

## Green Heart Family,

We appreciate all the contributions of our community members over the past year towards our mission to Grow Food, Grow Minds, and Grow Community. If you are reading this, it is likely that you played a role in our efforts, which are outlined in the following report. I am proud to say that our work continues to grow in Charleston.

Through your hard-won resources and the daily efforts of our team and partners, during the past year, we:

- Completed construction of the Urban Farm at Enston Home with the addition of a community pavilion, a fruit tree orchard, rain gardens, and a greenhouse.
- Signed a 100-year lease on the Urban Farm property from the Charleston Housing Authority, securing the space as a forever home for our organization in Downtown Charleston.
- Continued to expand school garden programming throughout the Lowcountry, now counting 18 school partners.
- Employed 20 high school students in career-building internships.
- Provided the community surrounding our Urban Farm with a weekly "pay what you can" produce stand.

Our work has continued to build a foundation of trust within the community and paved the way for Green Heart's mission to leave a positive, healthy impact for years, and even generations to come. And we could not have done it without the help of everyone who played a part. Thank you for your continued support.

With deep gratitude,

JESSE BLOM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



### MISSION

The Green Heart Project builds garden-based, experiential learning projects to educate students, connect people, and cultivate community.

### VISION

Cultivate a community of engaged citizens that value & respect their health, neighbors and the environment, through growing, eating and celebrating food.



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# The Urban Farm at Enston Home

A "forever home" for The Green Heart Project

This year, in partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston, we **signed a 100-year lease on the Urban Farm** property securing the space as a forever home for our organization in downtown Charleston.

The lease agreement is a culmination of our construction efforts at the Urban Farm over the last 4 years, which include:

### • Site Design and Preparation

Our lead design partner, SeamonWhiteside created the master plan and assisted with permitting. Other major site work partners were James White Construction and Yellowstone Landscape.

### • Farm Stand (completed 2019)

The Karalee Nielsen Fallert Farm Stand is for processing and selling produce at our weekly produce market which is open to the public on a pay what you can sliding scale. Design and build partner: Clemson School of Architecture's CommunityBuild program.

### • Community Pavilion (completed 2022)

The Horace W. Carter Pavilion hosts Farm to School lessons and other community events. Design and build partners: New World Byzantine, Timber Artisans, LLC., Cahill Contracting, The Spartina Company.

### • Center Garden (completed 2022)

The center garden features an olive tree, a symbol of peace. Design and build partners: Charleston Horticultural Society, Elizabeth Stuart.

#### • Learning Orchard (completed 2022)

Our Learning Orchard consists of 12 fruit trees and a banana grove. Design and build partners: Rita's Roots, Yellowstone Landscape.

#### Rain Garden (completed 2022)

Design and build partners: Clemson Extension Master Rain Gardeners, JohnHenry Designs.

#### Greenhouse (completed 2023)

The custom greenhouse allows us to start plants from seed while providing a learning opportunity for high school interns. Design and build partners: Meadors Architecture, Ables Landscape.





## Where we are

### **PARTNERS**

- 1. Burke High School 244 President St, Charleston
- 2. Charleston Catholic School 888 King St, Charleston
- 3. Charleston Charter School for Math and Science 1002 King St, Charleston
- 4. Compass Collegiate Academy 34 Race St, Charleston
- 5. James Simons School 741 King St, Charleston
- 6. Memminger Elementary 20 Beaufain St, Charleston
- 7. Meeting Street Academy 642 Meeting St, Charleston
- 8. Meeting Street Elementary at Brentwood 2685 Leeds Ave, North Charleston
- 9. Meeting Street Elementary at Burns 3750 Dorchester Rd, North Charleston
- 10. Mitchell Elementary 2 Perry St, Charleston
- 11. Sanders-Clyde Elementary 805 Morrison Dr, Charleston
- 12. Sullivan's Island Elementary 2015 Ion Ave, Sullivan's Island

### **AFFILIATES**

- 13. Ashley River Creative Arts 1871 Wallace School Rd, Charleston
- 14. Carolina Youth Development Center site 1 5055 Lackawanna Blvd, North Charleston
- 15. Carolina Youth Development Center site 2 Moncks Corner
- 16. Daniel Island School 2365 Daniel Island Dr. Charleston
- 17. Frierson Elementary 6133 Maybank Hwy, Wadmalaw Island
- 18. Pepperhill Elementary 3300 Creola Rd, North Charleston
- 19. St. Andrew School of Math and Science 30 Chadwick Dr, Charleston







# Where does the produce go?

### FARM TO SCHOOL LESSONS

85% of students stated that after learning how to grow fruits and vegetables, they are more likely to eat them.

I enjoyed the taste tests.

Because I enjoy trying new things and it was new every time.

