



Franklin Park Conservatory
and Botanical Gardens

2023 GROWING TO GREEN IMPACT REPORT



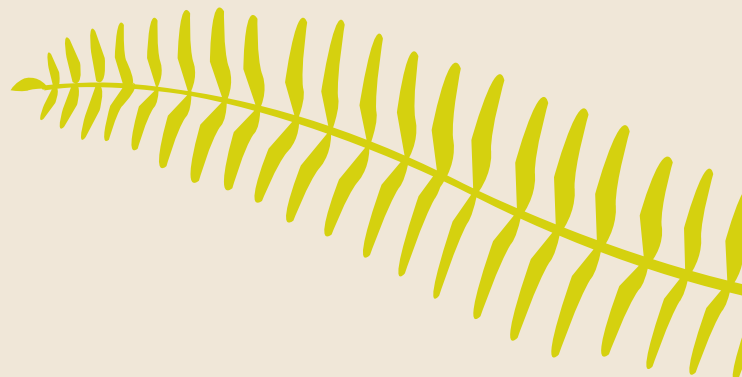


Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

Growing to Green

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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



It has been a tremendous year for the Conservatory's Growing to Green (G2G) program and community gardening in Central Ohio. Engaging in this initiative has allowed us to witness the power of collective effort in fostering sustainable urban agricultural practices, building connections, and nurturing a sense of belonging within the community.

Moreover, the vibrant tapestry of Columbus's community gardens reflects the diversity of its residents. These gardens are more than just spaces to grow fruits and vegetables; they are hubs of learning, collaboration, and empowerment. Through the G2G program, the Conservatory has played a pivotal role in providing resources, education, and support to individuals and groups eager to cultivate green spaces.

This support has been driven by a dedicated team – Sean McKay, G2G Coordinator, and Lauren Preston, G2G Educator, along with the help of Conservatory Volunteers and Women's Board. As you will see in the annual report, this team has profoundly impacted the gardening community. It goes beyond the numbers served – teaching classes, providing technical assistance, pulling weeds, planting seeds, and harvesting crops; it's about cultivating relationships and a shared sense of purpose.

Working side by side, we exchange knowledge, ideas, and stories, transcending barriers and fostering a deeper understanding of one another. It is a privilege for us to be a part of this community and to serve so many. We look forward to amplifying our work and “growing greener” in 2024!

Keep on gardening,

Bruce A. Harkey,
President & CEO
Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "B. Harkey".





VOLUNTEER DAY AT THE NEWLY BUILT LSS FOOD PANTRY COMMUNITY GARDEN

ABOUT GROWING TO GREEN

BY SEAN MCKAY & LAUREN PRESTON

The Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Garden's Growing to Green (G2G) is a free community garden program for all of Central Ohio. The program includes advocacy, education, technical assistance, volunteerism, financial resources, recognition, leadership development, and networking for all community gardens. These spaces include, but are not limited to; schools, donations, allotment, pollinators, educational, urban farms, cooperatives, workforce development, therapy, demonstration, and city beautification gardens.

Research shows that "The benefits of community-based gardening projects likely extend beyond food security, as gardens provide fresh vegetables, and the process of gardening involves physical exercise. Community gardens contribute to community wellbeing by influencing the nutritional and social environment." (Carney & Hamada, 2011; Egli, Oliver & Tautolo, 2016).

***"We've become a family.
Helping each other,
sharing seeds, and plants,
watering other's gardens
when not available to do so,
all tools needed to work with,
other than spoon feeding us.
Growing to Green has
been very helpful to
the gardeners!!!"***

- Franklin Park Community Garden Plot Holder



GROWING TO GREEN IMPACT

7,909

People directly impacted by the Growing to Green program through advocacy, education, technical assistance, volunteerism, financial resources, recognition, leadership development, and networking.

100

Garden visits

43

Educational presentations, work shops,
and hands-on learning experiences

372

Gardens directly impacted

156

Schools impacted

The Franklin Park Conservatory Community Garden (FPCCG) serves as a model for allotment-style community gardens with 40 annually leased plots. Registration is highly desirable with **36** people on the wait list.

