



SUSTAINABLE FOOD CENTER

Annual Report for July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016



GROW.SHARE.PREPARE.

Another fiscal year has come to a close, and our work in this local food system steadily grows. We have seen schoolchildren experience the joy of fresh produce they grew in their school gardens, farmers gain more access points to customers, and cooking class participants change the way they feed their families. We're so humbled to walk alongside the community members that we serve as they determine the best ways to alleviate hunger, improve their health and promote sustainable agriculture.

Our board of directors has played a pivotal role in overseeing agency risk and working with staff to strategize about programming, earned revenue, and fiscal soundness. Our volunteers have dedicated numerous hours at our farmers' markets, community events, and in the teaching garden. Companies are engaging with us to provide their employees with worksite wellness benefits that range from farmer produce deliveries to team building activities in our kitchen and gardens. And with each touch, another individual becomes a champion of this good food movement.

We have a long way to go and many routes to get there! It truly takes a village, and that means providing our services with a food justice lens. To quote our friends at Rural Advancement Foundation International, "In this moment, we renew our commitments to justice, equality, and sustainability now and for generations to come . . . we renew our deep conviction that creating the world that we all want to live in will take bringing people together, often across social divides and through unlikely partnerships, to find our common ground."

Thank you for being our partner in this critical work!



Ronda Rutledge
Executive Director



Ralph Hasson
SFC Board President



SFC'S GROW LOCAL PROGRAM

Food is homegrown.

Since our inception more than forty years ago as Austin Community Gardens, it has been central to SFC's mission to connect people to each other and to the source of their food through gardening. Growing our own food empowers us to make healthier food choices, builds community connections, and preserves biodiversity and natural resources.

SFC's Grow Local program carries on our agency's foundational work, inspiring central Texas residents to grow their own food by connecting individuals, families, and communities with the knowledge, resources, and space needed to start and sustain food gardens. During fall and spring planting seasons, Grow Local offers hands-on, holistic gardening classes taught by trained community-based facilitators. Both free and fee-based, these classes focus on the challenges specific to gardening in Central Texas' hot, dry climate, and they foster sustainable gardening practices. They include Austin's only Spanish-language organic gardening class, and are offered both at SFC and at sites throughout the Austin area.

Grow Local's Spread the Harvest program provides free gardening resources, including seeds, plants and compost, to low-income gardeners, and it encourages gardeners to share their harvest with friends, neighbors and food pantries. Grow Local also supports the creation and long term success of school and community gardens by offering School and Community Garden Leadership Trainings, consultation, and site visits for school and community garden leaders as well as a School Garden Classroom Training for educators on how to incorporate the school garden as a teaching tool for any subject. For the first time this year, Grow Local added a Building Strong Garden Teams training, which equips community and school garden leaders with strategies for successful collaboration. Also new this year, SFC collaborated with the Austin Independent School District and the City of Austin to offer a professional development workshop for teachers about how to create community gardens on school grounds. Finally, Grow Local released two education publications for school garden leaders, a School Garden Start-up Guide, and a School Garden Activity Guide.



SFC'S GROW LOCAL PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

JP'S PEACE, LOVE & HAPPINESS FOUNDATION TEACHING GARDEN AT SFC

At the J.P.'s Peace, Love, and Happiness Foundation Teaching Garden, Grow Local hosts hands-on classes, school field trips, and tours that showcase sustainable food gardening techniques and offer children and adults opportunities for interactive learning about food gardening. Community volunteers are integral to the success of the Teaching Garden, keeping it well maintained and productive through regular workdays throughout the year. This was a year full of exciting developments at the Teaching Garden, since a number of new elements were installed. These include:

- Two 1,200-gallon rainwater cisterns, which are used to capture rainwater for the Teaching Garden and showcase rainwater harvesting infrastructure.
- A Teaching Apiary with four honeybee hives, cared for in partnership with Austin Bees and Two Hives Honey. Two Hives Honey also serves as guest teacher for Grow Local's beekeeping classes.
- A Children's Sensory Garden, featuring elements to engage children in exploration using all five senses.
- A greenhouse with a design appropriate for the Central Texas climate, which will be used to start seedlings for the Teaching Garden and for teaching propagation at Grow Local's gardening classes.
- Interpretive signage throughout the Teaching Garden, which facilitates self-guided educational tours.
- **273** community volunteers, including corporate employee groups, service groups, and individual volunteers, helped install and maintain the Teaching Garden at 14 workdays
- **200** lbs of produce was harvested
- **45** lbs of produce was used in SFC's The Happy Kitchen/*La Cocina Alegre*® classes
- **81** lbs of produce was donated to local shelter Casa Marianella or to Teaching Garden volunteers
- **7** school-year field trips allowed 175 students to participate in food gardening activities at the Teaching Garden



SFC'S GROW LOCAL PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Grow Local served 34,958 individuals this year through Spread the Harvest.

