

UNITY GARDENS AND BEACON COMMUNITY HEALTH

A Multi-year Collaboration to Decrease Obesity and Increase Health/Wellness

2009-2010

DEVELOP SITES -from 12 to 34

ENGAGE COMMUNITY

1 class at LaSalle library, tasting tours

Harvesting help

CREATE MODEL & ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

2011-2012

EXPAND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Create outdoor classroom

Enhance and add curriculum

BUILD FAMILY PLOTS FOR ENGAGEMENT

2013-2014

MEASURABLE GOALS/OUTCOMES/DATA COLLECTION

INCREASE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Discovery Garden Area at LaSalle site

Summer Camp

Outreach to Beacon Heights

2015-2017

IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Garden Guides gather data from visitors

DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH BEACON HEIGHTS

Garden to Plate picnics, chef demonstrations

Unity Gardens has documented the following outcomes and impact for individuals, their organization and the community as a result of Beacon's support over time.

INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES

- Improved consumption of and access to vegetables and fruits
- Increased understanding of value of eating vegetables and fruits, healthy diets
- Increased youth physical activity
- Increased knowledge of gardening
- Increased opportunities for youth leadership development (i.e., junior counselors at camp)

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES

- Expanded capacity as educators
 - Offer variety of curriculum and educational experiences: How to grow gardens, taste produce, play in gardens.
 - Improved pedagogical practices
 - The most successful classes combine free outdoor garden exploration with a garden lesson and an edible element (e.g., Making your own salad, grilling veggies, or veggies and dip were all popular.
 - Replicate lessons learned: take home produce, plants, and recipes engaged kids to teach their families what they learned.
 - Outdoor exploration includes planting, harvesting, drinking from a hose, scarecrow making, hunting potato bugs, pet rocks, and water play.
- Increased capacity to gather, analyze and report qualitative and quantitative evidence about their achievements
 - Yum-yuk survey, etc.
- Expanded facilities
 - Fencing, signage, activity centers, special plots for class participants, tasting areas, a bee garden, nature areas
- Increased paid staff
 - Garden guides, internships
- Increased volunteers/collaborations with variety of skills (e.g., chef demonstrations, chicken coop builders)
- Increased sphere of influence
 - Over 3,500 attended Unity Gardens educational series in 2011

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

- Increased physical activity through engagement in gardening
- Increased accessibility to fresh fruits and vegetables in food desert areas of SJC
- Increased access to an in-depth food security- wellness-green space immersion
- Increased access to organically grown fruit and vegetables by vulnerable or disadvantaged populations
 - 18 Unity Gardens representing vulnerable or disadvantaged populations (homeless, incarcerated, developmentally delayed, impoverished)
 - LaSalle Garden outreaches to Beacon Heights residents
- Increased youth access to organically grown fruit and vegetables
 - 19 Unity Gardens host or focus on Youth education/programs
 - Summer camp

Overall, Unity Garden's ever expanding vision for community engagement reflects the breadth and depth of its impact in our area.