

Gina Sena



TEACHER

CHAMPION

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In this issue of our BCAITC Teacher Champion series, we are pleased to profile secondary school teacher, Gina Sena. Discover her passion for educating students about BC agriculture and food.

Q: What school do you teach at? A: [Richmond Secondary School](#).

Q: What grade(s) do you teach? A: Grade 11-12 Culinary Arts as well as [ITA's Youth Train in Trades Apprenticeship Program](#) in partnership with [Vancouver Community College](#).

Q: How and when did you first learn about BCAITC? A: I first learned about BCAITC at my very first [BCCASA](#) conference in 2009. Twice, Richmond Secondary School was honoured to host the THANK YOU event for many of our generous [Take a Bite of BC](#) program suppliers.

Q: How long have you been teaching students about BC agriculture and food? A: 12 years.

Q: What are the most important things that you want your students to learn about BC agriculture and food? A: Sustainability and the importance of supporting locally produced products.

Q: BCAITC has over 500 free downloadable resources including lesson plans, activities, videos, recipes, and more! What is your favourite BCAITC resource and why? A: They are ALL wonderful resources, but one of my favorites is [Grow BC: A Guide to BC's Agriculture Resources](#). It is in line with the topic of sustainability and supporting local products. This resource allows me to match the products that we receive through [Take a Bite of BC](#) and use it as a comprehensive resource to educate our students/apprentices just how diverse BC's agriculture, livestock, fruits, vegetables, field crops, and aquaculture are.

Q: What is your favourite BCAITC program and why? A: I LOVE the [Farm Tours and Field Trips](#) when generous owners open their gates and barns! It offers our students a fun and long-lasting experience.

Q: What is an agriculture or food based project you have recently implemented in your classroom? A: Involving students with the school gardens has been both an entertaining and rewarding experience. It was surprising how many students couldn't identify the very plants they ate regularly. Gardening allowed them to learn about food, understand the process of growing and harvesting, then actually cook them. In a way, they've lived the "farm-to-table" experience, rather than simply reading it on a restaurant menu.

Our students realized just how much it takes to produce the many wonderful products that we receive in our kitchen and classrooms! And behind these beautiful products we enjoy eating are hardworking, and dedicated people.

Q: Do you have any advice for other educators on how to integrate agriculture and food education into their curriculum? A: I found that the best way to integrate agriculture and food education is to give our students hands-on experience with the whole process, and work with groups other than just their classmates. Our school garden is a very important resource that is right outside our doors. We supplemented this with field trips to see how the "real world" works at a larger scale.

Our school garden also allows us to work with the different departments in our school. As examples, the Science department sows the seeds, Culinary Arts uses our products for learning and cooking, Learning Services/Peer tutoring have sold our produce at local market, Green Team looks after the composting, the Arts Department have made signs and painted rocks around the garden. It is a wonderful collaboration.

ABOUT THE TEACHER CHAMPION SERIES: This monthly BCAITC series features BC teachers who are passionate about providing agriculture and food education to K-12 students. For more information, please contact our Communications Coordinator, meghan@aitc.ca.