- 6th grade Green Heart student

# In our gardens this year, we:

Grew 95

TOTAL VARIETIES OF PRODUCE

Grew **8,063** 

TOTAL POUNDS OF PRODUCE Served **1,333** 

CUSTOMERS AT OUR FARM STAND

### RESTAURANT SALES

Restaurant sales help to earn income to support farm operations, while raising awareness of our work in the community and connecting with local businesses.









# Farm to School Programs

This school year, we piloted programs to engage new age groups of students including a high-school Farm to School program with Burke High School and a pre-Kindergarten program with Charleston County School District's Head Start Program at Sanders-Clyde.

503 total lessons and sessions.

2,944 total students reached.



30 additional school and community partners engaged in...

field trips.



After Green Heart lessons,

90%

of students stated that they feel comfortable working in the garden.

85%

of students stated that they feel comfortable cooking a meal.









81% of students shared things they learned in Green Heart with their families.



# Farm to School Program Evaluation

We partnered with the Center for Applied Research & Evaluation at the University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health to undergo a formal evaluation of our Farm to School Programs. CARE researchers conducted a **randomized controlled trial** at a partner school, looking at key education & health outcomes for students receiving a year of Green Heart programs vs. students who did not. They also analyzed student survey data from 2017 thru 2023 to determine areas of impact. Below is some of what they found, and results that are helping us to build our evidence base for Farm to School education!







### GREEN HEART STUDENTS EXPERIENCED:

- Significant gains in willingness to try new foods.
- Significant gains in positive attitudes towards fruits and vegetables.
- Gains were higher at schools with a Title I designation (indicating a majority of students & families are currently experiencing poverty).
- Higher likelihood of meeting the recommended daily amounts of fruit or vegetables, when compared to students who did not receive GHP programs.

Overall, GHP's Farm to School program improves student's mental model of healthy food and the environment as well as their attitudes and behaviors towards fruits and vegetables."





In year 4 of our Youth Internship Program, we employed **16** youth interns. growing the program, growing opportunities and growing impact. We've watched our interns build knowledge around financial literacy, develop transferable workplace skills and move into leadership roles in the program. They've learned how to grow food & manage a garden, prepare healthy, plant-forward meals for themselves, and have gotten active in their community.



Over the past 4 years of the program, we've paid out

**\$118,288** 

in youth wages to our interns.

Here's what some of them are doing now:

- Studying agriculture, agricultural engineering, and sustainability at 4 year Universities
- Leading climate coalitions at their high schools
- Managing their own gardens
- Working at local restaurant establishments
- Returning to lead subsequent Youth Internship Programs



# **Community Engagement**

Over the past year, volunteers remained at the [green] heart of our work, supporting our community through garden maintenance, program implementation and at various events.



We also partnered in or attended 20 community events, engaging and building community with other projects, businesses and community members in the Charleston area. Some event highlights included:

- Co-hosting a Piccolo Spoleto event with the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston at the Urban Farm at Enston Home
- Hosting garden-inspired, hands-on activities and sharing Green Heart produce at events such as the Avery Family Reunion and Lowcountry Food Bank Walk to Fight Hunger
- Being the nonprofit partner of the inaugural Charleston Heritage Fire Tour



### GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

598 volunteers joined us in our gardens to help with garden projects including: maintenance, harvesting, planting, filling beds with soil, weeding, landscaping and general garden beautification. We hosted weekly volunteer work days at the Urban Farm at Enston Home along with hosting corporate volunteer groups at multiple of our school garden locations.



### HARVEST DINNER

Despite it being our first Harvest
Dinner with the chance of inclement
weather, our 13th Harvest Dinner
was a huge success with over
575 students, families,
teachers, school
staff members and
members of the broader
community joining together for
a night of delicious food, live music
and celebration.

### GREEN HEART BUDDY PROGRAM

97 volunteers dedicated their time to our Farm to School programs, committing to one of our school garden programs for a semester, volunteering once a week for ~2 hours. Buddies serve as urban farmers, teachers and mentors, working alongside our students, connecting, encouraging and supporting them through a variety of garden-based and culinary-focused activities.



### EVENT VOLUNTEERS

**271 volunteers** helped us out at fundraising events this year. At both Riverfront Revival Music Festival and High Water Music Festival, volunteers staffed beverage tents serving drinks to patrons where a portion of sales and 100% of all tips came back to support our work. Volunteers also helped run the Revelry Brewing Block Party, where all ticket proceeds supported Green Heart. These events helped raise almost \$75,000 for the Green Heart Project.



