



gardeneers  
growing school gardens

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

## WELCOME

### DEAR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS,

As I look back on my first year as CEO of Gardeneers, I am proud of what we have accomplished. In 2021, we rebounded from setbacks due to COVID, providing garden programming at 9 schools for 969 students. We also grew 3,566 pounds of food which we distributed to families through our free after-school farm stands and through partnerships with other local organizations.

As difficult as the past two years have been, we are emerging with a renewed understanding of the importance of our work. Gardeneers helps young people lead healthier lives. The pandemic has caused us to be even more cognizant of the ill effects of comorbidities like obesity and diabetes - which are largely avoidable with healthy habits - and which were deadly long before COVID. The best way to have adults lead healthier lives is to reach them and help them build healthy habits as young people.

Additionally, the pandemic has taught us all about the importance of community. As we stayed home and kept our distance in order to protect ourselves and others, we have all missed out on an incredibly valuable part of our lives. This has been particularly difficult for young people who are building the social-emotional skills that will be critically important throughout the rest of their lives. We are proud to report that more than 90% of the teens in our programs demonstrate growth in social-emotional capacities, such as social skills or academic self-efficacy

As schools have returned to in-person education, it is abundantly obvious how valuable it is for students to be outdoors in the garden, working together to grow food for themselves and their families as part of our school garden programs. We have had more schools reach out to request our program than ever before. With your support, we are able to take more of these schools off our wait-list and provide more students with the benefits of a school garden program.

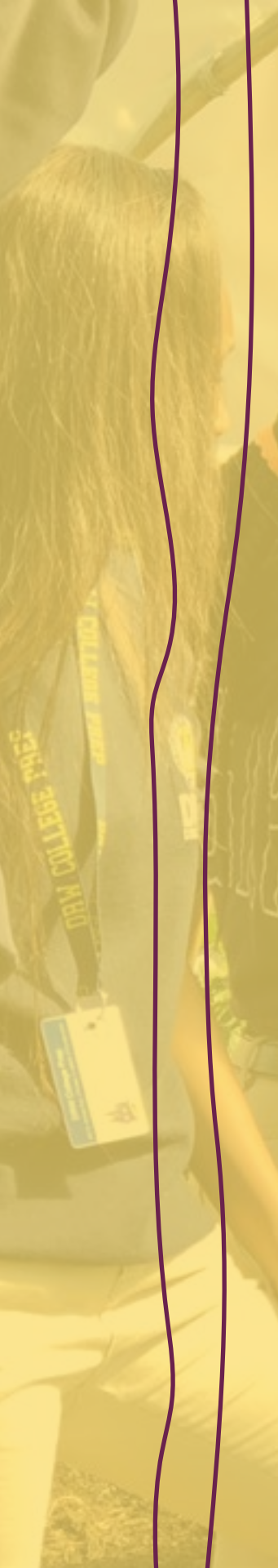
This spring, we anticipate that we will be back to our pre-COVID strength, partnering with 19 schools to provide programming to 2,000 students.

To everyone who has supported Gardeneers, you have our most sincere and heartfelt gratitude. Thank you for making this valuable work possible, and we look forward to working with you on building a more healthy and sustainable future.

In community,

**Selma Sims**  
*Gardeneers CEO*





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GARDENEERS CULTIVATES  
CUSTOMIZED SCHOOL  
GARDEN PROGRAMS TO  
ENSURE EACH SPACE,  
AND THE STUDENTS AND  
COMMUNITIES WHO CARE  
FOR IT, CONNECT WITH  
HEALTHY FOOD AND GROW  
TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

2021

As, *Selma Sims*, took the helm as our new CEO, we bounce back from COVID. By the fall, we had resumed programs at **9 schools for over 900 students**.

2019

We worked to *deepen* our partnerships and *strengthen* our operations as an organization. *We improved* our data collection, and upgraded our curriculum.

2017

We adjusted our strategy *to form deeper partnerships* with each school and **enable more students** at each school to participate. Moved to our current *headquarters in North Lawndale*. Acquired *Homan Rails Farm*, enabling us to **double our food production capabilities**.

2015

Moved into a shared office space with *Growing Power Chicago*. Kicked off our partnership with *Pilot Light* at *Smyth Elementary*. We started the year with **programs at 9 partner schools**.

2020

One week into our spring programs, schools shut down because of COVID-19. We transitioned entirely to virtual learning for most of the year. We *distributed grow-at-home kits* to families. We focused on *maximizing the output of our growing spaces*, and we **doubled the amount of food grown**. We partnered with other local nonprofits to get the produce distributed to those in need. By fall, one school had returned to in-person programming.

