends and local food to source and use. We get excited when the Take a Bite of BC order comes in; they get excited too and value local food. I have enjoyed reading my students learning in past few years when I made them do self-reflections, it helps me see where they are at in their learning, so I recommend doing that with your students if you are not already.



What advice would you offer other new chef teachers?

Don't try to do too much! We are always asked to cater a million things and people come up with ideas of how to make more money, but we are teachers and need to do what is best for our students learning and our own health. Learn to say no! The value is in connecting with the students and teaching them to learn and grow. Do the events that you value, and feel are good experiences for your students. This job can be all consuming, remember to take time for yourself, your family and friends. Life should not be all about work. Make sure to have fun in your life!

**Congratulations on your
well-earned retirement
John & Donna!**

AI IS MY CO-AUTHOR

A series of articles written with help from Chat GBT... our students use it, why shouldn't we?



The Food Traditions of British Columbia's Indigenous Peoples: A Deep Connection to Land and Sea

British Columbia is home to more than 200 distinct First Nations, each with its own rich cultural traditions, including unique food practices passed down through generations. These Indigenous foodways are rooted in deep respect for the land and water, emphasizing sustainability, seasonality, and community. While culinary practices vary across regions and nations, common threads tie them together—namely, a profound connection to nature and an understanding that food is more than nourishment; it is culture, ceremony, and identity.

A Bountiful Landscape

From the rugged coastlines of the Pacific Ocean to the forested interior and mountainous terrain, the geography of British Columbia has profoundly shaped Indigenous diets.

On the Coast, seafood is central. Nations such as the Nuuchahnulth, Haida, Coast Salish, and Tlingit traditionally relied on salmon, halibut, herring, shellfish, and seaweed. The annual salmon run is not just a seasonal harvest—it is a spiritual and cultural event, often celebrated with feasts and potlaches (ceremonial gatherings).

Inland Nations like the Secwepemc, Nlaka'pamux, and Okanagan relied more on hunting and foraging.

Game such as deer, moose, and rabbit was common, supplemented by roots, berries, and plants such as wild onions, camas, and Saskatoon berries.

Techniques of Preservation

One of the most remarkable aspects of Indigenous food traditions in B.C. is the knowledge and skill involved in preserving food for the long winters.

Smoking, drying, and fermenting were essential practices. Salmon, for instance, was split, smoked, and dried on wooden racks or pit



smoked in earthen ovens. Herring roe was harvested and preserved on hemlock branches. Shellfish and seaweed were dried in the sun and stored for months.

Root vegetables like **camas** were slow-cooked in pit ovens over several days, converting inulin (a hard-to-digest carbohydrate) into sugars. These ovens were often community-built and tended, making the process both a culinary and communal experience.

Foraging and Plant Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge of edible and medicinal plants is extensive and intricately tied to local ecosystems. Elders and knowledge keepers have long taught younger generations how to identify, harvest, and

prepare plants in ways that ensure their regeneration.

Common foraged foods include:

- **Berries:** salmonberries, huckleberries, blueberries, and cranberries
- **Seaweed:** especially red laver, harvested in spring
- **Roots and bulbs:** such as yellow glacier lily and wild carrot

These ingredients weren't just food—they played roles in health, ceremony, and trade.

Food as Ceremony and Connection

Among Indigenous peoples, food is deeply ceremonial. The **potlatch**, a traditional gathering held by many coastal nations, exemplifies this. Potlatches include speeches, dances, and storytelling, with food as a central element. Lavish feasts of salmon, clams, berries, and other locally sourced items are shared, not for profit, but to honor guests, mark significant life events, or pass on knowledge.

Food sharing reinforces relationships between families, clans, and nations. It reflects core values of generosity, reciprocity, and respect for the land.

Revitalization and Resilience

Like many aspects of Indigenous culture, traditional food systems were disrupted by colonization,

residential schools, and industrialization. Fishing rights were restricted, land access was limited, and knowledge transmission was interrupted.

However, in recent decades, many Indigenous communities have been reclaiming their food sovereignty. Programs promoting traditional harvesting, Indigenous-run fisheries, community gardens, and school-based cultural education are helping restore food knowledge and pride.

Chefs like Chef Rich Francis (Wet'suwet'en) and Chef Paul Natrall (Squamish Nation) are bringing Indigenous cuisine into contemporary spaces, blending traditional ingredients with modern culinary techniques.

