



WASATCH
COMMUNITY
GARDENS

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Empowering people to grow and eat healthy, organic, local food.



From the Director

Looking out my office window at our beautiful Campus, I regularly have to rub my eyes and look again to make sure I'm not dreaming. The more time I spend at the helm of this inspiring organization, the more I come to understand the strength, joy, and community that is Wasatch Community Gardens (WCG). Your trust and encouragement have been a mainstay as I have worked to deepen my knowledge of WCG, its supporters, and the communities we serve.

2021 was, of course, far from ordinary, and the year continued to challenge us all to dig deeper, work harder, and identify and prioritize the needs of our community. I am continually encouraged by the unparalleled investment you – as a gardener, donor, program participant, volunteer or Plant Sale shopper – have made to ensure that we at WCG can continue the important work of building a community where everyone values and has access to growing and eating healthy and delicious food.

Looking back on my first months, I have been amazed by the programming taking place and touched by the deep and earnest engagement of the community. Prior to starting with WCG, I was given a tour of the almost finished Campus. Serendipitously, the second of our three Sabores de Mi Patria (Flavors of My Homeland) events was taking place as my tour finished, and I was able to take part in *iSomos lo que comemos: La Milpa!* (We are what we eat: La Milpa!). It was a joy listening to our partners and participants discuss the importance of food as not only a form of nourishment, but a connection between cultures, communities, and each other.

At the end of the growing season, and with some time under my belt, the third Sabores de Mi Patria event took place: *Celebración de Cosecha* (Harvest Celebration). We welcomed the autumn solstice by harvesting from the "Milpa" garden side by side – sharing stories of our growing season, exclaiming in celebration when a gourd was found beneath the swaying corn stalks, and honoring our harvest together. It was a beautiful and meaningful way to begin my journey with WCG and this community.

Looking ahead, and with your support, you can expect WCG to bloom where it is planted in the coming year and beyond. Programming is back in person, many in partnership with organizations that align with our mission. My leadership will focus on equity and food access, sharing our proven models with others, and deepening partnerships – especially with those who can teach us how to better serve our community. Finally, I will ensure that our growth and programming remain intentional, sustainable, equitable, and always mission-focused: to empower people to grow and eat healthy, organic, local food.

As I reflect on the work we accomplished as a community in 2021, and all that remains to be done to make our mission and vision a reality, I think of Robin Kimmerer's words in her impactful novel *Braiding Sweetgrass*: "Action on behalf of life transforms. Because the relationship between self and the world is reciprocal, it is not a question of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting. As we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us."

I'll see you in the garden!

Warmly,

Georgina Griffith-Yates

About Us

WCG's mission is to empower people to grow and eat healthy, organic, local food. Since 1989, we have provided children, adults, and families in Salt Lake County with access to land and education for growing and eating fresh produce, while building and nurturing community connections through gardening and healthy food. Our hands-on, garden-based programming takes place in our new Campus teaching and demonstration gardens, community gardens, school gardens, youth teaching gardens, and job training farm.

Our programming is effective largely because of the strong community partnerships we have developed over the years. This includes partnerships with Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, the Salt Lake City School District, and numerous nonprofits, social service agencies, and businesses.

WCG hosts community events throughout the year aimed at educating Salt Lake County residents about gardening, healthy eating, and building community. Annual events include the Spring Plant Sale, Urban Garden & Farm Tour during the summer months, and Tomato Sandwich Party in September.

2021 proved to be yet another pivotal year for WCG. Amidst the backdrop of an ongoing pandemic, we shed our skin as “the little nonprofit that can” and moved into the organization’s first permanent home: the Wasatch Community Gardens’ Campus. We were able to do so thanks to the resilience and generosity of our community. In turn, we grew food, offered garden land access, and administered programs to this same community, in constant pursuit of our vision of a community where everyone values and has access to healthy, delicious food.

