



**GROWING
HOME**

...

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



"That's one of the reasons I'm proud of working here at Growing Home. It gives me a purpose, in giving out these fresh vegetables to those who actually need it."

- ANTHONY, 2020 GRADUATE -

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



At Growing Home, we know that growth requires hard work. Whether it's tending to the crops in our urban farm or strengthening our neighborhood through our workforce development program, the growth we see each and every day is a result of a lot of time, energy, and love.

And just as a farm can't thrive without the dedicated people who plant, harvest, and sell its produce, an organization can't thrive without the volunteers, patrons, partners, neighbors, alumni and team who support the mission.

Growing Home has always been a collective community effort. This year showed that more than ever as we creatively adjusted to all the challenges brought our way by COVID-19. From transitioning our Employment Training program to a hybrid format, switching to a mostly-CSA model for food distribution & having smaller groups on the farm for planting & harvesting - we had to work together.

I know that everything won't be perfect these coming months. Our society continues to struggle with racial and



social injustices in our community - and with the effects of the pandemic and high unemployment and food insecurity affecting our Black and Brown communities the hardest in Chicago, there is so much work to do.

I imagine that we will continue to face these challenges together with honesty, respect and compassion. As Anna, one of our Employment Training Program Graduates, said, "At Growing Home, I found out that things are possible." We couldn't agree more with Anna; and we know that the best is yet to come for our organization and our community.



GROWING HOME ABOUT

At Growing Home, we believe that everyone deserves a good job, to eat well, and to live in a vibrant, supported community. We are a non-profit and social enterprise urban farm focused on using agriculture as a vehicle for workforce development and food security in our Englewood community of Chicago.

We believe that farming is a unique and powerful vehicle to teach hard, transferable job skills, while also providing a therapeutic experience to individuals who are looking for personal growth and connection. Our unique, paid 12-week workforce development program aims to increase employment opportunities for individuals with extreme barriers to employment. To date, we have empowered over 500 individuals with the tools, connections, and confidence to find and keep stable jobs, providing a path out of poverty and towards self-sufficiency.

We also use our farms to provide affordable, healthy food and food education to our neighbors in Englewood, a community that has suffered greatly from systemic racism and disinvestment. The community faces a 35% unemployment rate and many residents lack access to healthy, affordable food.

We grow over 200 varieties of vegetables, which we sell at affordable prices at our weekly Wood Street Farm Stand and other pop-up markets. In 2020, we began a neighborhood food box delivery program at no cost to Englewood residents. Through cooking demonstrations, farm tours, and community outreach, we share with our customers and their families how to integrate nutritious choices into their lifestyles. Growing Home is helping to redefine local, sustainable food systems and communities as we operate Chicago's first and only high-production, USDA-certified organic urban farms.

AT-A-GLANCE



WE'RE THE FIRST AND ONLY HIGH-PRODUCTION USDA-CERTIFIED ORGANIC URBAN FARM IN CHICAGO! WE MAKE ORGANIC PRODUCE ACCESSIBLE IN OUR ENGLEWOOD COMMUNITY. WE PAY! ONLY A HANDFUL OF JOB PROGRAMS PAY THEIR PARTICIPANTS. WE HELP PEOPLE STAY OUT OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. WE ARE A BLACK- AND WOMEN-LED NON-PROFIT WITH SOME STAFF MEMBERS WHO ARE ALUMNI OF OUR PROGRAM, ENSURING OUR WORK TRULY REFLECTS THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY.



EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

...