SPREAD THE HARVEST

- 75% of Spread the Harvest participants served were low-income
- 131 schools were provided with free resources to help them carry out their school garden project
- 12,364 garden fresh produce meal equivalents were shared by Spread the Harvest participants
- 84% of Spread the Harvest participants chose “a lot” or “considerably” when asked, “To what extent has Spread the Harvest made it easier for you to grow your own food?”
- 77% of Spread the Harvest participants chose “a lot” or “considerably” when asked, “To what extent has Spread the Harvest made it easier for you to eat healthy food?”
- Compost, seeds, transplants, and organic fertilizer were distributed for free to 453 local residents at Resource Give-Away Days

CLASSES & TRAININGS

- 31 garden education classes and 6 garden leadership trainings were provided
- 2 Introduction to Food Gardening classes were provided in Spanish
- 415 individuals attended Grow Local classes and trainings
- 30 classes and trainings were hosted at SFC’s Community Room & Teaching Garden.

COMMUNITY & SCHOOL GARDEN ASSISTANCE

- 166 school garden groups and 64 community garden groups received education, resources, or other assistance for their garden projects
- 13 community gardens received Grow Local fiscal sponsorship
- Community members shared information, resources, and support about school and community gardens through the Coalition of Austin Community Garden and the Central Texas School Garden Network (Grow Local staff provide administrative support for these coalitions)
- 2 Coalition of Austin Community Gardens panel discussions, which featured experienced community gardeners and community experts sharing insights about topics of special interest to community gardeners, were hosted at SFC’s Community Room

“Thanks for offering this program. Having the incentives you provide makes all the difference for us to continue gardening, especially in times when it’s so expensive to live in Austin is and it’s becoming harder and harder to make ends meet.” - Spread the Harvest participant

“Our gardeners are more excited this season than they ever have been before! As I was handing out some of the seeds and transplants that we received from the Give-Away Day, one of the women said to me “we’re bringing life back to Sweeney Circle!” Our community had a rough fall and winter. Many of our residents are viewing spring and the gardens as a new beginning!” Emily, Green Doors (Spread the Harvest participant)

HOW ONE INSPIRED GARDENER HELPED STRENGTHEN A COMMUNITY

By Sari Albornoz, Grow Local Program Director

Joseph de Leon wasn't always a gardener, but ever since he was a small child, he has understood the power gardening has to make a place feel special. "My earliest memories are of my grandmother's awesome garden: she had roses, chickens, nopales, yerba buena. We were in the middle of the urbanized west side of San Antonio, but her yard was like an oasis."

Fast forward a couple of decades, and Joseph is a passionate gardener in his own right. His initial try at gardening--a 2x2-foot herb garden--has gradually enveloped his whole yard, so that he now lives among vegetables, fruit trees, and chickens. He became a volunteer with the Gardens at Gus Garcia, a combination community garden and senior garden at the Gus Garcia Recreation Center, and when garden leaders invited him to join the steering council, it was a natural fit. "It was an honor," he says. "I dove in headfirst."



Joseph can now speak to the magic that happens when you add community to gardening. "Having a space to build a connection with neighbors is something that's been missing in my life, and I think for a lot of other people, as well," Joseph reflects. "When I was a kid, we knew everyone on our street, and even streets away. Now it's not that way." Rediscovering that sense of fellowship and belonging at the Gardens at Gus Garcia has been powerful. "It's more than chit-chat. It's building things together, collaborating, asking for help, and solving problems."

It's a lot of work, actually, and as an energetic "doer," Joseph has had to learn to draw boundaries to keep balance in his life: "one of the many lessons I've learned in the garden." But Joseph says there's something truly different about the work that happens at community gardens. It's worth it because it's work done together. "When you rely on people, and they rely in turn on you, you accomplish something bigger. It's hard to compete with that feeling."

There are plenty of collaborative accomplishments to celebrate at the Gardens at Gus Garcia these days: new fruit trees planted through a workshop with TreeFolks, a thriving pollinator garden, a smoothly-running compost system managed with help from Compost Coalition, a neatly-organized tool shed, a partnership with Multicultural Refugee Coalition, and a plan to host a fall SFC Intro to Food Gardening class series, among others. After a difficult initial two years with frustratingly low involvement and slow progress, these accomplishments over the past few months are nothing to make light of. Asked what makes him proudest about the garden, Joseph doesn't hesitate: "For the first time, all our plots are rented to gardeners!" Having reached this long-awaited threshold, Joseph and his fellow steering committee members are savoring the moment, taking stock and gearing up to tackle new goals, which include building an even stronger garden team.



3,960 customers from 46 worksites across Central Texas actively participated in Farm to Work

SFC'S FARM DIRECT PROGRAM

Food is connection.

SFC's Farm Direct promotes access to fresh, healthy food by connecting local farmers to schools, worksites, food service operations and Austin shoppers through a network of farmers' markets, strengthening our local economy.

FARM TO WORK

Farm to Work is an employee wellness and Farm Direct marketing project that connects local farmers with employees at partner worksites. The program provides farmers with a reliable and economically viable marketing outlet.

Farm to Work offers employees increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and addresses some key barriers many employees face when trying to add more fruits and vegetables to their diets. Employees can order and pay for a basket of fresh produce, delivered by the farmer directly to the worksite. This project was developed by Sustainable Food Center in partnership with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

- \$210,186 in gross sales
- 3,960 unique customers purchased 10,767 baskets of local fruits and vegetables
- 9 local farmers participated in Farm to Work
- 46 Worksites participated in Farm to Work across Austin, Houston, and San Antonio

FARM TO CAFETERIA

As individual farmers have built their capacity to interact directly with larger institutional buyers, and as distributors have begun offering more local foods, SFC's work has evolved from broker and delivery coordinator to a consulting role. Farm to Cafeteria helps connect farmers with cafeterias interested in sourcing local foods directly from farmers, ranchers, and vendors across Central Texas. SFC staff provided consultations to cafeteria managers and referred these managers to farmers, ranchers, and vendors in SFC's network.