2021 Numbers

11,000+

community members were served by WCG's programs, events, and produce donations

6,784

people and counting viewed our webinars and other virtual programming

THE MAJORITY OF OUR PROGRAM

PARTICIPANTS were from low- and moderate-income households

1,214

volunteers contributed 6,770 hours of service to WCG

40,000+

seedlings were sold at our Spring Plant Sale and distributed to community gardeners and partners

6

acres of beautiful, productive green space were maintained across Salt Lake County to provide community access to healthy, organic, local food

“Thank you, Wasatch Community Gardens, for all that you do to provide a place for community members to cultivate the skill of, and love for, gardening! My husband and I remember enjoying big, juicy tomato basil sandwiches at the Tomato Sandwich Party at the Grateful Tomato Garden on one of our first dates. We buy plants from the Annual Plant Sale, and our family loves gardening and cooking with what we grow. We definitely have a soft spot in our hearts for Wasatch Community Gardens!”

– Willow Luker Jeppson, Donor and Plant Sale shopper

Community Garden Program

In 2021, WCG managed 16 community gardens throughout Salt Lake County and provided community members with garden space, resources, and education. These community gardens help to preserve urban green space, strengthen community bonds, promote healthier living, and provide access to fresh, healthy food for Salt Lake County residents. Throughout the year, we worked with Salt Lake City and interested community members to design and construct a new community garden at Harrison Avenue and 700 East; the garden opened in spring 2022. We also provided leadership training, resources, and garden materials to independent garden projects.



38 community and school gardens received donated vegetable seedlings from our Green Phoenix Farm

51 gardeners of refugee background participated in our gardens through our partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and its New Roots Program

531 households - 60% of which are low- to moderate-income per federal standards - grew their own food in our community gardens

53,339 pounds of organic produce, valued at \$120,255, were grown by our community gardeners

Scan the code to learn about our Community Garden Program



"[Thank you for] the amazing opportunity for my family to put our labor into our food this year. It gave us a refuge from the pandemic and a place where we could just be. My daughters (6, 8 and 9) loved the empowerment of making decisions about their garden and the rewards of their hard work. We love WCG and we cannot say enough positive words about WCG." – Heather Polikoff, Community Gardener

Community Education Program

WCG's Community Education Program empowered community members with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to successfully grow and eat healthy, delicious food. Our free garden coaching sessions via Facebook Live offered interactive education to beginning and expert gardeners at a time when growing one's own food became more critical than ever. Nine of our most popular in-person workshops were also transitioned to a live webinar format. This format allowed for COVID-safe education, and the majority of these webinars were made available in an on-demand format for student access throughout the year.

WCG again worked with PBS Utah's Modern Gardener to transition our annual Urban Garden & Farm Tour to a video format, allowing gardeners to learn about kid-friendly pollinator gardens, eating from your garden year-round, and gardening techniques from a New Roots community gardener. New Roots is a food and land access program for refugees and new Americans, and a project of Salt Lake City's IRC.

Finally, through our Farm Fresh Program partnership with Valley Behavioral Health, WCG provided low-income individuals with severe mental illness with access to organic produce and healthy snacks.



3 Urban Garden & Farm Tour virtual, educational garden tours were created with PBS Utah's Modern Gardener, amassing 1,653 views and counting



6 short educational videos were created and posted to our YouTube channel, providing gardening tips to 612 community members and counting



9 Facebook Live garden coaching sessions allowed us to educate and interact in real-time with 209 community members; these sessions amassed 658 engagements and counting

"I wish I had done this [workshop] years ago when I started gardening. I've learned more tonight than I have in the last 5 years or more. Thank you so much!" – Jason, workshop attendee



Scan the code to follow along on our virtual 2021 Urban Garden & Farm Tour.

50 Valley Plaza residents received weekly deliveries of fresh produce grown at our Green Phoenix Farm, with an estimated retail value of \$5,865. 2021 deliveries included 366 pints of cherry tomatoes, 331 bundles of carrots, 861 cucumbers, 438 pints of lunchbox peppers, and 241 pears

334 community members attended one or more webinar workshops

Youth and School Garden Program

In 2021, we continued to offer COVID-friendly “in a box” remote learning programming for all of our Youth & School Garden programs in order to keep youth participants and their families connected, learning, and engaged with growing and eating fresh, healthy food during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our offerings continued to help cultivate a curiosity about food and nature and inspire participants to make healthy choices for themselves, their community, and the environment.