GROWING HOME EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

PEOPLE & SERVICES



PAID JOB TRAINING ON OUR FARMS LEARNING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS



COMPUTER, RESUME & INTERVIEW CLASSES



ROOTS OF SUCCESS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE COURSE



"TIP" EMOTIONAL RESILIENCY CURRICULUM



CASE MANAGEMENT, WRAPAROUND SERVICES & CRIMINAL RECORD RELIEF



JOB PLACEMENT + RETENTION SUPPORT



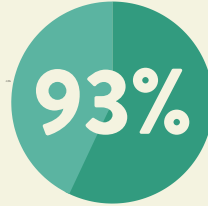
55 individuals were enrolled in our job program



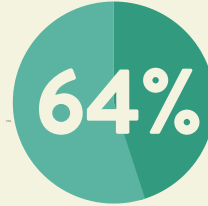
76% had previous experience with criminal justice system



32 years old was the average age of our PA's



93% identify as Black/ African-American

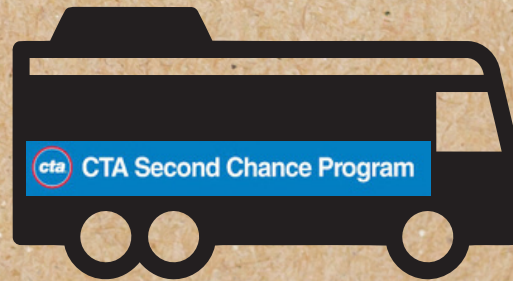


64% of PA's are from Englewood & the rest from surrounding neighborhoods

CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENTS:

As COVID-19 continued to be a serious issue in 2020, the Employment Training team made adjustments to its curriculum and programming. While this was not the year that we anticipated, we continued to grow and cultivate our community resources and partnerships in order to support our PAs with the following resources:

- Virtual Curriculum
- Lending laptops and hotspots
- First year using new ROS curriculum
- Hybrid program format
- Increasing Pay rate to maintain PA income
- PA internships/extensions
- PA job retention incentives



SUPPORTIVE SERVICE SPOTLIGHT:

In 2020, Growing Home established a partnership with CTA's Second chance program. This program is a nationally recognized program that provides valuable job skills and career opportunities to Chicago residents who often face challenges re-entering the workforce. This program provided our PAs with an opportunity to have a paid on-the-job training with CTA for 12 months. In July of 2020, 10 PAs were referred to the program.

"At Growing Home, I found out that things were possible."

- 2020 Program Graduate -

LONG-TERM IMPACT



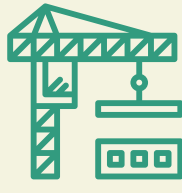
IN 2020, PA'S SECURED PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT IN THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES:



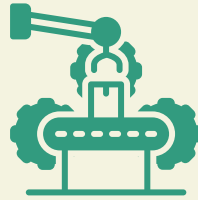
of 2020 graduates retained jobs for at least 30 days*



Retail
23%



Construction
20%



Manufacturing
17%



Food
Manufacturing
10%



Agriculture
7%

*Overall 2020 placement numbers were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of available positions in the broader job market.

IN A STUDY OF ALUMNI FROM 2016-2018, GROWING HOME'S PROGRAM WAS PROVEN TO **REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF RECIDIVISM BY 71%**

2016 - 2018 PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS WERE SURVEYED BY LOYOLA UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON SELF-SUFFICIENCY (CROSS) AS PART OF THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL "TIP" CURRICULUM:



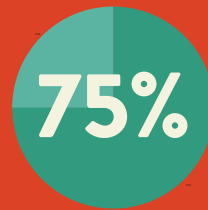
reported decrease in employment barriers



reported decrease in health and mental health barriers



reported decrease in childcare barriers



reported increase in Psychological Self-Sufficiency



reported increase in well-being of family and self

TOP 2020 EMPLOYER PARTNERS



Transforming Through Support & Perseverance: A's Story

When Growing Home Staff met “A” it was apparent that she was highly motivated and passionate about starting a program within the urban agriculture sector but was experiencing various barriers standing in her way. In her early conversations with staff, A disclosed that she was living in a recovery home and navigating her way through a new life of sobriety. A never had a driver’s license and lacked a work history due to her prior battle with substance use and previous contact with the justice system. During the intake process, A expressed needing assistance in securing a stable job for her future to support her goal of becoming self-sufficient.