SFC'S FARM DIRECT PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS



160,000 customers visited our four year-round SFC Farmers' Markets.

SFC FARMERS' MARKETS

Starting in 2003 with the “Austin Farmers’ Market” established Downtown at Republic Square Park, the network of SFC Farmers’ Markets has grown to include four unique and vibrant markets – Sunset Valley, Downtown, The Triangle, and East. Total sales at SFC Farmers’ Markets was about 90% of the 2014-15 year, due to weather issues impacting volume and variety of produce and to an increase in the number of markets and other shopping choices offered to customers. Construction in the area of the SFC Farmers’ Market East and weather factors impacting farmer production created some challenges in keeping the market open, although it continued through the year with Johnson’s Backyard Garden maintaining a steady presence there. The Triangle location remains a reliable stop for a mid-week local food fix on Wednesdays, with B5, Margaret’s Farm, Animal Farm, Ranger Cattle, JBG, Happy Vegan, and Engel Farms as market mainstays. The SFC Farmers’ Market at Sunset Valley continues as “the family-friendliest market” around, featuring kids’ activities like the Imagination Playground, and a wide range of producers, such as Hairston Creek Farm and Flintrock Hills with organic vegetables, Dewberry Hill Farms with “really good chicken,” and the Yard to Market Co-op with a little bit of everything. The SFC Farmers’ Market Downtown is thriving, with total sales equal to last year’s despite disruption caused by reconstruction of the Republic Square Park and limited availability of parking.

SFC Farmers’ Markets are strong overall. With an added focus on outreach and advertising, place-making and special events, innovative approaches to increasing sales, and building vendor and product diversity, we expect the markets to prosper and to succeed in the purpose of “providing Central Texas with access to local foods” in the coming year and beyond.

- Total sales for all four markets combined was \$1.9 million
- Nearly \$1.25 million in sales just at the SFC Farmers’ Market Downtown
- 92 local farmers and small businesses participated in SFC Farmers’ Markets as vendors
- 160,000 customers visited our four year-round SFC Farmers’ Markets



SFC'S FARM DIRECT PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FOOD ACCESS PROGRAMS

SFC works to help members of our community overcome barriers to healthy food access, and strives to engage all people in our community as participants in a strong local food system. All SFC Farmers' Markets accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, WIC fruit and vegetable benefits, and Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers for WIC eligible families to purchase fresh fruits and veggies. These three food assistance programs, when paired with our Double Dollar Incentive Program (DDIP), can make healthy local food affordable for low income communities. Efforts to spread the word about this and other SFC programs have been bolstered in the past year through our Community Outreach and Engagement work, embedded within our Food Access area but also encouraging participation in all SFC programs.

The success of the SFC Double Dollars program has resulted in investment from the Austin City Council and Health and Human Services Department to fund the expansion of Double Dollars to other markets and farm stands. SFC now provides program support to Green Gate Farms, Springdale Farm, three community-led farm markets, and the two Texas Farmers' Market locations – Lakeline Mall in Cedar Park and the Mueller market, so community members have added opportunity to buy affordable and healthy local foods.

Community Outreach and Engagement has focused on building relationships in neighborhoods to invite residents to participate in their local food system. This work has included attending school and community events, taking part in neighborhood walks, conducting cooking demonstrations, and working with partners such as schools, churches, and the GO! Austin / VAMOS! Austin (GAVA) place-based health initiative. Our direct connections are further supported with advertising and marketing strategies – radio and mobile ads, television appearances, and billboards – designed to reach communities with the highest risk of limited food access and diet-related disease.

- Total sales for local farmers attributed to SFC Food Access programming \$147,567 – a, increase of 22% over last year
- \$13,340 in Double Dollar benefits were distributed through expansion sites
- The number of unduplicated customers accessing Double Dollars was 2,766 through 3,573 individual transactions
- SFC distributed FMNP voucher booklets to 2,772 WIC eligible individuals, with a total value of \$83,160
- Customer surveys indicate that over 90% of Double Dollars customers increase both the volume and the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables consumed

Customers who responded to our survey also provided their thoughts on Double Dollars:

“We really like the program and the ability to eat locally grown foods. This is not the closest farmers market to our house but we come for the (Double Dollars) match.”

“I am incredibly thankful for this program. It is such a blessing to our family and the community as a whole.”



**SFC's Double Dollars
served 2,766 individuals**

SFC'S FARM DIRECT PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FARM TO FAMILY AND COMMUNITY/SCHOOL FARM STANDS

School and Community Farm Stands provide a space for families to purchase high-quality, fresh produce at a low cost, directly within in their own neighborhoods. They are situated in familiar spaces where people gather and connect. SFC works within our local farmer networks to connect growers to communities where limited access to healthy food has been identified as a concern by residents. Uniquely, Farm Stands are planned in direct collaboration with community members, and are fully operated by community leaders, with logistical support from SFC.