2018

First year as an AmeriCorps host site. Our first cohort of AmeriCorps service members helped us work with *more students than ever before* - **2000 students at 19 schools**.

2016

Kicked off partnership with After School Matters. **Hosted the first Growing Healthy Futures Gala**. We started the year with **19 partner schools**, working with most of them only one day per week.

2014

*Gardeneers* was founded. We began programs at our first two partner schools, reaching just shy of **100 students**.







HABLE  
VIGERATED

FRESH  
PRODUCE

1/2 BU.

GROWN & PACKED BY

PRODUCE OF U.S.A.  
UNLESS OTHERWISE MARKED

PRODUCE OF CANADA

FRESH  
PRODUCE

HANDLE  
FRESH  
PRODUCE  
WITH CARE





## WHO WE ARE

Gardeneers was created to give Chicago students in **communities experiencing food injustice** equal access to fresh produce and food education. We are a team of *dedicated* **Garden Educators** who work directly with students in gardens and farms at our partner schools on a weekly basis.



## WHAT WE DO

Gardeneers is the only Chicago-based nonprofit providing **full-service**, customized school garden programs with **ongoing support**. We work with schools, their communities, and community partners across the city of Chicago.



## MISSION

Gardeneers works with Chicago's south- and west-side schools and communities to contribute positively to the larger food system. We do this by **supporting youth in our school garden and farm programs** to build their own knowledge, skills, and habits to become leaders who care for themselves, their environment, and their communities.



Students help cook  
the greens they harvested  
from their garden.



If you've known **Gardeneers** for any amount of time, you may have noticed a change in how we talk about our work. In the past, we've talked around the root of our work, but rarely outwardly naming systemic racism as the true cause of food inequity.

Our work has *always been* about **bringing social and racial justice to neighborhoods who've been left in the margins**. Today more than ever, we are outwardly transparent about this core of our work.

By acknowledging the reason for our work, we are acknowledging that our work is about *more than* growing food, but about using the act of growing food to **positively impact our communities** in a multitude of ways. Our work, although physically in the garden reaches far beyond it. These seemingly small acts of growing in school gardens contribute to a more just food system for all humans.

NUTRITION

COMMUNITY

NATURE

## LOGIC MODEL

### INPUTS

Staff

Schools

Youth

Families

Garden and Farm Spaces

Gardening & Farming

Equipment & Resources

Volunteers

Community Members

Community Leaders

Philanthropic Funding

Government Funding

### ACTIVITIES

School partnership agreements

Staff recruiting, training, development, and support

Volunteers, staff, and students care for and maintain gardens

Staff and students engage in weekly lessons centered on nutrition, community, and nature

Staff-led and student-supported free farm stands at schools

Fundraising through charitable donations, grant-making, sponsorship, and events

### OUTPUTS

Gardeneers engaged with **969 students** at **9 schools** in 2021 (down from 2000 students at 19 schools pre-pandemic)

Students participate in **more than 8,000 hours** learning in school garden programs in 2021

Gardeneers grew and distributed **3,566 pounds** of locally grown fruits and vegetables to our school communities

### OUTCOMES

Youth improve in their understanding of basic nutrition

Youth learn how to grow food and how to incorporate garden produce into recipes

**70%** of students said our program **helped them change their behavior** or made them want to change their behavior to *improve their health*

**79%** of students try a **new food** or vegetable during our program


**90%** of teens in demonstrate growth in social-emotional capacities after participating in a Gardeneers program

**100%** of school leaders agree that Gardeneers has had a positive overall impact on their school

### IMPACT

Gardeneers graduates lead healthy, abundant lives throughout which they prioritize caring for the Earth and its inhabitants