A quickly became a natural leader and integral part of the cohort’s overall success. Despite A navigating a difficult living situation, she was consistent on the farm and thrived in the classroom. During the Roots of Success curriculum, A displayed her enthusiasm for education around environmental justice issues and was eager to become part of the “green” movement in Chicago. The staff immediately noticed A’s hard work and commitment to the farm work and recognized she was a vital asset to Growing Home as a whole.



While in the program, A obtained the ServSafe Food Handler License and the Roots of Success Certificate with the support of the ET staff. A shared that her dream was “to work in planting and gardening, and felt it was therapeutic in nature.” A worked tirelessly to job search and stayed open to any opportunity that would assist her in reaching her goals of becoming self-sufficient. In order to support A with her visions for the future the ET team referred her to Chicago Lights Urban Farm where she was offered the position.

Upon graduation, Growing Home recognized that A was not only flourishing in her current role as a PA but was vital to the farm as well. A was offered an Intern position with Growing Home, which allowed her to continue on a career pathway in urban agriculture while working on her stability post-graduation. As an Intern, A continued to demonstrate her allegiance and served as a leader for incoming cohorts by providing guidance and hands-on training to new PAs. Due to A’s immense success in the Intern position, she decided to apply for a permanent farm position with Growing Home and was hired on in 2021. A’s story illustrates the growth and perseverance of an individual on a career pathway of stability and passion through the support of a dedicated team. A now serves as a role model and mentor to future Growing Home cohorts and is continuing her journey in the urban agriculture division that she stated “has changed her life forever.”

Story written by Jaclyn Santi, Employment Training Coordinator, Growing Home



FOOD & FARM

...





BY-THE-NUMBERS



19K

pounds of produce were harvested by our farm team & PA's!*

50

crops of vegetables, fruit and herbs!

145

different varieties of crops grown

100%

of produce donated to neighbors, PA's & alumni in first 3 months of harvest

1.5

acres of urban land makes up our farm!



In 2019, Growing Home received the Impact Chicago Grant for \$100,000 which allowed our farm staff to increase our farm and add two new hoop houses plus outdoor growing spaces. We finished construction of the site and were able to grow over 8,000 lbs of food in this spot!

Our organic certification is still in good standing! Growing Home is still the first and only high-production USDA-certified organic farm in all of Chicago.

Despite the seed supply backorders and onsite production interruptions caused by Covid-19, we still had diverse and well performing crops in 2020. Also, despite a lot of seed orders being delayed, our seeding schedule was relatively maintained.

*Due to Covid-19 and staffing patterns, we are missing the first 2-3 months of harvest.



GROWING HOME PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION

Due to the pandemic and stay-at-home orders, Growing Home's Farm did not utilize its traditional revenue sources such as markets, with the exception of CSA's.

RESTAURANT/ WHOLESALE



Thanks to the generous \$20,000 grant from The Lee Initiative, Growing Home was able to sell produce to the following restaurants in Chicago: Smythe and the Loyalist, Kikko/Kumiko, and Inspiration Kitchens. The actual value of the produce distributed to the restaurants was \$1,893. We also sold 8lbs of okra to Majani Restaurant for \$32. In addition to these restaurant sales, Growing Home partnered for the first time with Catholic Charities and sold 720 pounds of produce at the market value of \$5,105.

CSA: COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



In 2020, Growing Home expanded our CSA offering and launched a Northside and local Englewood CSA. In total we had 94 CSA shares for the season and distributed 712 CSA boxes over the 16 weeks. This year, we sought to increase our food access locally and distributed 55 half shares to individuals in and around Englewood. Thanks to the generosity of individual donors, grantees, and community partners, the Englewood CSA was wholly funded at no cost to Englewood residents.

