

GROWING GREAT

2021



+ Annual Report 2021



GrowingGreat's Mission:

To empower children to make healthy food choices through hands-on science and garden education



Dear Friends,

I chose this photo for our annual report to share the impact of GrowingGreat's community partnerships – not only to keep our organization alive and empowering children to make healthy food choices during the pandemic, but also to grow stronger, to flourish. Ivan and Xitlalic are members of the Variety Boys & Girls Club in Boyle Heights. They have been participating in GrowingGreat activities throughout the pandemic, both at home and at the Club. Their mom took this photo. You can see GrowingGreat STEM Educator Maxwell Watson on their laptop talking about one of his favorite books. This is part of our new Reading Club, bringing stories about cooking and gardening that feature Communities of Color into children's homes. Families who participate in a GrowingGreat activity send us their picture and we send them a free book.

Our team bonded with each other and with partners nationwide, growing closer relationships than we had before, even though we only saw each other on our laptops. We reached more children than ever before and built relationships with parents too, with hands-on science, garden and cooking activities from our kitchen to yours, from our garden box to yours.

Thank you for your kind phone calls and emails when you were worried about how we would continue our mission without the ability to dig in the garden and eat healthy snacks with children. Thank you for asking how you could help and for your tremendous effort and generosity which made this year possible.

Jennifer Jovanovic
Executive Director



From Our Window Sill to Yours

GrowingGreat educators Meghan Nealon, Grace Sanchez and Maxwell Watson, led by Jill Coons, transformed our activities to videos filmed in their own kitchens. Grace single-handedly kept our commitment to Spanish-speaking parents by filming everything in Spanish. Our educators' impressive work caught the attention of PBS, who featured three GrowingGreat activities in their Camp TV program.

Thank you to LAUSD Parent Representatives who invited us to their virtual parent meetings to share cooking and gardening activities caregivers could do at home with their children.

Thank you to the Los Angeles County Libraries who launched our new Grab-and-Grow kits at 10 branches from Palmdale to Gardena, allowing us to virtually meet hundreds of new families in their kitchens and provide them hands-on activity supplies to grow fruits and vegetables. Thank you to our Office Manager Sally Alder who, when we didn't have an office, wholeheartedly committed to leading our assembly of hundreds of kits.

Thank you to our partner Para Los Niños, who distributed cooking supplies and fresh produce for parents so that they could participate in our parent/child healthy snack activities.

Thank you to our partners at KIPP Empower Academy and Leuzinger High School, who found creative ways for our educator to be on site in their gardens and still communicate with students learning at home.

"GrowingGreat provides programs that engage not only our children but our whole school community. Their workshops for teachers, bilingual family night presentations and webinars for families are interactive, culturally responsive, and unique. Through fun, inquiry-based STEM investigations, GrowingGreat sparks a child's natural curiosity in the garden and in the classroom and helps children connect science concepts to their everyday lives."

– Cyrene St. Amant, elementary school educator, South Central Los Angeles

California Partners:

City Scholars Foundation
Environmental Charter School
KIPP Empower Academy
Leuzinger High School

Los Angeles County Libraries
Los Angeles Unified School District
Manhattan Beach Unified School District
Maple Primary Center

Mount Diablo Unified School District
Para Los Niños
St. Anthony of Padua School
Variety Boys & Girls Club



+ GrowingGreat Nationwide

GrowingGreat was recently awarded a 5-year subcontract for an NIH Science Education Partnership Award called Seeds to STEM. We are thrilled and grateful for this opportunity to provide high-quality, hands-on STEM education to inner-city preschoolers, the result of years of collaboration with science center educators nationwide.

Thank you to every child who wrote in the chat box! We are also grateful for every time a child was able to turn on their camera and we could see the fun they were having. We are grateful for every photo a parent emailed to us of their child doing our activities at home.

Thank you to our followers on Instagram and Facebook and our Pen Pals who share our activity emails. Follow us at [instagram.com/growinggreat](https://www.instagram.com/growinggreat). GrowingGreat social media transformed into a hub for hands-on science education for families, featuring our latest activity videos in English and Spanish. And you can eat your experiments!

Thank you to the science centers, children’s museums and zoos nationwide who, in the midst of closures and furloughs, stuck by their local partner schools and parents and continued GrowingGreat Veggies and Fruits programs virtually. Their leadership supported museums all across the country in making the transition to virtual programs. And we are grateful to Del Monte Foods for continuing their sponsorship of GrowingGreat and our partners, now entering our third year.