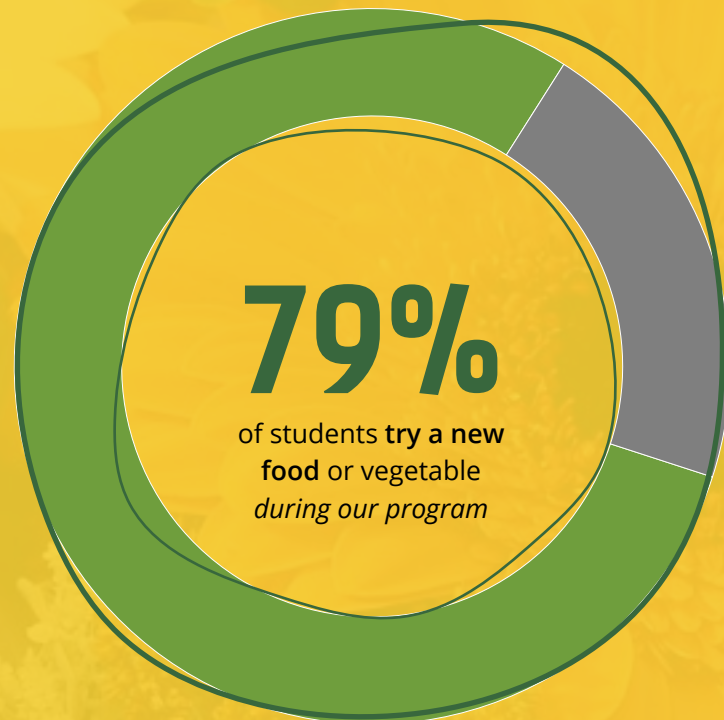
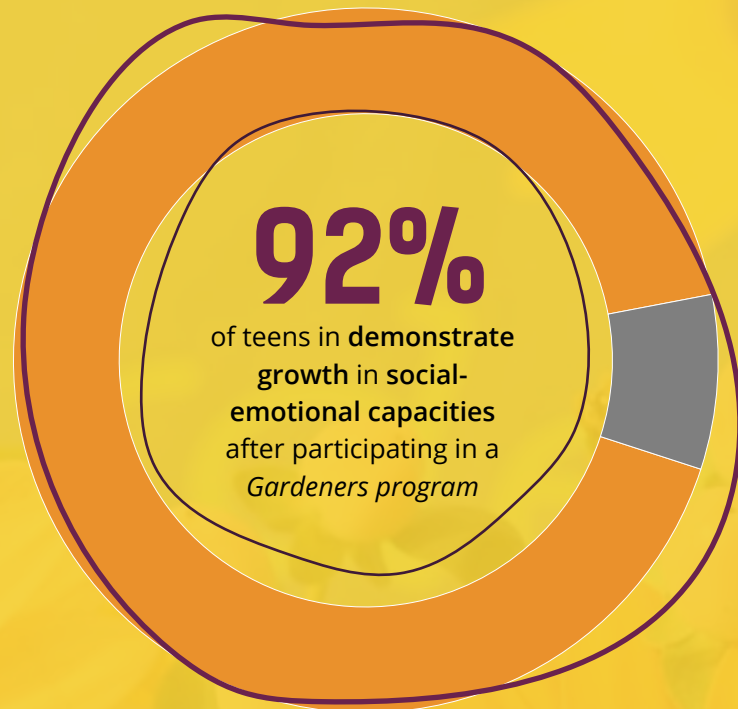
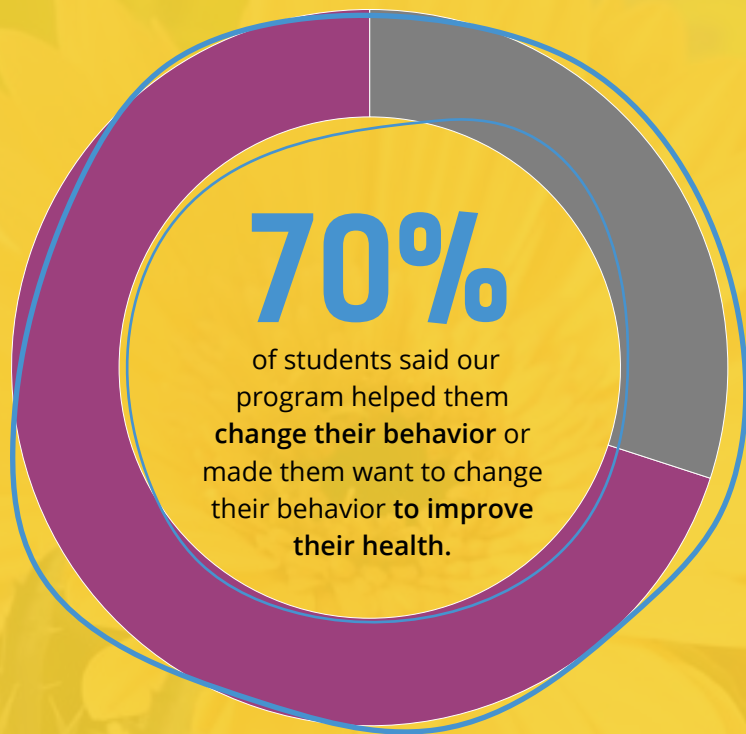


**A school garden** is a living laboratory where students are active participants in their learning. Gardeneers empowers students to connect with healthy food through experiential, garden-based learning.