We continued to offer Sabores de Mi Patria (Flavors of My Homeland) workshops through our partnership with Artes de México en Utah at the new Wasatch Community Gardens' Campus to celebrate food, culture, and tradition. Participants learned about growing and eating culturally relevant crops. Seeds harvested from the “Milpa” gardens in 2021 will be planted and shared with community members in 2022. We also hosted our first Día de Muertos event with Artes de México en Utah in November at our Campus. Families were able to set up ofrendas (offerings) in our new “Growing Traditions” garden space to honor their loved ones and share their culture and traditions with their children and families.

1,350 children and families received organic produce, hands-on activities, and/or educational opportunities through the Youth and School Garden Program

1,000 children from primarily low- and moderate-income households received regular access to fresh produce and activities through our “Youth Garden Club in a Box” programming in partnership with YouthCity and YWCA after-school programs

96 children and families received “Summer Camp in a Box” kits filled with produce, activities, crafts, and healthy snack recipes



“We are so excited about our partnership with WCG. The produce and activities provided in the 'Family Garden Club [in a Box]' kits support our students, staff and community members. The crates full of fruits and vegetables allow us to learn about seasonal produce, and planting food at school gives our children purpose and nutrition.” – *Karina Villalba, Family & School Collaboration Specialist, Backman Elementary*



100 families from Backman and Rose Park Elementary schools received regular deliveries of “Family Garden Club in a Box” kits containing fresh produce and family-friendly activities in English and Spanish

60 community members attended an in-person Sabores de Mi Patria workshop, gaining hands-on experience planting seeds and harvesting produce; the first workshop was also broadcast on Facebook Live and has received 982 views and counting

100+ estimated community members visited our Día de Muertos Ofrenda; nine families participated in the event, and more than 50 community members attended the closing ceremony



“Thanks, WCG, for all of your support with our Fairmont Garden this year. We grew tomatoes, acorn squash, and eggplant! Thanks, too, for the deliveries of fresh produce and activities for our youth participants. I’m sending some photos of the kids making salad and BLTs.” – *Colin Crebs, Community Program Manager, YouthCity Fairmont Park (2021 Youth Garden Club partner)*



Job Training Program

In 2021, WCG continued to provide opportunities for women living in poverty at our 1.4-acre Green Phoenix Farm in downtown Salt Lake City. The farm provides a safe place for participants to restore their sense of confidence and re-establish their lives and livelihood while learning about growing and eating fresh, healthy food.

Our Green Team Job Training Program provides employment, mentoring, and job training to women facing homelessness through a partnership with Advantage Services. By working part-time, undergoing job/life skills training, and engaging in one-on-one advocacy and support, our Green Team participants leverage the farm experience as a way to address barriers in their lives. The program serves as a crucial “stepping stone” for women who are working towards the goal of stable housing and employment.

Produce grown through our Job Training Program at the farm feeds participants and supports other WCG programs serving youth and adults from low-income households. Our Green Phoenix Farm also regularly donates produce to other local nonprofits and partners. WCG believes in the healing power of the garden and the difference a connection with food, nature, and other people can make in individual lives.



9 women were served by the Green Team Job Training Program in 2021. During their time at the farm, each participant in the program had access to 150 farm-fresh meals, 6 guest speakers, 10 cooking workshops, and 9 off-site field trips, all focused around self-sufficiency goals and personal wellness

88% of Green Team participants left the program with stable housing

78% of Green Team participants attained reliable employment within one month of the program

13 community agencies received food from the farm, including Advantage Services, Comunidades Unidas, Neighborhood House, Palmer Court, Volunteers of America, and YWCA. Through these partners, WCG increased access to fresh, local, organic food for families in our community.

“[I learned about] relating farming to real life - you’re always finding solutions in gardening and you never know what life’s going to give you. If you can relate farming to life, you know there’s more than one way to get around this problem.” – *Green Team participant*

Green Phoenix Farm

WCG's Green Phoenix Farm provides employment and mentorship for women facing homelessness through the Green Team Job Training Program. While the focus of the farm's efforts is to support Green Team participants, the farm itself boasts a wide array of forward-thinking ecological design features and serves as a model for what is possible when growing food in an urban environment. The environmental benefits and regenerative agriculture practices at the farm include restoring the ecology of a vacant urban lot; composting; hand scale, no-till agriculture; organic growing methods; the installation of beneficial insect habitat; waterwise irrigation; and a focus on carbon farming, a method of farming that returns carbon from the atmosphere to the soil.