SFC has worked in collaboration with the GO! Austin/VAMOS! Austin Initiative (GAVA) on the development of this project. GAVA is a coalition of residents, community leaders and nonprofits that share a common interest in improving the health of the 78744 and 78745 communities through increased access to and participation in physical activity and improved nutrition. SFC is also working collaboratively with the City of Austin Department of Health and Human Services on the further development of this project, including expansion to other parts of Austin.

- 3 farm stands are operated, with the capacity to accept SNAP and offer Double Dollars
- 375 individual transactions at all markets

BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL CENTRAL TEXAS

SFC managed the Buy Fresh Buy Local Central Texas campaign. This campaign promoted locally produced foods to customers in an effort to increase sales for farmers. Vendors who meet the minimum requirements for acceptance are listed on the buylocalcentex.org website, promoted and advertised through a variety of marketing channels, and are provided printed promotional materials.

- 48 participants, including 12 farmers' markets, 8 farm stands, 7 CSA farms, and 21 individual farmers
- \$51,000 federal grant funds invested in radio advertising and mobile marketing



SFC'S FARM DIRECT PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SPROUTING HEALTHY KIDS

Sprouting Healthy Kids (SHK) began in 2006 as Sustainable Food Center's farm-to-school and food systems education project, in collaboration with Austin Independent School District and others. We now refer to all of SFC's work with young people as being part of our Sprouting Healthy Kids initiative, including Farm to School, summertime day camps, school gardening efforts and field trips to our teaching garden (please see the Grow Local section of this report for information about school gardens and field trips).



SFC'S WORK WITH CHILDREN

FARM TO SCHOOL

This year, for the first time since SFC began its Farm to School partnership with AISD, all schools in the entire district were able to participate in local food purchasing. The growth of Farm to School local procurement from an incrementally expanding project to a district-wide policy represents a milestone in SFC's work, having reached this 10-year goal.

Farm to School provides schools and students the opportunity to incorporate local foods into the cafeteria and food systems education in the classroom. We've partnered with AISD schools to provide marketing materials encouraging the selection of locally sourced foods, as well as and Meet the Farmer and Veggie Sampling opportunities in the cafeteria and classroom.

- Local Food Promotional materials offered to all schools eligible to participate in local food purchasing
- 39 food system education events facilitated by SFC Farm to School Ambassadors, including 29 Veggie Sampling activities and 10 Meet the Farmer events
- Citrus Sale Fundraisers coordinated with two schools, resulting in over \$2,500 raised and selling 167 bags of certified organic, Texas grown oranges

SUMMERTIME DAY CAMPS AND FIELD TRIPS

SFC's summer field trips invite area summer camps to join us for a half-day food systems experience. Groups include private summer camps, non-profit organizations, and neighborhood daycare centers. Campers from many different backgrounds enjoy a garden visit, hands-on preparation of a healthy snack, and making seed-to-plate connections. For many campers, this is their first time seeing how food grows. Through our first two weeks of day camp in partnership with Creative Action, we explored even more themes around food and community, including farmers' market visits, planting and harvesting summer produce, and preparing and sampling healthy, seasonal recipes.

- 14 field trips and 176 kids reached
- 2 week-long day camps and 75 kids reached



SFC'S THE HAPPY KITCHEN/ LA COCINA ALEGRE®

Food is health.

FREE SIX WEEK SERIES CLASSES Responding to the growing need of social services in outlying areas, The Happy Kitchen/*La Cocina Alegre*® offered its free six week cooking class model outside of the Austin core. Partnerships with Round Rock ISD and H-E-B made it possible to hold classes in Round Rock, Pflugerville and Elgin. These classes were some of the best-attended and we look forward to continuing to offer classes in the future with these partners.

FEE-BASED PUBLIC CLASSES Staff finalized the “Fundamentals Series” of classes that are ideal for the home-cook looking to improve his/her skills in the kitchen. With few options in Austin to learn how to cook healthy with seasonal ingredients on a budget, we feel we are filling a much-needed niche in our local food system. The Fundamentals Series consists of classes such as Quick Healthy Weeknight Meals, Meatless Main Dishes and the Secrets of Soups and Homemade Stocks.

In the Diabetes and Hypertension class in May, THK facilitator Linda Clark prepared Lemon Mustard Salmon Salad and Creamy Green Dressing from our cookbook, *Fresh Seasonal Recipes*. In order to incorporate the recipes into specific nutrition information, Linda facilitated a conversation highlighting the importance of controlling blood sugar, heart healthy oils, and monitoring sodium intake. Class participants got a lot out of the tips and information, but the larger take away was receiving the information from people like Linda who are also on their own journey towards health. One participant shared,

