



GREEN JOBS INITIATIVE

Success Story

Garlic harvest with the kids

Green Job Connects Quebec Youth to Farming, Food and Nature

ANA CASTILLO WAS WORKING AS A cook in a restaurant when the COVID-19 pandemic shut its doors, leaving her out of a job.

She was looking for work options, and fondly remembered her time working at Camp Amy Molson's Young Roots Farm in Grenville-sur-la-Rouge, Quebec years ago. She heard the camp was hiring a farm apprentice and immediately applied for the job supported by the CPRA Green Jobs Initiative, which is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Skills Strategy program.

The experience was life changing.



GRENVILLE-SUR-LA-ROUGE,
QUEBEC

Canada

This project is funded by
the Government of Canada



Chicken wedding



Lachute farmers market

“Farming, education and food sovereignty is just what I want to do forever. It really awakened a love for the land that I hadn’t known before ”

Ana Castillo, Farm Apprentice

“After I started working at this farm, I’ve realized it’s just what I want to do for the rest of my life,” says Ana. “Farming, education and food sovereignty is just what I want to do forever. It really awakened a love for the land that I hadn’t known before.”

Camp Amy Molson’s Young Roots Farm helps make nature more accessible to local communities, and teaches lessons about composting, carbon neutrality and over-consumption in ways that are innovative and interactive.

The farm also works with children who live below the poverty line, and wouldn’t otherwise have access to ecological farming programs.

As a farm apprentice, Ana worked throughout the spring of 2021 helping run the farm – including seeding, harvesting, and building composting system. In the summer, the farm opened up to children as a summer camp. Ana worked directly with campers and developed lessons and programs that taught them about cooking, harvesting and the environment.

“It was just a mix of everything,” Ana says. “Whatever there is to do, you do it.”

While she had learned to farm there years earlier, she said the job gave her new experiences – such as working with children, construction skills and gaining an appreciation for the land.

“This is a unique space because you get to learn, and you get to connect with the land without the rush,” Ana says. “We still harvest, but a lot of it is for the kids and with the kids, so it’s very different.”

Lynea Aboumrad, who was Ana’s manager, was the Young Roots Farm coordinator at the time and said the grant gave the organization the opportunity to hire youth like Ana who had a passion for the work.

“She played a huge role in developing the curriculum and introducing new kinds of programming,” Lynea says, adding that Ana’s talent for developing the lessons helped the organization offer enriched programs that make connections between nature and food.

Lynea considers the grant to be a “really big deal” – and that the funding gave the farm the opportunity to fill a position that wouldn’t have existed.

“We are a non-profit, and we try and keep our farm productive to support us – but really it is a tiny fraction of what we need to run the programming,” Lynea says.

“We really do run on grants, and we couldn’t actually have the program without that. It wouldn’t be possible to run a program with one person, and it is a really special program.” 🍁