



2016 Annual Harvest Report



A word from our Executive Director...

Dear Friends,

Thank You! Because of you, the Big Garden has had a wonderful year. Where to begin? In March we purchased our first property, located at 5602 Read St. This former garden nursery is now our home, a wonderful space where we are growing fresh produce, teaching workshops, building new greenhouses, hosting volunteer teams, and sinking roots in our community. None of this would be possible without the help of supporters like you.

While looking forward to a bright future at our new Big Garden Campus, we also spent time honoring our past by celebrating 50 years of work for mercy and justice by our founding organization, United Methodist Ministries. A two-day celebration was held in April, with hundreds in attendance. Previous executive directors, board members, staff and volunteers reflected on a half-century of good work, sharing stories and looking forward with excitement to what the next 50 years will bring.

Our impact in the community continues to grow. In 2014 we had a goal of teaching 150 low-income children and youth how to grow, cook, and preserve their own vegetables through our Grow-Your-Own summer program. This year, we taught weekly classes to over 625 children and youth, and already we have a waiting list for next summer! In addition to that, we taught workshops and provided mission experiences for another 250 youth.

Our plans for 2017 are ambitious. Our greenhouses will be up and we will grow thousands of seedlings for our garden network. The Big Garden Campus will continue to bloom with more vegetables, flowers, fruit trees, and maybe even chickens in our future! Our programming with children and youth is expanding as we work to make sure more kids know how good fresh nutritious produce tastes, and how to grow it themselves.

None of this work would be possible without you. Your financial support, your volunteer hours, your thoughts and prayers have brought us this far. There is still much to do. I hope you will continue to walk with on this journey as we work to grow justice in our community.

Gratefully,



Nathan Morgan
Executive Director



Program Highlights



Growing Gardeners

The Growing Gardeners Workshop Series is a collaboration between City Sprouts and the Big Garden in Omaha, Nebraska. Our purpose is to offer four seasons of hands-on workshops that feature skills and techniques for every gardener and urban farmer. All workshops are free or low-cost, for all-ages, and no one will be turned away for inability to pay.

In 2016 we have hosted **43** Growing Gardeners workshops.

Topics covered have included pollinator habitats, homemade baby food, local foods on a budget, backyard chickens, water conservation, meal planning, seed saving, fermented foods, cover crops, organic pest management, bread-baking, soup-making, and more.

Nature Camp

This program is a new addition to our 2016 offerings, made possible by the new Big Garden campus. During the summer, we offered **6 camp sessions** for children age 3-7. Each camp had an average of **12 participants**, many of whom were children from the surrounding neighborhood.

Topics included wild salads, herbal remedies, creatures of the garden, and more.



Seed to Market

Through a partnership with City Sprouts, we offer this program at **5 middle schools** in Omaha Public Schools: Marrs, McMillan, Monroe, Lewis and Clark, and King Science Center.

We taught the Seed to Market program for **42 weeks** during the 2015-16 school year, with **8 classes per week**, and a reach of **120 participants** each week.

Participants learn how to grow vegetables and herbs in their school garden as well as how to properly harvest, cook, and preserve these crops through various methods.

This program specifically highlights STEM education through plant science and organic gardening techniques, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles.

More Program Highlights

Grow-Your-Own

In 2016, our **9** summer garden educators logged **3,780** hours planning & teaching children & youth at **26** different schools and childcare centers. Our unique **10-week curriculum** addresses soil health, planting techniques, pollinators, permaculture, food systems, local foods, harvesting, and cooking. **650 children & youth** participated weekly over 10 weeks.

The interns received a two-week intensive training, along with multiple visits to urban and rural farms to help them develop a better understanding of sustainable growing practices.

New Garden Builds

Caritas Kids' Cottage | Bellevue, NE
AHSTW | Avoca, IA
Riverside Community School | Carson-Oakland, IA
Bennington UMC | Bennington, KS
Bonner Springs UMC | Bonner Springs, KS
First UMC | Wahoo, NE
Nelson Mandela Elementary | Omaha, NE
Psalms Child Care Ministry | Omaha, NE
Little Blessings Learning Center #2 | Omaha, NE
Blackburn High School | Omaha, NE
Burke High School | Omaha, NE
Fontenelle Elementary | Omaha, NE
Element Learning Center | Omaha, NE
Montessori Learning Home | Omaha, NE
Learning Community of South Omaha | Omaha, NE
Lollipop Patch Child Care and Pre-school | Omaha, NE
Franklin Elementary/Refugee Empowerment Center | Omaha, NE



Students at Omaha's Fontenelle Elementary prepare the soil for planting in their newly-built hoop house.



Volunteers

We've hosted more than **450 volunteers** on our campus since April, including 10 Volunteers in Mission (VIM) teams from Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri.

We also helped with the Lutheran Youth Service Days, partnered with Outward Bound, and hosted youth from Lewis and Clark Middle School.

Staff

Nathan Morgan, Executive Director
 Jaimee Trobough, Director of Communications & Marketing
 Matt Freeman, Director of Operations & Development
 Cait Caughey, Education Director
 Mary Hanten, Education Coordinator
 Kay Wilwerding, Education & Volunteer Coordinator
 Matthew Cronin, Program Coordinator



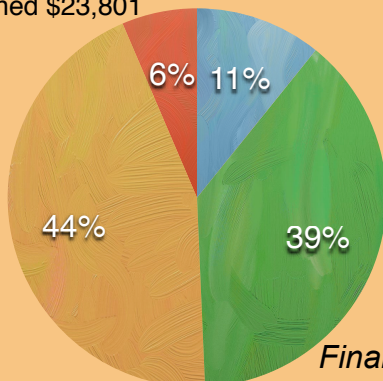
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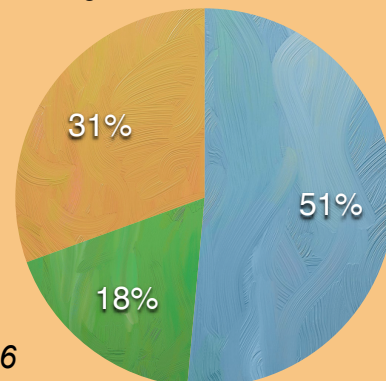
Income \$370,100

- Individual Donations \$39,923
- United Methodist Church Support \$142,612
- Grants \$163,764
- Earned \$23,801



Expenses \$360,596

- Salaries \$185,598
- Operating \$64,873
- Programming \$110,125



Financials through 9/30/2016



Named 2016 Non-profit of the Year by Food Day Omaha!

Our mission

The Big Garden's mission is to cultivate food security by developing community gardens, creating opportunities to serve, and providing education on issues related to hunger.



Contact

The Big Garden
5602 Read Street
Omaha, NE 68152
402.898.9862
BigGarden.org
info@BigGarden.org