\$62,118 worth of produce, herbs, and flowers was produced by the Green Phoenix Farm in 2021, all of which served WCG programs or community partners

\$9,435 worth of seed was provided to Snake River Seed Cooperative, a collection of small farms located in the Great Basin Bioregion that grow seed for our region, resulting in plants bred to thrive in our often challenging climate

17 TIMES more produce was grown at the Green Phoenix Farm compared to the average yield per acre for vegetable farms in the United States



Wasatch Community Gardens' Campus

Our organization has been working towards our dream of building an urban agriculture center that would create a centralized space for our gardens, education programs and offices since 2010. This dream was realized in 2021 with the completion of construction of the Wasatch Community Gardens' Campus and the official moving in of our programs and offices into the space. The Wasatch Community Gardens' Campus project embodies historic preservation and adaptive reuse, conservation of thriving open space in the heart of the Central City neighborhood, 8 micro-units of affordable housing that achieves net zero energy use, and new and expanded indoor and outdoor garden and education spaces where we can educate, collaborate, inspire, and welcome all in the community to grow, eat, and prepare fresh, healthy, delicious food. It is a tremendous achievement for our organization, and we are excited for all of the opportunities that it presents for WCG and the larger community. A grand opening event welcoming the community to the new Campus is planned for June 2022.

THE \$6.2 MILLION Campus project was completed on time and within budget

OVER 400 INDIVIDUALS and foundations supported the project, with donations ranging from \$5 - \$2,000,000

10% MORE YOUTH AND ADULT COMMUNITY MEMBERS will be served annually by the new and expanded teaching spaces at the Campus

"Wasatch Community Gardens perfectly addresses the goals of the Alternative Visions Fund: to engage community in garden education for children and adults and provide opportunities to learn about growing food in soil naturally enriched by using sustainable growing methods and reducing or eliminating chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It is our hope that the new Campus will be a springboard of hope and joy for Salt Lake area community members."
— *Alternative Visions Fund, \$2,000,000 Campus Donor*

2021 Annual Support Donors



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Please contact Laura at 801-810-7238 to learn more about supporting WCG or to report an error in your listing.

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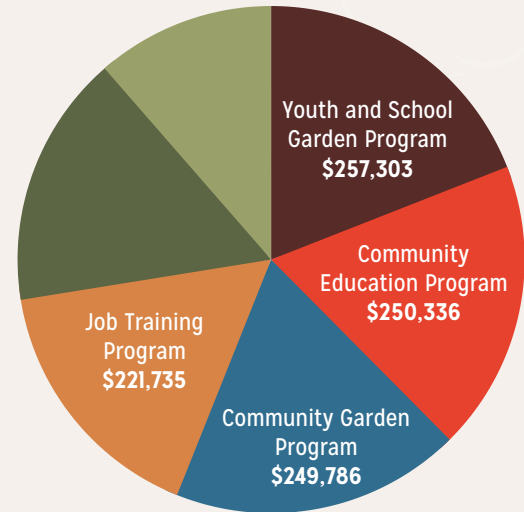
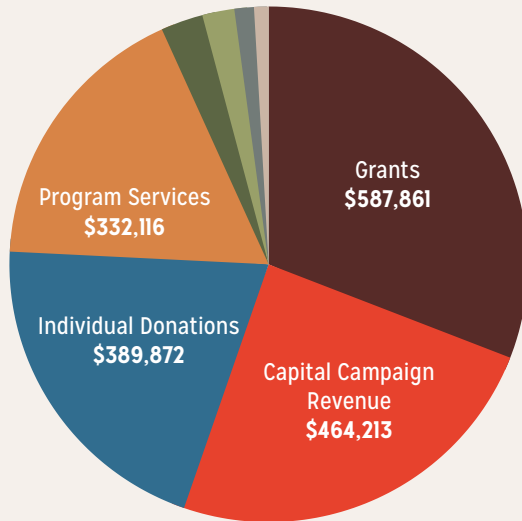
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2021 Financials



TOTAL REVENUES **\$1,902,628**

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$1,351,331**

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