“At Maple Primary Center, anyone who steps through our doors is family. Since 2017, GrowingGreat has been an important member of that family and one that the children know and love. In an area where 98% of our students qualify for Title 1, the nearest food is primarily fast food and there are few grocery stores and even fewer opportunities to interact with fresh fruits and vegetables, GrowingGreat provides our students with nutrition and garden exploration they would not otherwise experience.”

– Sharyn Clark, Principal,
Maple Primary Center

National Partners:

- Academy of Natural Sciences, Drexel Univ.
- Assoc. of Science & Technology Centers
- Carnegie Science Center
- Detroit Zoo
- Discovery Center
- Discovery Place
- Institute for Learning Innovation
- Marbles Kids Museum
- Oregon Museum of Science & Industry
- PBS Camp TV
- Saint Louis Science Center

+ Impact

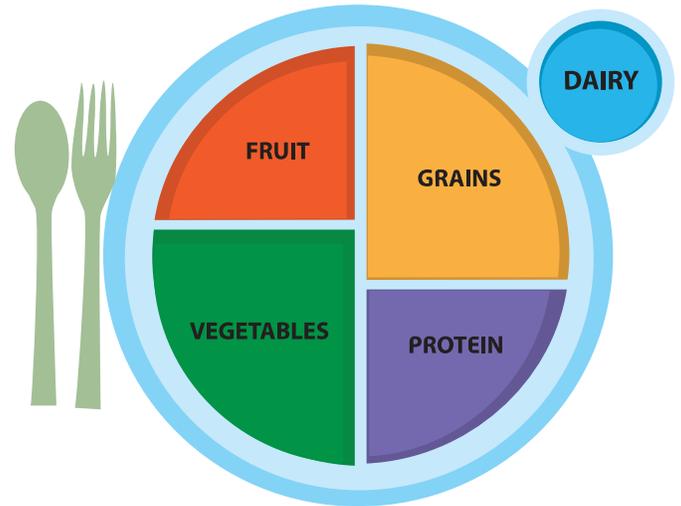
During the pandemic when schools were closed, 343 caregivers/parents of children in grades K-5 from GrowingGreat Los Angeles programs and partners at six museums nationwide responded to a survey about their participation in at-home, hands-on activities.

GrowingGreat caregivers were significantly more likely to report their children having tasted fruits or vegetables as part of an activity when compared with caregivers from other sites.

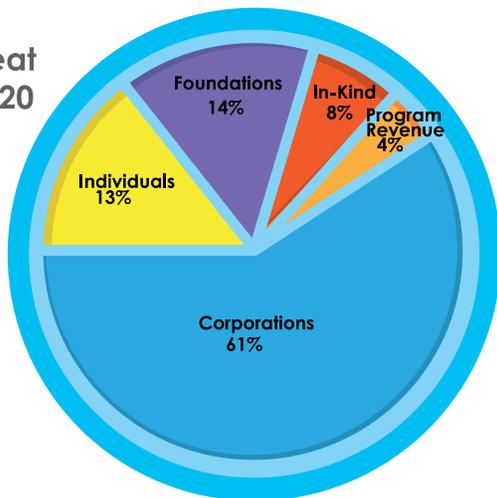
- 90% of caregivers felt confident engaging in cooking and science activities with their children.
- 95% of caregivers were interested in hands-on science activities related to cooking.
- 92% of caregivers were interested in hands-on science activities related to gardening.

In contrast to the rest of the sites, over 80% of the GrowingGreat survey participants represented Communities of Color.