Utilizing our community garden map, we assisted **9** of the people on the wait list to find another community garden in the meantime.

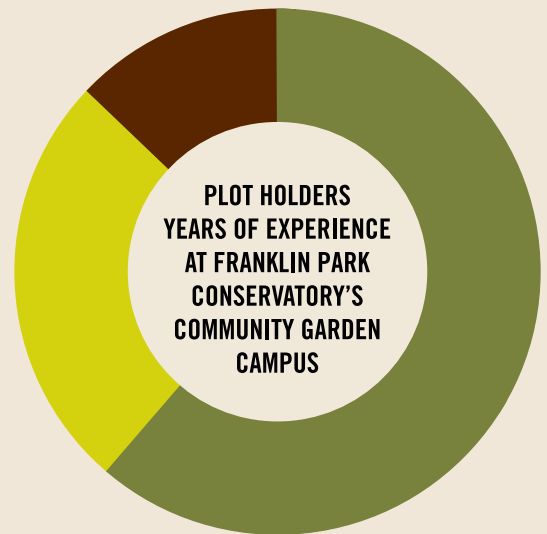


27.4%

Of the plot holders are immediate neighbors to the Conservatory

6-11 YEARS
25.8%

11+ YEARS
12.9%



1-5 YEARS
61.3%

FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY COMMUNITY GARDEN





TIME IN THE GARDEN

“I like all the opportunities you provide to connect with the other community gardeners.”

- Franklin Park Community Garden Plot Holder

1,667

Hours

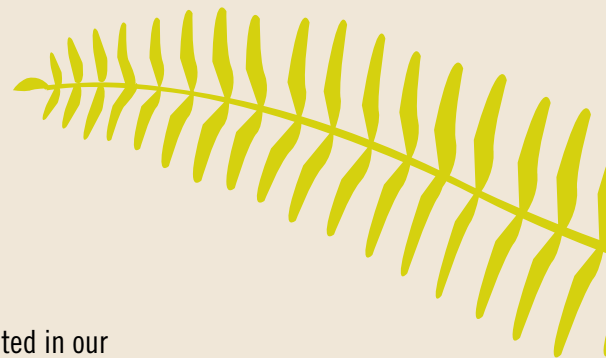
Engagement hours recorded by our plot holders. Engagement hours include maintaining their personal plot, maintaining public space in the FPCCG, volunteering on the main Conservatory Campus, and engaging with other gardeners in educational/social/work events at FPCCG

57

Active plot holders utilize the community garden

13

Zip codes represented in our community garden





SEAN MCKAY ACCEPTING
THE CERTIFICATE OF HONOR
AT THE ACGA CONFERENCE

COMMUNITY GARDEN OF THE YEAR

2023 COMMUNITY GARDEN OF THE YEAR ART & EDUCATION

"Celebrating the Diversity of Growing"

Franklin Park Conservatory Community Garden received
this recognition at the 2023 American Community Garden
Association Conference (ACGA) in Houston, Texas.

150

Community garden leaders
nationwide attended

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

“Volunteering with Growing to Green connects me with nature -plants, soil, dirt - and it provides a community for gardeners to connect with each other”

- Women's Board Member

Is a volunteer service initiative to assist community gardens, neighborhood beautification projects and urban farms. Part of this initiative is to further educate ourselves about our communities and the neighborhood leaders who take on these projects. Some time in the garden is set aside to just listen and learn about particular issues affecting neighborhoods and those that are addressing them.

In 2023, **8** gardens throughout Franklin County hosted our volunteers. Community Connections totaled **177** service hours by **59** volunteers. The value of the volunteer time was \$5,628.60.