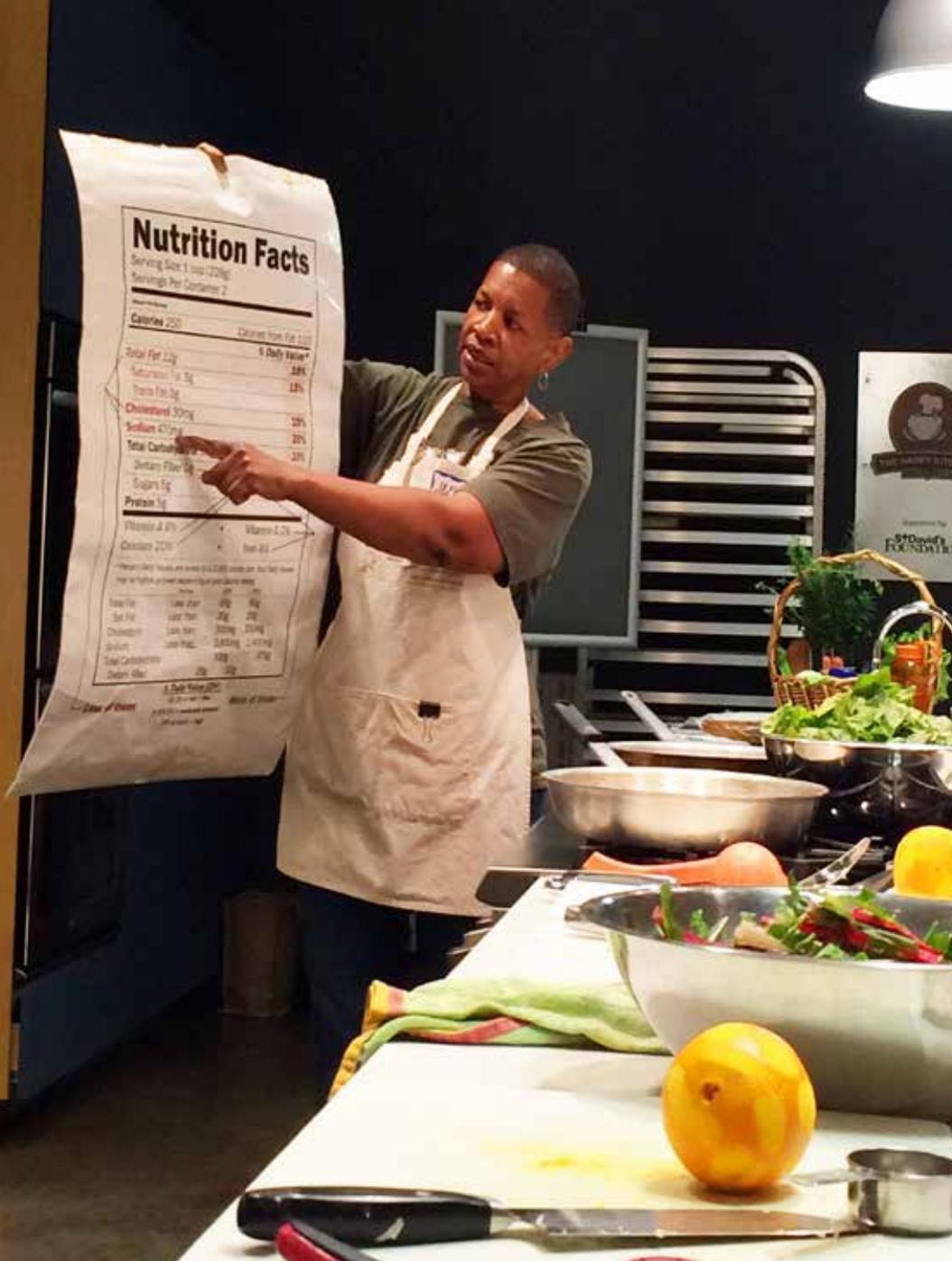
“I’ve heard it all before but today was more of a meaningful lesson & her personal testimony helped me to really listen and want to make changes.”



23 free six-week cooking & nutrition education class series were taught, serving 526 people



SFC'S THE HAPPY KITCHEN PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- 23 free six-week series serving 526 people (A six-week series of cooking and nutrition education classes lasting 1.5 hours each. Classes are located in recreation centers, faith communities, schools and community centers and lead by trained community facilitators.)
- 97% of six-week series graduates report using the nutrition facts label to make healthier food choices
- 94% of six-week series graduates report eating more fruits and vegetables
- 95% of six-week series graduates report using the THK Happy Plate as a guide to healthy eating
- 12 free follow-up classes for 170 past-six-week class participants (These classes support six-week participants maintain healthy behavior change and cooking skills. Example Class topics include Meal Planning, Growing and Cooking with Herbs, Controlling Blood Sugar and Hypertension)
- 22 Worksite Wellness Classes serving 452 Austin Independent School District, University of Texas or City of Austin employees (These classes promote healthy eating and SFC's Farm to Work program at the employers.)
- 15 Private Classes for 206 people (These classes are delivered to private groups. Class content focuses on specific healthy eating/cooking topics if instructor-lead, or participants work in teams to prepare a meal with several recipes.)
- 32 public cooking classes serving 462 people (Class topics included Knife Skills, Kitchen Fundamentals, Seasonal Immune Boosting, and Home Butchery; 18% of participants took more than one class)

SFC'S THE HAPPY KITCHEN PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: ELGIN & DOWN HOME RANCH

By Molly Costigan, The Happy Kitchen Program Manager

One of the strategic goals for SFC's The Happy Kitchen/ *La Cocina Alegre*® is to offer more free community cooking class series outside of the Austin core. As demographic data shows lower income families moving out of central Austin, we want to make our programs more accessible in the surrounding communities.

This summer, Elgin-based Wesley Nurse, Debi Laurents, was trained as a facilitator for The Happy Kitchen with the intent of helping bring the classes to Elgin. Thanks to generous support from H-E-B, she and I started planning for a class at the Elgin H-E-B store.

