



GROWING GREAT

2024



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



GrowingGreat's Mission:

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



Dear Friends,

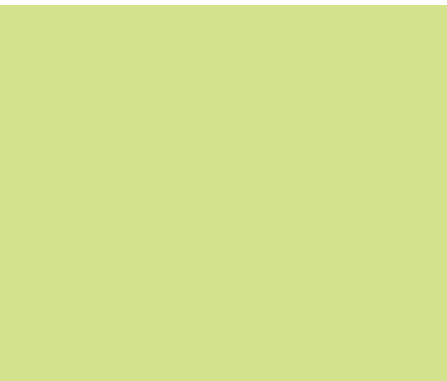
Did you know that at most GrowingGreat schools over 90% of families live in low-income households with fast food on every corner? We believe every community, regardless of economic status, should have access to fresh produce, and all kids should experience the joy of growing fruits and vegetables in their own gardens. We are committed to families living in our cement-covered city and we have extended this commitment nationwide through our NIH Science Education Partnership Award for the "Seeds to STEM" preschool program and our collaboration with science centers, children's museums and zoos. None of this would be possible without your unwavering generosity.

Thank you,
Jennifer Jovanovic
Executive Director

"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 Los Angeles

GrowingGreat + Garden = STEM Lab



“The Variety Boys & Girls Club's partnership with GrowingGreat has become an integral part of our programming. It is incredible to witness first-hand the joy on our Club members' faces as they engage in the GrowingGreat activities and have the opportunity to try new foods and learn about topics for the first time. The most exciting element of our partnership is that the learning doesn't stop at our Club but extends to our members' homes as they share with their parents the lessons they have learned and build their own gardens.”

-- Patricia Siqueiros, Executive Director, Variety Boys & Girls Club

By the Numbers

- 93 hands-on activities (Spanish & English)
- 1,400 PenPal emails to 350 partners spanning 20 states
- 3,080 PreK-12th graders at 25 Los Angeles schools and libraries
- 11,500 hands-on activity views on YouTube
- 4,000 educators at state and national conferences
- 22,000 people of all ages at Los Angeles City of STEM event



California Partners

City of STEM
 Culver City Unified
 School District
 Dolores Mission School
 Environmental Charter Schools
 Immaculate Conception School

LAUSD Early Education Centers
 L.A. Works
 Leuzinger High School
 Los Angeles County Libraries
 Los Angeles Public Libraries

Los Angeles Unified
 School District
 PACE Education Head Starts
 SoCal Climate Champions
 Tree People
 Variety Boys & Girls Club



“Our GrowingGreat partnership empowers students to think critically, develop science process skills, explore local environmental issues and propose solutions. Our middle school students are working with camera and audio equipment to film garden tour segments, exploring video editing, developing a wide range of recipes and creating environmental science activities for K-2 students.”

-- Tashanda Giles-Jones
Environmental Charter Schools

+ Planting Seeds for Tomorrow’s Leaders, Nationwide



National Partners

- Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University
- Association of Science and Technology Centers
- Detroit Zoo
- K2 Communications
- NASA Community Anchor Award
- Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
- NIH Science Education Partnership Award
- NSF Polar STEAM Fellowship
- PBS SoCal
- Saint Louis Science Center
- School Garden Support Organization

"A problem I see a lot at our school and in our neighborhood is trash and litter on the ground. It's important for people to pick up trash so that it doesn't get washed into the rivers and oceans where fish and other animals might eat it and die."

-- Middle School GrowingGreat Participant

+ Impact

Good News! The first-year evaluation findings are coming in from Drexel University about “Seeds to STEM,” the NIH Science Education Partnership Award led by the Academy of Natural Sciences and GrowingGreat.

Seeds to STEM:

- increased teaching and learning resources in the classroom
- modeled how to integrate math, literacy, science and nutrition
- led to positive outcomes including teaching confidence, teacher STEM knowledge and learning of new instructional practices

In Math, Science, Nutrition and Literacy:

- 86% of teachers reported using more best practices in at least two areas.
- 75% of teachers held greater student expectations in at least one area.
- 55% of teachers reported growth in their confidence in at least one area.

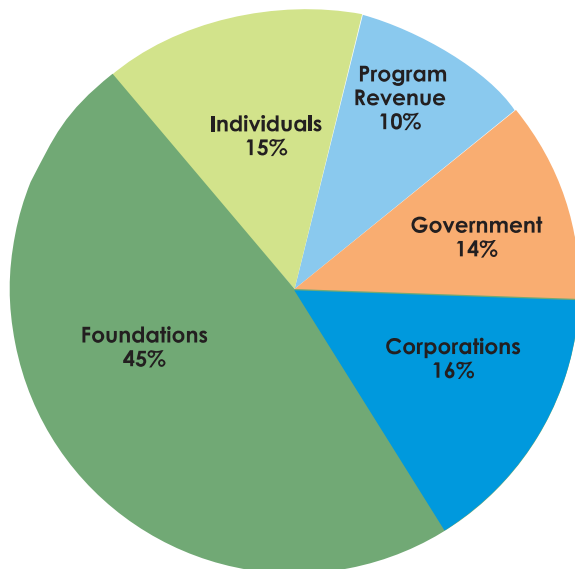
“I feel more confident teaching more science because now I see that the kids are really interested. They really want to learn. They really want to touch and feel.”