**Our programming** is offered March through November, and includes opportunities for students (grades K-12) to engage with gardens during the school year and throughout the summer.



## SURVEY SAYS...







100%

of school leaders agree that Gardeneers has had a positive overall impact on their school.






## SCIENCE BEHIND SCHOOL GARDENS

**"School gardens have potential to affect fruit and vegetable availability in the home environment."**



Wells NM, Meyers LA, and LE, et al. The capacity effect of school gardens on fruit and vegetable availability in the home: A randomized controlled trial in low-income urban elementary schools. *Prev Med*. 2018;112:152-159. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2018.03.007

 gardeneers



**"Gardening is seen as promoting teamwork and cooperation and breaks down social barriers"**

Ohly, Heather et al. "A systematic review of the health and well-being impacts of school gardening: synthesis of quantitative and qualitative evidence." *BMC public health* vol. 16 286. 25 Mar. 2016. doi:10.1186/s12889-016-2941-0

**"Experiencing fun and enjoyment appeared to play a vital role in children's motivation to actively participate."**



Nury E, Sari A, Dekstra C, Seidel JC, Deodding C. Sowing Seeds for Healthier Diets: Children's Perspectives on School Gardening. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2017;14(7):688. Published 2017 Jun 25. doi:10.3390/ijerph14070688

**"School gardens as a component of nutrition education can increase fruit and vegetable knowledge and cause behavior change among children."**



Reinherz AM, Johnson-Greene N, Shumway D, Strueman B. School gardens: A teacher-led nutrition approach for a nutrition curriculum to increase fruit and vegetable knowledge, perceptions, and consumption among second-grade students. *J Child Health Care*. 2017;22(1):1-11. doi:10.1177/0898010116642005.06.000



TOMATO

BLACK  
MAGIC  
KALE

Basil

Purple Cherokee  
Tomato

broccoli

RV  
y





## STAFF

ADAM

ALEXIS

ALEXY

ANGELICA

CARMINA

JARED

LEAH

REBECCA

SARA

SELMA

## AMERICORPS SERVICE MEMBERS

ALI

BEC

CALDY

CAMI

DAWN

MIKAILA

NATE



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

ADAM ZMICK

AMY ZEMNICK

ANDREW CALCUTT

JESS ZANDER

KAREN MALKIN

MAY TSUPROS

NATASHEE SCOTT

WAYNE WILLIAMS

“The Gardeneers are some of the most **dedicated people** I’ve seen in the school gardening arena. They take the resources which are available and make the most of everything given to them.

Gardeneers is exactly the support we need for our **overextended teachers** and **hungry to learn students.**”

— Annamaria L,  
Community Member



## FINANCIALS

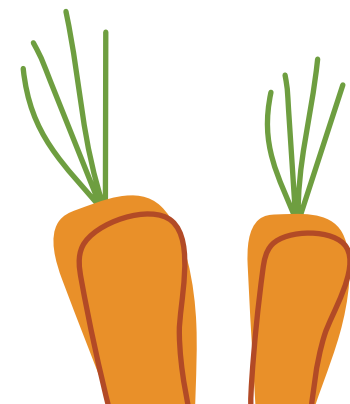
### GARDENEERS PROFIT & LOSS JANUARY - DECEMBER 2021

INCOME	
Foundation Contributions	\$261,156
Program Service Fees	\$116,276
Corporate Contributions	\$90,752
Government Contracts	\$80,553
Individual Giving	\$20,057
Special Event Revenue	\$18,060
Refunds and Allowances	-\$43
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 586,812</b>
EXPENSES	
Salaries & Wages	\$293,526
Payroll Taxes	\$76,328
Benefits	\$38,805
Payroll & Workers Comp	\$5,274
<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL</b>	<b>\$413,934</b>
Social Media, graphic design & human resources	\$31,608
Grant Writer	\$26,100
Accounting & Audit Fees	\$19,000
Virtual Assistant	\$7,508
<b>TOTAL PROFESSIONAL FEES</b>	<b>\$84,217</b>
Rent, Utilities, & Office Supplies	\$21,735
Staff Development & Culture	\$11,557
Vehicle & Travel Expenses	\$10,028
Event Expenses	\$5,496
Technology	\$5,448
Advertising & Marketing	\$5,300
Insurance	\$4,800
Taxes, Fees, and interest	\$1,485
Food & meals	\$1,344
<b>TOTAL OCCUPANCY &amp; OPERATIONS</b>	<b>\$67,194</b>
<b>Materials &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>\$33,791</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>	<b>\$9,182</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$608,318</b>
<b>NET OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>-\$21,506</b>
OTHER INCOME	
Restricted Funds Released	-\$35,000
Misc. Income - PPP Loan Forgiveness	\$135,280
<b>TOTAL OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>\$100,280</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$78,774</b>