VOLUNTEERISM



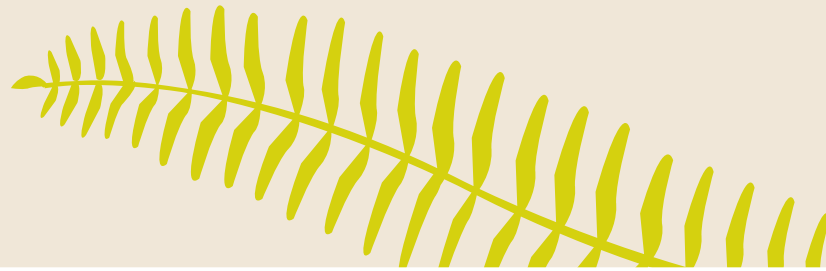
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS VOLUNTEERS AT EBENEZER CEMETERY BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

“Volunteering with Growing to Give was such a rewarding experience for our team. Not only were we able to connect with each other while we were giving back to the community, we also learned a lot from Growing to Green along the way.”

- Growing to Give Volunteer

GROWING TO GIVE

In 2023, Growing to Green piloted a similar volunteer initiative to Community Connections. Provide, a Fifth Third Subsidiary, piloted this program volunteering at a total of 4 gardens supplying 20 volunteers for a total of 72 hours of volunteer service. The value of the volunteer time was \$2,237.76.



VOLUNTEERISM



GROWING TO GIVE VOLUNTEERS HELPING TO PREP THE NEW BEDS AT LSS FOOD PANTRY COMMUNITY GARDEN



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & ADVOCACY

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCE PARTNER

Partnership with the Columbus City Schools (CCS) Farm to School program has expanded by giving resources, on-site technical assistance, and helping hands for the **72** CCS schools enrolled in the program. Many students and teachers have attended our free Communal Garden classes.

In 2023, G2G participated in the development of a new **\$150K** Urban Agricultural Infrastructure Grant in partnership with

Franklin County Board of Commissioners and Franklin Soil & Water Conservation District to increase food production and distribution throughout Franklin County.

Other technical assistance include writing letters of support for garden grant applications, presenting about the importance of community gardens to civic and area commission meetings, and garden design implementation.



2023 TEEN ECO SUMMIT

The Teen Eco Summit hosted by the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is a free, student-driven program where teams create Conservation Action Plans to help create sustainability and conservation-based change within their schools and communities. G2G attended as an organizational resource partner providing on-site technical assistance, design, plant selection, project resources, and student led meetings.

391

Students attended the
Teen Eco Summit

60

Schools in
attendance

31

Schools from
Franklin County

Berwick Alternative Community Garden

Garden started in 2015, but recently was redesigned and installed Spring 23' as a mixed-use community garden. G2G has done educational garden programming for the 900 students this STEM K-8 school serves.



Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

Growing to Green

Mezzacello Urban Farm

21st Century Urban Homestead modeled after Thomas Jefferson's famous Monticello. The goal is to function as both a sustainable, private formal and food garden, as well as, a public educational agricultural training center. Won the 2022 Harvest Sustainability Award.

Mid-Ohio Food Collective Farm

Mid-Ohio food Collective has the mission to demonstrate and teach sustainable and efficient urban gardening strategies to help create hunger-free and healthier communities. The produce grown on site helps supplement fresh produce in their pantry. They won the 2022 Harvest Ellen Bowden Health & Wellness Award.

Urban Farm Church

In partnership with Maize Manor United Methodist Church, the Urban Farm Church is a new kind of faith community that cares for both people and the planet in very tangible ways. G2G will be partnering with UFC with free on educational programming.

2023 WOMEN'S BOARD COMMUNITY GARDEN TOUR

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & ADVOCACY

COMMUNITY GARDEN BUS TOUR

Is an opportunity for Franklin Park Conservatory Women's Board to experience the amazing community gardens that G2G impacts.
40 members attended the day trip visiting 4 different types of gardens.

"Great memories of this tour and it was excellent as always. Thank you for a fun, educational and inspiring day."

- Women's Board Member

"What an amazing,inspiring day! Thank you! It is so powerful to see the Growing to Green partners in action and to know that our work as Women's Board helps make it possible."