Sustainable Food Center has roots in Austin going back 40 years, so many Austinites are familiar with our programs, and we have a fairly extensive network of community contacts who help with class outreach. Without that network in Elgin, I expected the class to require a lot of extra promotion. We started with Debi's contacts, flyers in the store, and an article in the Elgin Courier, and before we could start to plan our next steps, the class was full. Word continued to spread, and soon there were 60 people on the list to find out about the next series.

We are very grateful to the Elgin community for their enthusiastic support, and it has been great to see our Elgin network expand. One of the coolest new contacts is Down Home Ranch, who sent 5 of their ranchers to the class. Down Home Ranch is a working ranch for people with Down syndrome and other disabilities, and those who choose to live and work beside them. Ranchers have the option of living in a shared home with other ranchers and a live-in assistant, or applying to live independently. The ranchers take care of the farm operations, caring for chickens, cattle, horses, a garden, and several greenhouses, and also participate in vocational training, continuing education, fitness activities, and more.

The group of ranchers attending the class right now live together and prepare meals together. Since class participants take home groceries for the in-class recipe, they have had fun experimenting with the recipes as a group. The quinoa from the first week's recipe was such a big hit that they've been adding it to anything they can think of. The focus on using fresh produce in our classes is also a great fit for the ranchers since they grow so many of their own fruits and vegetables.

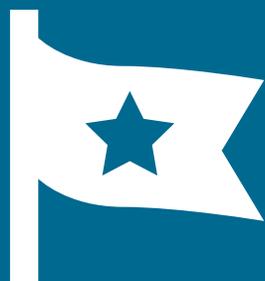
We're looking forward to planning more classes in Elgin, and inviting more of the ranchers sign up!





30
VOLUNTEER
WORKDAYS

In the SFC Teaching and Herb Gardens



241
VOLUNTEERS

Actively volunteered their time with SFC



2750+
HOURS

Donated to the farmers' market

**VOLUNTEERS
MEAN OUR
SUCCESS**



SFC'S VOLUNTEER ACCOMPLISHMENTS



SFC'S COMMITMENT TO RACIAL JUSTICE

(Modified from article by Carolina Mueller)

“When we acknowledge that racial inequity exists in our community and involves us all, we can strive to ensure that, first, our work does not perpetuate racial inequity, and second, that our work instead helps to build a more racially equitable community.”- Sari Albornoz, Grow Local Program Director

Racism is a subject that is difficult to talk about, uncomfortable to confront, and absolutely necessary in addressing the work that we do regarding food access here in Austin. Because our City has a difficult history of race-based discrimination, we as a non-profit have the very difficult task of not only dealing with the ramifications of this history, but finding ways to actively undo the systems that allow discrimination to continue. This year, staff at Sustainable Food Center participated in a series of racial justice trainings and goal-setting work sessions led by Dr. Martha Ramos-Duffer and Paula X. Rojas.

SFC decided to dedicate the time and effort to this all-staff endeavor in order to build a foundation and shared language to discuss racism and racial justice among staff. The training provided a concise and factual narrative about the evolution of institutionalized racism in the United States. The trainers also facilitated challenging conversations about our experiences with discrimination and privilege. As Andrew Smiley, Deputy Director said, “Most people working in the social sector, including SFC employees, have a basic knowledge of health disparities along racial lines in our community and nationwide... It is important for our staff to fully comprehend institutional racism as the basis of many of the disparities that exist in our community.”

Part of the training included an audit of the work that we are currently doing. We celebrated aspects of our programs that are working well and began to dream of where we would like to be. We have incorporated the lessons and considerations from this training into our annual operational plan this year, and have set clear long-term goals for ourselves to more actively and intentionally use our programs to undo racism.

“[I] was particularly excited about emphasizing programming and recipes that lift up the health value of traditional cuisines and support class participants to make food choices that feel good and right to them within a culturally appropriate context.” - Molly Costigan, The Happy Kitchen/*La Cocina Alegre*® Program Manager

We are excited about being more comfortable having conversations about racism within and outside of SFC. As Andrew notes, “this training has resulted in an organization-wide commitment to follow through on specific actions. Documenting these actions, and monitoring our progress, creates a level of accountability – to ourselves and to the community.”

SFC has also established a Racial Justice team with representatives from all SFC departments, tasked with holding our agency accountable to the commitments we have set forth. This team is also responsible for launching biannual Food Justice Encuentros, will bring together social justice leaders interested in learning from each other and enhancing our efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable food system.

A huge thank you to Paula and Martha for their excellent leadership and deep knowledge! as well as St. David's Foundation for funding this training through SFC's participation in Capacity Academy!



COMMITMENT TO RACIAL JUSTICE

FOOD POLICY AND ADVOCACY — *Food is nonpartisan.*

COMMUNITY GARDENS

SFC staff worked alongside the City of Austin Community Garden Program staff to create a list of recommended policy changes to better support community gardens and to promote equitable access to community gardens. The recommendations were adopted by the Austin/Travis County Food Policy Board. Additionally, they were incorporated into a broader list of Food Policy Recommendations compiled by the City of Austin Food Policy Manager for Austin City Council.

AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY FOOD POLICY BOARD

SFC staff supported the board's \$400k Healthy Food Access Initiatives, which was approved by City Council. These funds will be ongoing, each year.

AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY FOOD POLICY BOARD'S FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND ACCESS WORKING GROUP

SFC participation in the working group resulted in four significant recommendations, which were all approved by the Food Policy Board: How to build-in land uses allowing food production in Austin's new City Code; a template letter of support for farmers experiencing development pressures; a Regional Community-Based Food System study; increased funding for the City's community garden program.

Additionally, the letter of support template was used in support of Green Gate Farms, who underwent

negotiation with a developer who purchased the land on which the farm is located. All of the working group members signed the letter and sent to all Austin City Council Members and Travis County Commissioners. SFC also wrote a letter of support. Additionally, SFC staff worked with Green Gate Farms and its stakeholders as part of the "Save Green Gate Farms" campaign.

AUSTIN AREA SCHOOL GARDEN COLLABORATIVE (AASGC)

SFC staff worked to craft a survey for school garden stakeholders in order to create a vision for Central Texas school gardens. 130 responses were collected, which will inform a school garden evaluation project led by the UT Nutrition Department starting in Fall 2016. The evaluation project will be completed in conjunction with the AASGC Evaluation Action Team, on which SFC staff served.

Additionally, SFC staff served on the AASGC Harvest Action Team which contributed to Austin Independent School District's forthcoming Harvest Guide. The Harvest Guide will assist schools in understanding how to serve food from the garden in school, how to directly market the produce to buyers and how to donate the produce.

AISD ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

SFC staff served on the Food and Nature Working Group of AISD's Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee. The Working Group created

benchmark goals, and established baseline data related to equitable access to food & nature across all AISD campuses. This data will inform AISD's first-ever Sustainability Master Plan.

TEXAS LOCAL FARM AND FOOD COALITION

SFC, along with Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, Grow North Texas, San Antonio Food Policy Council and the Houston Food Policy Work Group formed a state-wide coalition to support food and agriculture policies that promote healthy, environmentally sustainable, and economically strong local food production. Over the first year, the steering committee and member organizations solidified policy priorities for the 2017 Legislative Session.

GOOD FOOD PURCHASING PROGRAM, AUSTIN

The City of Austin's Office of Sustainability launched a pilot program to implement the Good Food Purchasing Program in Austin with the University of Texas Housing and Food Service Division and Austin Independent School District. The goal of the pilot is to provide a framework for large institutions to direct their buying power toward five core values: local economies, nutrition, valued workforce, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare. SFC staff serve as technical advisors to the pilot project.

STAFF ASSIGNED TO POLICY GROUPS

Ronda Rutledge, Executive Director

- Austin/Travis County Food Policy Board's Farmland Preservation and Access Working Group
- Vice Chair, One Voice Central Texas
- Austin Independent School District School Health Advisory Council

Sari Albornoz, Grow Local Program Director

- Coalition of Austin Community Gardens
- ATX Environmental Justice

Bianca Bidiuc, School Garden Manager

- AISD Environmental Stewardship Committee
- Austin Area School Garden Collaborative

Joy Casnovsky, The Happy Kitchen/La Cocina Alegre® Program Director

- American Heart Association, State Advocacy Committee
- Partnership for a Health Texas
- Texas Local Food and Farm Coalition
- Central Texas Policy Equity Council
- Good Food Purchasing Pilot Program

Evan Driscoll, Farm Direct Projects Manager

- Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

Jess Gaffney, Development Director

- Austin/Travis County Food Policy Board

Matt Macioge, SFC Farmers' Market Manager

- Austin/Travis County Food Policy Board's Codes and Ordinances Working Group



SFC CORE VALUES

FUN

RESOURCEFULNESS



We foster an enjoyable and fruitful environment for healthy living.

What does this value look like in action?

- We devote the time and space to create a workplace that we enjoy.
- We create experiences that inspire individuals and communities.
- We engage communities in exploring creative and impactful activities.
- We strive to incorporate passion, humor, spontaneity, and joy into our daily lives.
- We maintain a healthy balance between our work and our personal lives.

We make the best use of resources to achieve the greatest possible outcomes.

What does this value look like in action?

- We are creative problem solvers – striving for innovative solutions to systemic challenges.
- We value and seek to strengthen existing community resources.
- We seek knowledge of our complex food system in order to be a valuable resource to the community.
- We challenge ourselves to exceed expectations in our daily work.

INTEGRITY

We approach our work, the community, and each other with authenticity, honesty, and respect.

What does this value look like in action?

- We provide credible and trustworthy community-based programs and resources.
- We respect each other, our community, and our environment in all that we do.
- We support open and honest dialogue, and assume the best intentions in others when dealing with conflict.
- We are transparent and ethical in our stewardship of the organization and our resources.

COLLABORATION

We cultivate meaningful relationships with each other and the larger community.

What does this value look like in action?

- We prioritize teamwork, shared responsibility, and group problem-solving as a means of effectively reaching goals and addressing challenges.
- We embrace the idea of collective impact by actively seeking and responding to partnership opportunities.
- We contribute fully to collaborative efforts, and value the same level of participation from our partners.
- We embrace our diverse community and the connection we share within our food system.

EMPOWERMENT

We believe that the community's inherent power and leadership is the foundation for a truly equitable and sustainable food system.