“GrowingGreat helps our whole school community dive into science lessons and nutrition, and that’s an important part of education as well as a part of a child’s day-to-day life.”

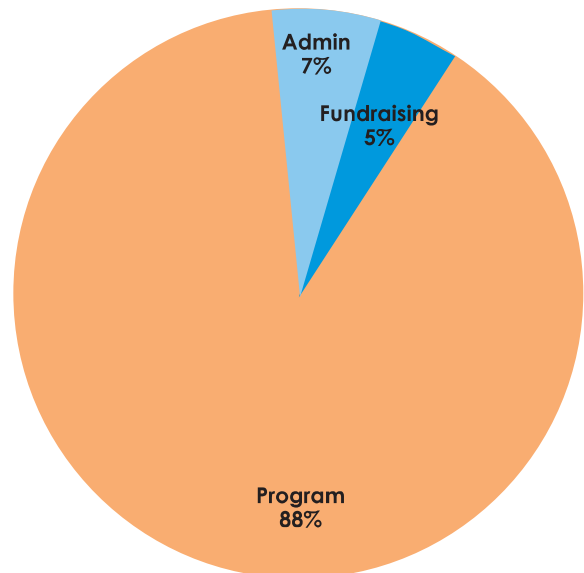
– Preschool Teachers discussing GrowingGreat’s Seeds to STEM Program

In 2023-24, GrowingGreat reached 7,430 people. We directly impacted 3,080 children, families and teachers at 25 schools and libraries, and 4,350 indirectly through PenPal activities, community events and national partnerships. Our direct impact programs total over 20,000 hands-on activities with up to 10 visits for each child each year.

GrowingGreat Program Revenue 2023-24
\$529,122



GrowingGreat Expenses 2023-24
\$513,629



Strategic Initiatives 2023-2025

Vision: We envision a world in which all communities have equitable access to fresh, nutritious foods; all caregivers are empowered to make nutritious food choices for their families; every child has the opportunity to learn in a school garden; and every school garden is an outdoor STEM Learning Lab.

Initiative 1.

Provide Hands-on, Educator-led Garden and Nutrition Programs that:

- impact students in grades PreK-12 and their teachers
- are available in English and Spanish
- include standard-aligned STEM and literacy activities
- demonstrate measurable positive outcomes
- use both virtual and in-person methods
- offer video and written activity options
- feature healthy snack tasting when Covid policies allow

Initiative 2.

Expand Programs to Serve More Preschoolers, their Teachers and Caregivers:

- in under-resourced regions of Los Angeles, especially LAUSD Early Education Centers
- as part of the national Seeds to STEM program, a five-year NIH Science Education Partnership Award (launched in 2022)
- virtually, through Caregiver/Child Cooking Activities

Initiative 3.

Take a Leadership Role in Garden, Nutrition and STEM Education Nationally and Statewide through Presentations and Committee Involvement with:

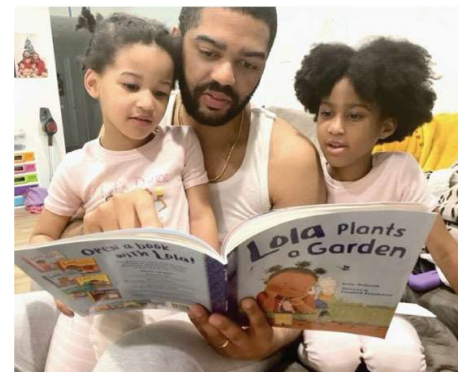
- Association of Science and Technology Centers
- National (and California) Association for the Education of Young Children
- School Garden Support Organization Network
- Los Angeles County Libraries
- New corporate funder for National Museum Collaborative (seek sponsor in 2023)
- Teen Leadership and Career Pathway Programs (launched in 2022)

Initiative 4. Increase Online Visibility and Accessibility through:

- posts in Spanish and English
- on-campus school communications and take-home flyers
- QR codes and social media hashtags in newsletters, stickers and handouts
- sharing social media connections through Pen Pal email distributions

"I was thrilled for the Academy of Natural Sciences to be chosen to lead an NIH Science Education Partnership Award, working together with GrowingGreat to create the new Seeds to STEM preschool program. I understand that the reception to GrowingGreat's activities in Los Angeles has been so positive that it is a challenge to accommodate all the preschools that want to join!"

-- Mariah Romaninsky
Academy of Natural
Sciences
of Drexel University





Thank You for Your Support

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Amy Watson Bean
 Marika & David Bergsund
 Peggy & Tim Curry
 Cindy & David Hoag
 Corina & Dave McGovern
 Jan & Chet Pipkin
 Lori & Kyle Sherman

Major Program Sponsors:

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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 offer programs for 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.



2006 N. Sepulveda Blvd., #279
 Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

info@growinggreat.org
www.GrowingGreat.org

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