DONATIONS



At the beginning of 2020, we partnered with IMAN and RAGE to distribute our produce and non-perishables to the community. In addition to the Englewood CSA, Growing Home donated produce to partner organizations including: Imagine Englewood If, Urban League Boys and Girls Club, Teamwork Englewood, and Catholic Charities. We also had Community Engagement drives for seniors and local residents in the fall and winter months where we provided over 600 CSA bags and boxes of Growing Home produce. Also, We have continued to provide food to the Englewood Community by delivering an additional 100 boxes of food weekly to individuals in the neighborhood. This 14 week program began right before Christmas and we delivered 200 boxes in December. The program will continue to deliver through April 2021.



COMMUNITY





GROWING HOME COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

BY THE NUMBERS



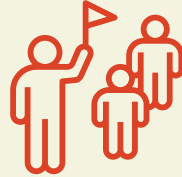
600

event attendees for our WinterFest, Roll N' Peace Half-Way Stop & Thanksgiving Gift-Away



112

volunteers during the pandemic, in small groups & with masks!



68

tours to educate and share about our farms and our work with the greater Chicago community



1,078

people reached through food access initiatives such as pop-up food drives & donations



1,511

people reached through online cooking demos on healthy living

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



ROTARY CLUB OF CHICAGO

The Rotary Club of Chicago boasts over 200 members who continue to meet on a weekly basis. It's a dedicated Foundation with a vibrant calendar of guest speakers and a strong participation in service projects both in Chicago and across the world. The Rotary Club of Chicago is carrying forward the traditions and values that were first founded over 115 years ago. Dr. Jeffery Soble and his team have really stepped up to support Growing Home's mission. Since June 2020, Rotary Club has been boots on the ground at Growing Home. They have contributed their time and expertise on many projects. They have also supported events through monetary donations. Thank you, Rotary!

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

We would love to highlight two superstar community volunteers! Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Lindsey have selflessly offered their time to Growing Home throughout this season in spite of the pandemic. Their continued support of Community Engagement and the Farm staff has not gone unnoticed. Whenever needed they jump right into the needs of Growing Home! Thank you, Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Lindsey.



EDUCATION PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Growing Home partnered with Union League Boys & Girls Club to offer a new after school experience that allowed students to learn healthier food choices and to promote gardening skills. This program rolled out on 11/10/2019 with our first session focusing on a healthy smoothie demonstration. During this lesson the participants discussed which fruit and vegetables they liked or disliked.

During this pandemic, we quickly shifted classes to a hybrid virtual format. This summer, we had the opportunity to participate in ULBGC's summer camp for weekly classes which included hands-on activities and cooking demonstrations via Zoom.

Students decorating their own Grow Bags! Glitter, paint and sequins really help dress up the plants' containers. >>

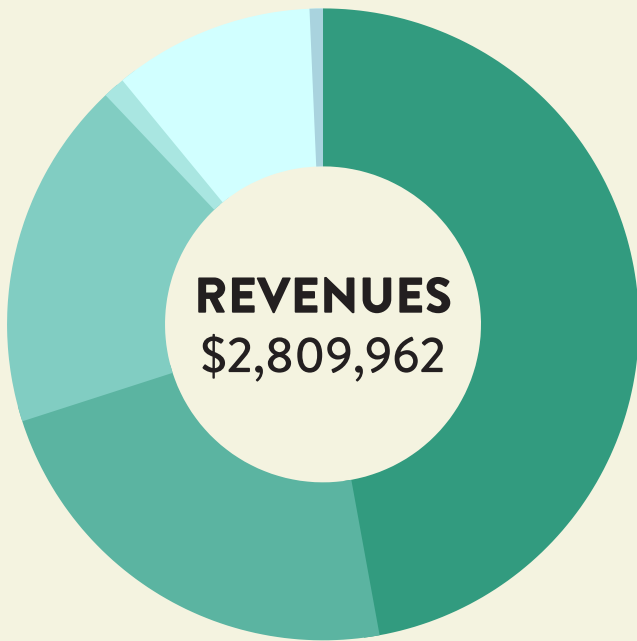


A highlight activity for the students was learning how to grow their own Swiss Chard from LaQuandra's online educational videos and then decorating and planting Swiss Chard in their own grow bags. All materials were provided to ULBGC by Growing Home to make the growing process easy and accessible.