The food traditions of British Columbia's Indigenous peoples are more than a collection of recipes—they are a way of life that honors the seasons, the environment, and the ancestors. As more people come to recognize the depth and value of these traditions, there is growing respect and support for Indigenous-led food initiatives.

In an era of environmental uncertainty and globalized food systems, these time-tested practices offer not only cultural insight but also lessons in sustainability, stewardship, and community resilience.



Come join us in Nanaimo!

BCCASA Conference October 24th and 25th, 2025

**Central Vancouver Island:
Trades in Education**



Join culinary educators, industry experts, and professional chefs from across BC for an unforgettable weekend of learning, networking, and inspiration at the 2025 BCCASA Annual Conference & AGM on beautiful Vancouver Island. Membership Early Bird price is only \$300 (which includes annual membership fee) until June 30th. Member's regular rate is \$350 (including membership fee). Non members fee will be \$400. Please be sure to register early at: <https://bccasa.ourconference.events/> or on our website at: www.bccasa.ca



BCCASA Conference Schedule

Schedule Friday:

- 8:00am - Meet in lobby to board bus(es)
- 8:30am - Sign in & Greetings
- 8:45am - Breakfast
- 9:20am - AGM
- 10:30am - Keynote Speaker
- 11:00am - Board bus(es) to VIU meet in the Arbutus room
- 11:30am - VIU Program Director, Buddy Wolfe, BC Chef Association Education Director, and guest to Talk about Culinary & Baking Programs at VIU and in the Province of BC
- 12:00pm - Lunch in the Arbutus room prepared by the VIU Culinary Students
- 1:15pm - Tours of the Baking Program and Culinary Program
- 3:00pm - Board Bus to the Hotel for time on your own
- 5:00pm - Dinner at Melange Restaurant



SATURDAY:

- 9:00am - Meet in lobby to board bus(es)
- 10:00am - Qualicum, Coombs & Parksville tours (2 groups)
 - Group 1 - Milner Gardens VIU Gardens - Scarecrow event tour
 - Group 2 - Little Qualicum Cheese Works tour
- Noon - Lunch at Cuckoo Trattoria and Pizzeria
- Self-guided tour at Goats on the Roof
- 2:30pm - Qualicum, Coombs & Parksville tours (2 groups)
 - Group 1 - Little Qualicum Cheese Works tour
 - Group 2 - Milner Gardens VIU Gardens - Scarecrow event tour



Registration link & more info can be found on our website:

<https://bccasa.ca/conferences.html>

Hotel registration, a special BCCASA rate of \$150:

<http://coa.st/BCCulinaryArtsSpecialists>

Hotel Information



Coast Bastian Nanaimo

**11 Bastion St, Nanaimo, BC V9R 6E4
(250) 753-6601**

**To take advantage of the BCCASA exclusive
discounted rate, book online at: <http://coa.st/BCCulinaryArtsSpecialists>.**

Rooms consist of single kings or double queens

\$150.00 plus tax per night.

HEY! WANT A BCCASA T-SHIRT OR HOODIE?

We are going to order some BCCASA swag! They will look just like the ones shown here. Now is your chance to rep our PSA in the real world!

Green T-Shirt (men's or women's): \$22
Black Hoodie: \$45

Shipping \$10

- Shipping will be extra if you live outside of the Lower Mainland.

If local, pick-up can be arranged in Vancouver, or you can pick up at our October 24th Conference in Nanaimo!

Please follow this link to pre-order so we can get an estimate of numbers:

[LINK FOR SURVEY](#)

A link will be sent to your email for final purchase.
Deadline for ordering will be September 5th, 2025.
Purchasing website will be up this August.





EDCP 329

Summer Institute

The Agri-Food Experience!

Why Register?

Many students lack a clear understanding of where their food comes from, how it's produced, and the challenges behind it. This course aims to change that by providing teachers with the knowledge and tools to inspire their students and spark meaningful conversations about food systems. BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation works alongside farmers, educators, and agricultural experts to bring the story of local food to life in BC classrooms.

Become part of an exciting movement to bring BC's rich agricultural story into the hearts and minds of the next generation. Are you ready to inspire your students?

What is Offered:

- ✓ Lessons and Demos by Chef Randle
- ✓ Field Trips around Fraser Valley
- ✓ Expert Speakers
- ✓ Daily lunch included and prepared using BC-grown food



Note: This course can be taken for credit or without and is eligible for the ++5 . It is open to anyone looking to expand their knowledge of local agriculture.