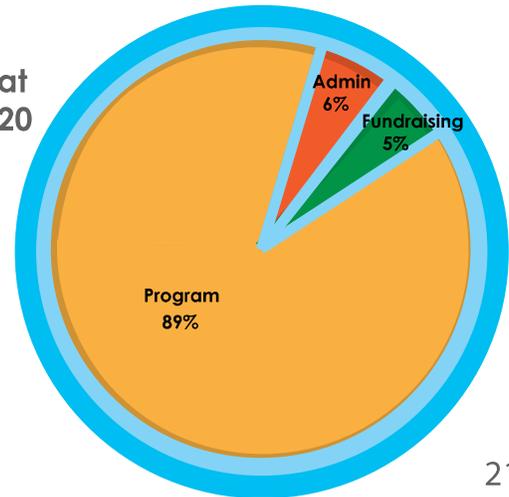
MyPlate



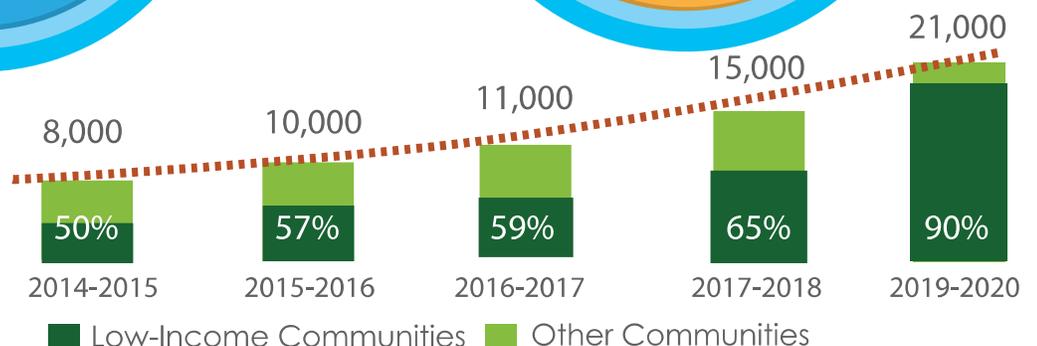
GrowingGreat Revenue 2020
\$458,018



GrowingGreat Expenses 2020
\$457,356



Children Impacted Per Year





Strategic Initiatives 2019-2022

We envision a world in which all communities have access to fresh, minimally-processed foods; all parents are empowered to make healthy food choices for their families; and every school garden is an outdoor STEM Learning Lab.

1) Strengthen core partnerships in under-resourced communities

- Our educators visit schools and teach programs; we collaborate with organizations to coordinate efforts and expand
- Maintain partnerships and national collaboration for PreK-12 STEM and literacy programs
- Develop and implement an effective impact evaluation for under-resourced communities

2) Focus GrowingGreat program delivery on three methods that ensure adherence and efficacy:

- Our educators visit schools and teach programs; we collaborate with experienced educators nationwide who teach programs on their own with our support and curriculum; and free consultations to under-resourced schools.
- Demonstrate at least one program working at scale for each delivery method
- Create hands-on science- and literacy-based activities that are integrated into core curriculum

3) Engage parents in both Spanish- and English-speaking households

- Offer family garden festivals in under-resourced communities featuring planting, cooking, and hands-on science- and literacy-based activities
- Review every aspect of GrowingGreat's written and spoken programming to ensure we are inclusive of Communities of Color and Spanish-speaking families

4) Increase program online visibility and accessibility

- Continue to expand social media presence
- Update website and online curriculum to become mobile-friendly

"GrowingGreat possesses a unique ability to develop programming that breaks down tough scientific concepts into fun, edible experiments. At OMSI, we have a rich cooking curriculum that aligns closely with our explorations of chemistry, physical sciences and human history. GrowingGreat's partnership has allowed us to expand this curriculum with innovative nutrition activities designed to foster scientific thinking."

-- Annie Douglass,
Early Childhood
Engagement Manager,
Oregon Museum of
Science & Industry



Thank You for Your Support

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Amy Watson Bean
 Marika & David Bergsund
 Peggy & Tim Curry
 Cindy & David Hoag
 Corina & Dave McGovern
 Betsy McLaughlin
 Jan & Chet Pipkin
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 Para Los Niños
 Torrance Memorial Medical Center
 Variety Boys & Girls Club

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 Nikkie Singh





As a pioneer in school garden programs in Los Angeles since 1999, GrowingGreat has reached hundreds of thousands of children and their families with hands-on nutrition, garden, STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) and literacy education. We are committed to low-income families in our cement-covered city where a school garden may be a child's only experience with living, growing things. That commitment has grown stronger through virtual programs to support parents and children learning at home, along with our Grab-and-Grow gardening kits, created in response to Covid-19. We have extended this commitment to thousands more children nationwide through GrowingGreat Veggies & Fruits, a national STEM education program. We offer programs from preschool to high school, in Spanish and English, during and after school, and always with the opportunity to enjoy fresh, healthy foods. We couldn't do this without your generous support. For free copies of our bilingual hands-on activities for home or school, or to find out more about any of our programs, please email info@growinggreat.org.



2711 N. Sepulveda Blvd., #279
 Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

info@growinggreat.org
www.GrowingGreat.org

GrowingGreat is a 501(c)(3)
 nonprofit organization.