As Ms. Hall, ULBGC Director of the program, shares: "Our kids don't always get to experience the healthy side of eating. So us partnering with Growing Home gives the kids the five essential food groups that they need. That's one of the best parts of our partnership."

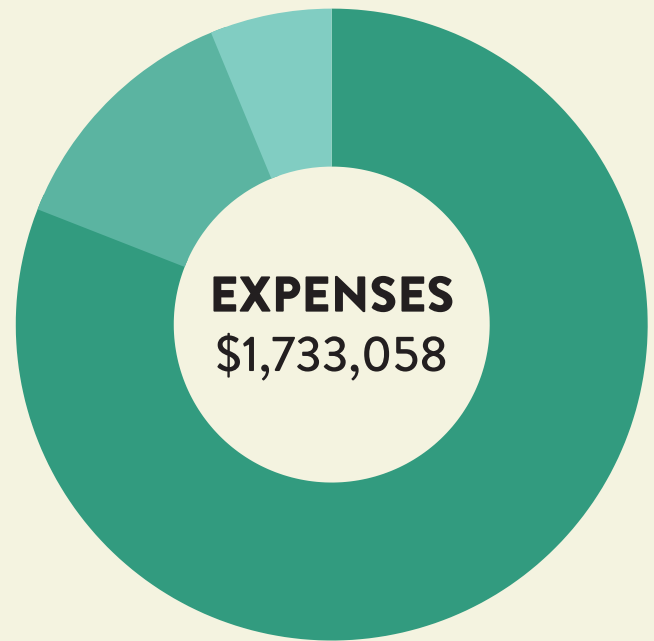
<< Growing Home's LaQuandra Fair recording a video on how to plant Swiss Chard in a grow bag that was shared with students.

GROWING HOME 2020 FINANCES



- 47% GRANTS - \$1,318,530
- 23% GOVERNMENT GRANTS - \$640,708
- 18% CONTRIBUTIONS - 500,205
- 1% IN-KIND DONATIONS - \$31,689
- 10% SPECIAL EVENTS - \$287,250
- 1% FARM SALES - \$19,089

- 81% PROGRAM - \$1,402,785
- 13% FUNDRAISING - \$222,110
- 6% MANAGEMENT - \$108,163



**GROWING HOME BELIEVES THAT EVERYONE
DESERVES A GOOD JOB AND GOOD FOOD.**

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 CIRCLE OF IMPACT DONORS!



LES BROWN FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

\$50,000 and above
Emmy and Steve Stanley

SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS

\$12,500-24,999
Jana French and Peter Gotsch
Rebecca and Daniel Kaplan
Carmella Barrett-Perry and Lamorris Perry
Laura Tilly and Derek Cottier
Anonymous

HARVESTERS

\$5,000-\$12,499
Barbara Wallace and Tom Wolfe
Diana Leifer
Doug and Jessie MacDonald
Jeffrey Imberman
Joe Niemiec
Judith Aronson and Marc Hilton
Kevin Swan and Venous Shabahang
Lynn Sheck
Marny and Matthew Zimmer
Marty Eckstein and Carol Bernstein
Pascale and Thomas Kichler
Sara and Russell Foszcz
Scott Leff
Seth and Dorothy Hemming

CULTIVATORS

\$1,000-\$4,999
Alita Carbone and Deborah Mead
Beth Woods
Betsy Gates-Alford and Peter Alford
Brittany Leonor
Carlton Guthrie
Carolyn Ulrich
Cindy Yule
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Oluade Ajayi
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Susan Morrison
Ted and Maura Kennedy
WomenUnite!





GROWING HOME

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