**72%**  
PROGRAMS

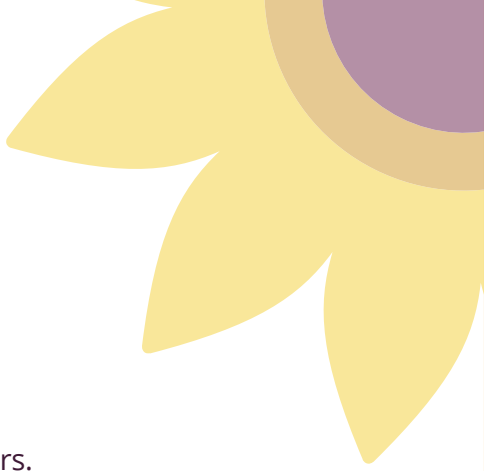
**12%**  
ADMIN

**15%**  
FUNDRAISING









**Ensuring the success** of each school garden takes a great deal of support. We are always looking for new donors, partners, board members, and volunteers.

For additional information on ways you can support Gardeneers visit [www.gardeneers.org](http://www.gardeneers.org). While you're there, fill out a contact form so we can keep in touch.

**DONORS** are critical to the success of Gardeneers school garden programs. A \$300 donation supports the garden materials and curriculum necessary for one student for a single growing season. A \$2,000 donation supports the garden education of one entire classroom.

**PARTNERS** come in many forms, including corporate sponsors with volunteer opportunities in namesake school gardens, with universities for program research and service work, and with companies for in-kind donations. Have an idea for a Gardeneers partnership? Let's connect!

**BOARD MEMBERS** and Junior Board Members are volunteer-based positions that help grow the organization. Responsibilities include advising the organization, increasing visibility of Gardeneers' work, and supporting fundraising efforts and events throughout Chicago.

**VOLUNTEERS** are an important piece in sustaining our school garden programs. There are a multitude of ways to get involved as a volunteer, from a weekly commitment working with students at a school, to seasonal volunteer events with corporate and community groups.





# WE EXTEND A *SPECIAL* THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS!



ADVOCATES FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE  
AFTER SCHOOL MATTERS  
AMD FAMILY FUND  
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
AMERICORPS  
ANDREW CALCUTT  
ANGELA MYERS  
B&J ASSOCIATES INC  
BRETT TSUPROS  
CAROL BARNETT  
CAROL OPPENHEIM TRUST  
CHICAGO GROCERY GROWERS  
CHICAGO GROWS FOOD  
CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
CHIDITAROD  
CLIF BAR  
CONAGRA BRANDS  
CONSORTIUM TO LOWER OBESITY IN  
CHICAGO CHILDREN (CLOCC)  
DIANE PALANICA  
EGERTER FAMILY FOUNDATION  
EPSTEIN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
THE GREENSPAN FAMILY  
GRETCHEN SLUSSER  
THE GUNN FAMILY  
HARRISON STREET  
HBS 2011 SECTION C  
HEIRS FARM  
ILLINOIS CHARITABLE TRUST  
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
JAMIE SIENKIEWICZ  
JEAN CONCANNON  
JEFF WILLIAMS  
JEROME H STONE FAMILY FOUNDATION  
JONATHAN PAUL  
JULIE CROSS  
KAREN MALKIN  
KEVIN SUTTON  
LINCOLN PARK ZOO  
LUMPKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION  
MONDELEZ  
MUFG UNION BANK FOUNDATION  
NANCY GAROON LEIGNER  
NATIONAL RECREATION FOUNDATION  
NATURE'S PATH  
NEVINS FAMILY FUND  
PATAGONIA  
PHALAROPE FOUNDATION  
ROBERT AND CAROL LIETZ  
SCHNEIDER NATIONAL FOUNDATION  
SEABURY FOUNDATION  
TEDD WARDEN  
UNFI  
WALTER S MANDER FOUNDATION  
WESTSIDE CULTURAL FOUNDATION  
WHOLE KIDS FOUNDATION  
WILLIAM GEE  
WORKDAY, INC  
THE ZANDER FAMILY  
THE ZMICK FAMILY



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growing school gardens

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Supporting Student  
Nutrition



Experiencing  
Nature



Connecting with  
Communities

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