- Women's Board Member



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

EDUCATION FOCUSED

Feedback from the FPCCG plot holders and general public included the need for continuing educational garden classes. Accessibility to quality education has been a priority. G2G has provided multiple forms of education through classes, workshops, events, presentation, and educational booth outreaches. G2G staff has participated and presented in 6 conferences this year and a total of 43 presentations and workshops.

COMMUNAL GARDEN SERIES

The Communal Garden Series is offered as a free monthly class series for the general public to learn about everything gardening, from seed starting, to cut flowers, to growing mushrooms.

There were 12 free classes offered at the Conservatory with an average of 35 participants in each class for a total of 407 participants. 8 classes were offered out in the community reaching an additional 289 participants.

“We love coming to the Communal Garden classes as a fun night out where we get to learn about a common topic of interest that will directly impact our garden”

BERWICK ALTERNATIVE K-8 SCHOOL

Growing to Green piloted a four week program for 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 8th grade students were able to have fun and learn using the garden as inspiration. They were able to talk about pollination and hold bees if they were brave. G2G provided tastings using produce from the garden like iced mint tea and pineapple salsa. Students help build green bean tepees and decorate them using marigold flowers, They also planted a salad garden which included; lettuce, radishes, and carrots. The students ended up producing over 82 pounds of radishes that were given away at the free weekly farm stand.