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Join Us 

July 21-25, 2025
8:30am-3:30pm

3440 Mount Lehman Rd, Abbotsford

REGISTRATION EXTENDED TO JUNE 30TH

NOTES FROM THE BACK OF HOUSE

...great thoughts on what we do

Burnaby student organizes dinners in the Downtown Eastside

By Lubna El Elaimy,
February 05, 2025

The Armstrong Elementary student managed to raise almost \$10,000 to make and distribute hot meals for people struggling with homelessness



A week ago, 12-year-old Armstrong Elementary student Keanna Lai stood before the entire Burnaby School Board to present the initiative she has been working on since 2020. Being the only child in a room full of adults in authority was a big moment for Lai, who had never spoken in front of this type of gathering before. However, the subject was something she has been passionate about since she was six-and-a-half years old, volunteering in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) and helping people struggling with homelessness.

"When I first got there, I was a little nervous, because everyone, they're so formal. I guess I'm used to people, just fiddling around with stuff and not always paying the most attention, but I was really surprised, like, every single one of them was looking directly at me and putting their full attention and effort," Lai said. "I think it was just an awesome experience for me to be able to talk to these people and share my story."

Lai told the Beacon her awareness of the struggles of people in the DTES started when she was only three. Her mother took her to the area, and Lai asked her mother what was happening with the people living there.

"I was actually three when I first drove through the Downtown Eastside. My mom took me there to see what was happening there. That was kind of how that started because I asked her what was happening because I was worried and why all these people were on the street," Lai said.

In 2020, Lai decided to do something to help people living in the DTES. At the time, she was around six years old, yet her parents encouraged her to help however she could.

"The first thing I did was a lemonade stand. I had a lemonade stand outside my house, and with the money from the lemonade stand, I first bought socks and blankets for the homeless, and I would go pass them out to them," Lai said. "Then I found out about A Better Life Foundation, which is located in Save on Meats. They are a program that will come in the morning to cook food for the homeless, and I can buy tokens and give out so that the homeless can have a free meal."

She eventually decided to expand her work in the community and started fundraising to cook and distribute meals herself in the DTES.

"Just this year, I started something else. It's called Plenty of Plates. It's an event where I invite friends to come and fundraise with me to cook a

three-course meal for the homeless,” Lai said.

Lai succeeded in raising \$9,705.65 and getting her friends and family members to help cook and distribute meals to people struggling with homelessness.

“When most people see the Downtown Eastside, they think these people are on drugs or just not clean, or things like that. But the people that go to these dinners are happy. They all are energetic, and they’re just fun, and we’re just all like a big family,” Lai told the Beacon. “I really hope that more people can join and like support and fund because it is a lot of money to do one of these dinners because it is a three-course meal, and it does feed a lot of people.”

The school board members were impressed with the eloquent 12-year-old who presented her initiative last week.

“When she first started speaking at the board meeting, she said that she was an aspiring philanthropist,” chair of the school board, Kristin Schnider, said. “I said, Keanna, you are not an aspiring philanthropist. You are an inspiring philanthropist.

You’re not aspiring anymore. You are already doing the work and need to take credit for the amazing things you are doing.”

Several board members decided to donate to the cause and promised to join the next time Lai organized a dinner.

Schnider first heard about Lai’s volunteer work a year ago, and since then, it has been a cause close to her heart.

“I learned about Keanna about a year ago when I read about her efforts in a local news article, and I reached out straight away after I read the article, to the school principal, Jennifer Griffin,” Schnider said.

She congratulated Griffin and the school on the work Lai was doing.

“Ms. Griffin invited me to come to an assembly at the school, which was right about this time last year, where they acknowledged Keanna in front of the whole school and kicked off this new initiative that they’ve done through the Promise Project. That was when they really announced to the school what their plans were to apply for the grant and do the work they’ve been doing for the last year,” Schnider said.

Lai’s parents have motivated her to volunteer her time, energy, and money in the DTES, helping people struggling with homelessness and encouraging her to step outside her comfort zone and approach people with compassion and empathy. Lai said she intends to continue volunteering when she moves on to high school next year, but she is unsure whether it will take the same form or evolve into something different. One thing she knows for sure is that she is committed to it for the long term.

“I will continue to help the homeless, but I might do it differently like it might not be



the exact same thing I’m doing now,” Lai said. “I feel like everyone deserves a nice life, and just because they don’t have a house doesn’t mean that you have to look down on them... I want to make sure they all get what they need in life, and I want them to be happy.”

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