# Our Team

### STAFF



Whitney Anderson Garden Educator



Allie Astor Marketing & Communications Manager



Jesse Blom Executive Director



Amanda Howell

Development Director



Nicole Kleinas
Farm to School Program Director



Kenai McFadden Youth Development Program Director



Sean Murray Farmer



Kimberly Perrineau Jackson Operations Director



Jane Rice Garden Educator



Erin Snow
Development Coordinator
& Garden Educator

### **BOARD**

Ann Calhoun
Past President

Mark Furlong

Wes Carter Member

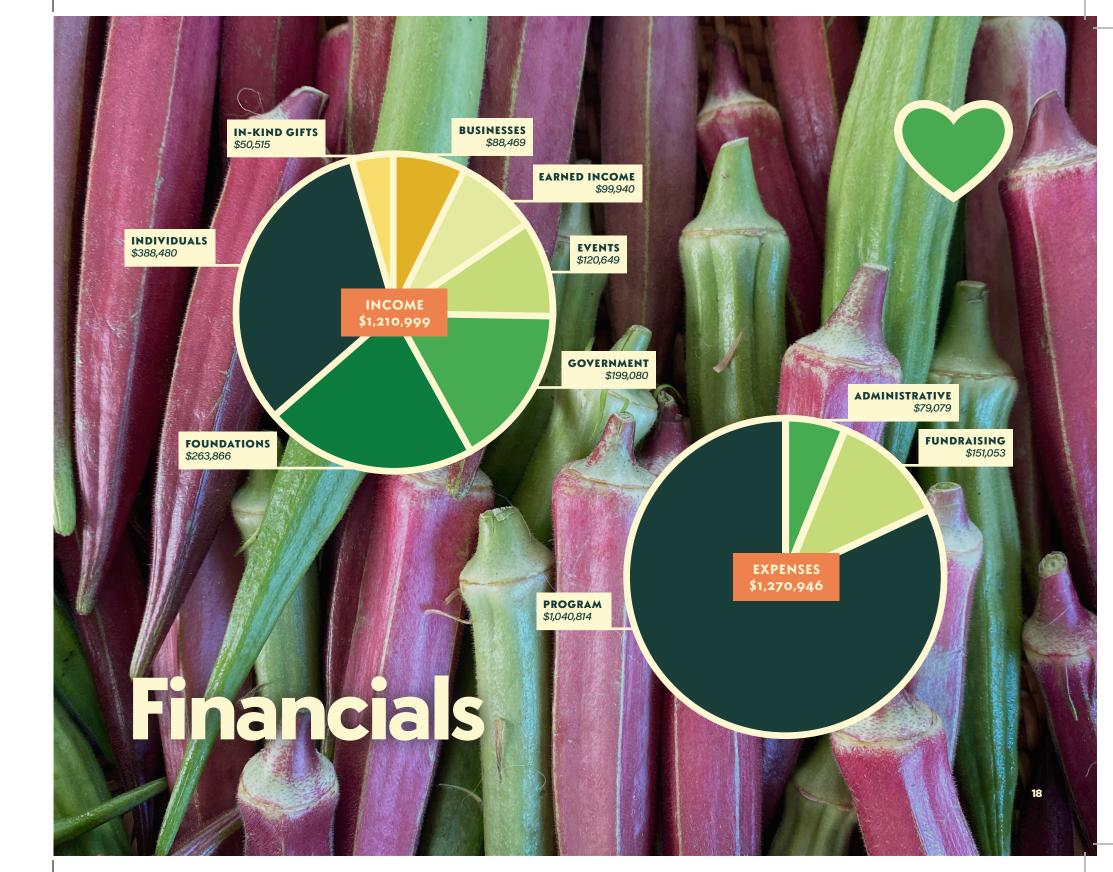
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Clarissa Pryor Member Kaitlin DaPore Vice President

Caroline Rion President Lucy Henderson Davis Member

Katie Saylors Member Karalee Nielsen Fallert Member

Jarvis White Secretary





## **Donors**

### **COMMUNITY BUILDERS**

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Basic Projects Foundation

Cahill Contracting

Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation

Fred Baker

Healthy Harbors Fund

Kennedy-Herterich Foundation

Lindsey and Wes Carter

Meeting Street Schools

USDA - NRCS

William Enston Trust

### **GARDEN CHAMPIONS**

**Charleston County** 

Coastal Community Foundation

Guffey Family Foundation

Harriett McDougal

James J. and Joan A. Gardner Family Foundation

Kuznik Charitable Foundation

Limehouse Produce

Maria and Steve Mungo

Pathfinder Foundation

Patriinder Foundation

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Tope Leyimu

United Community Bank

Weston Fennell

Williams and Walsh Law Firm



## **Donors continued**

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C. Edward Coffey

Caitlin Hamer and John Hadley

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Community Table

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**David Thompson Architect** 

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Eric Stafford

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