90

students participated

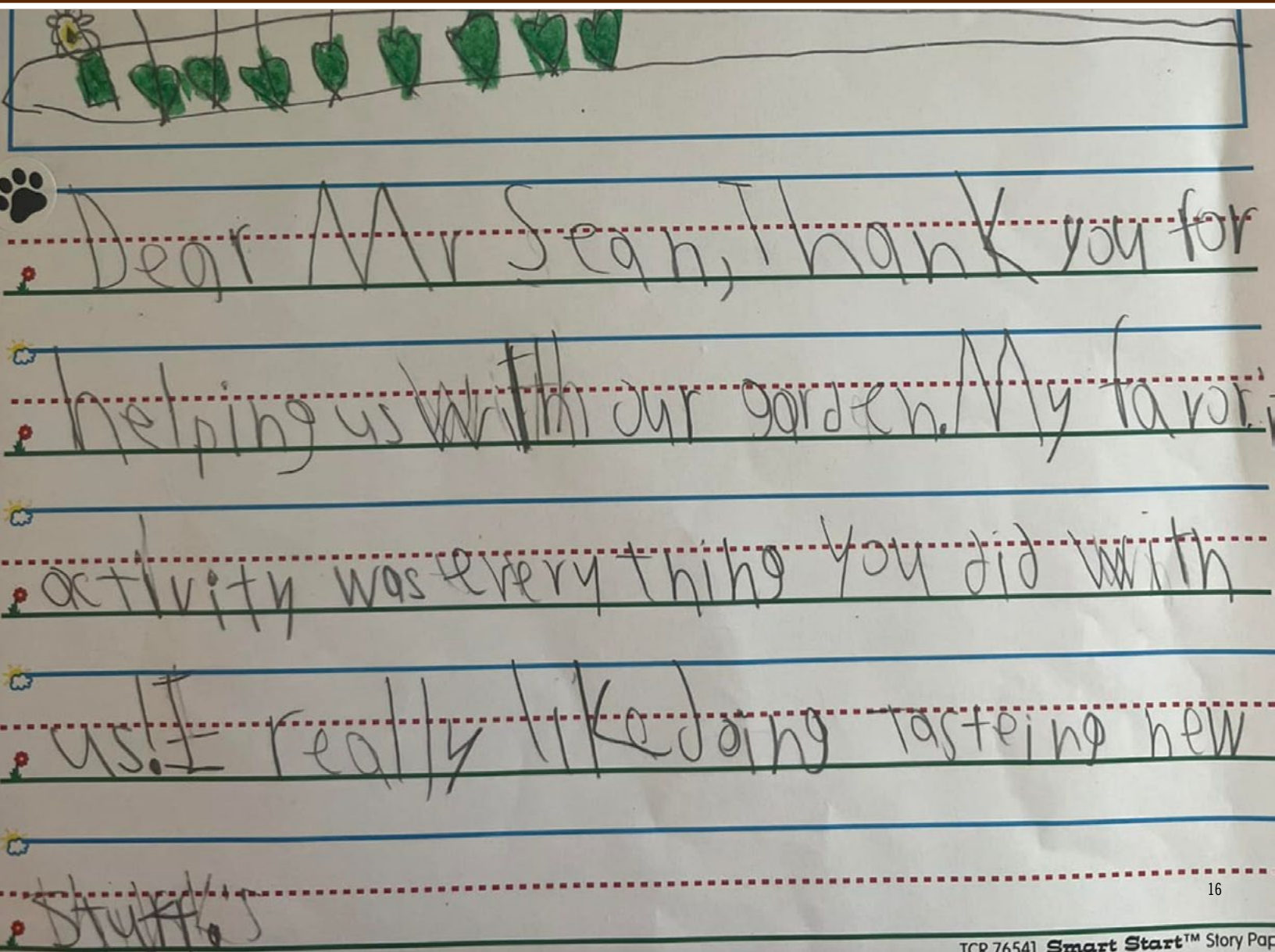
SUMMER SCHOOL GARDEN EXPERIENCE

BERWICK ALTERNATIVE K-8 STUDENTS PLANTING
POTATOES AND REACHING FOR THE SUN TO GROW





GARDEN EXPERIENCE





FINANCIAL RESOURCES

URBAN GARDEN GRANT

The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation, The City of Columbus, and Franklin County utilize a single application hosted by The Columbus Foundation to maximize funding and material resources to gardens and to provide financial and material resources to re-purpose underused land and to create, continue, or expand community gardens and greenspaces to:

- 🌱 Increase healthy, affordable, and local food access and education, particularly for people in under-resourced neighborhoods;
- 🌱 Connect individuals to the life-enhancing benefits of community gardens and greenspaces, including health and wellness, environmental, community building, and beautification.

Nonprofit gardening efforts may apply for:

- 🌱 Up to **\$3k**
- 🌱 Up to **\$300** in-kind product donations from The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company

G2G administers \$20k provided by Franklin County Board of Commissioners for 20 of the 93 applicants in 2023. Growing to Green hosted an Earth Day Celebration in The Wells Barn parking lot to distribute 25k of wholesale Scotts Miracle-Gro Company products to all of the applicants.

“We are grateful for the support and what it allows us to make possible at our centers for the children and family we serve.”

- Urban Garden Grant Applicant

The Awards honor and celebrate the dedication and hard work of many Central Ohio communities, organizations, and individuals. **8** awards were presented and GreenScapes made a surprise donation of **\$150** to all **12** nominations for the Bill Dawson Community Gardener of the Year Award. **\$5,300** was distributed that evening.

210

attendees

65

nominations

GROWING TO GREEN HARVEST AWARDS

2023 HARVEST AWARD CEREMONY





COLUMBUS SCHOOL FOR GIRLS VOLUNTEER DAY AT STODDART AVENUE COMMUNITY GARDEN

FRANKLIN COUNTY GARDEN MAPPING

ARC GIS MAPPING

The term community garden encapsulates quite a diverse variety of gardens including: school, food pantry, faith-based, allotment, communally-shared, market, pollinator, city beautification, therapy, demonstration, educational gardens and many more.

Creating a cohesive and comprehensive map has been attempted many times before unsuccessfully due to the complexity of high turnover of garden leadership, diverse types, and a lack of centralized organizational structure.

Growing to Green has partnered with the Ohio State University Knowledge Exchange and Extension services, City of Columbus Land Bank, CCS Farm to School Program, and Local Food Action Plan Council to administer this initiative through ARC GIS mapping software and a connected online survey.

The data collected from the survey will be used as resource network, connecting the general public, and quantifiable data collection on points such as how much food is produced, donated, and impact made on the community for more permanent sustaining funds.



SURVEY RESULTS

75,829 LBS

of produce have been grown in these community garden spaces

276

gardens surveyed

400

unconfirmed gardens expected

48,373

youth are impacted in these gardens