What does this value look like in action?

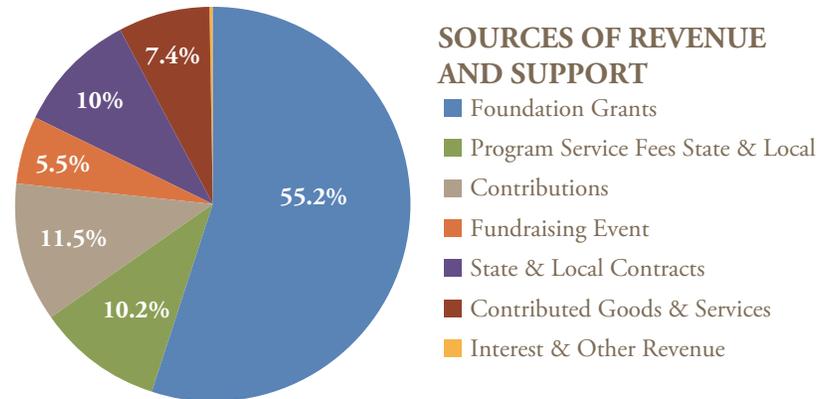
- We learn alongside community members, through open exchange and sharing of skills, knowledge, resources, and tools.
- We help build capacity for a return of power over the food system to the community.
- We ensure that the community is involved in leadership and decision making of the organization.
- We advocate for inclusive stakeholder involvement in decisions on food systems and policies.
- We ensure that all of our programming supports food production, marketing, distribution and preparation as a means for individual, family and community self-sufficiency.

CONDENSED AUDITED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

JULY 1, 2015 - JUNE 30, 2016

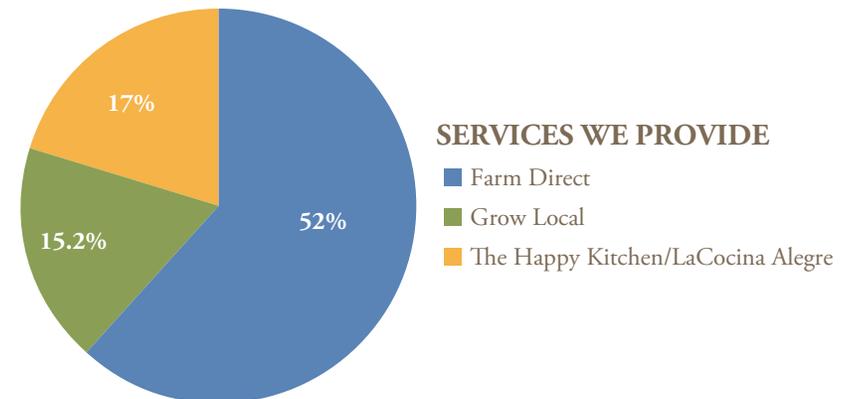
REVENUE

Foundation Grants	1,720,300	55.2%
Program Service Fees	319,535	10.2%
Contributions	359,089	11.5%
Fundraising Events	170,657	5.5%
Federal, State & Local Contracts	310,603	10.0%
Contributed Goods & Services	231,309	7.4%
Interest & Other Revenue	6,390	0.2%
Total Revenue	3,117,882	100.0%



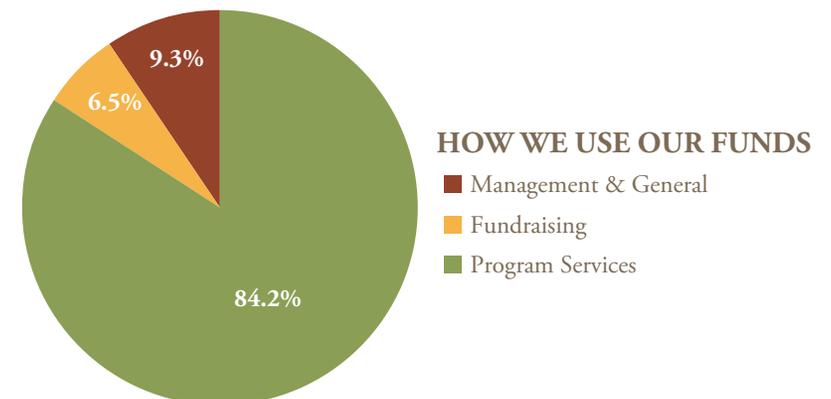
EXPENSES

Program Services		
Farm Direct	1,231,112	52.0%
Grow Local	361,248	15.2%
The Happy Kitchen/ <i>LaCocina Alegre</i>	401,475	17.0%
Management & General	220,284	9.3%
Fundraising	153,465	6.5%
Total Expenses	2,367,584	100%



CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Total Revenue	3,117,882
Total Expenses	2,367,584
Change in Net Assets from Operations	750,298
Net Assets, Beginning of Fiscal Year	4,462,802
Net Assets, End of Fiscal Year	5,213,100



In FY16, Sustainable Food Center charged 6.5% for fundraising and 9.3% for management and general.

The full financial statements, audited by Gindler, Chappel, Morrison & Co., P.C., are available upon request by calling 512-220-1089.

SALARIED STAFF

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Jess Gaffney
Development Director

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Lacy Garner
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Community Outreach Coordinator

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