



2023

# Impact Report





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# Board of Directors

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in the tri-state area for Party  
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Consultant to Non-Profits

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Client Advocate at the Center for  
Food Action

## CORNELIA GERAGHTY

Director

Elementary School Teacher,  
Bogota Public Schools



# Farm Operations & Production





# Farm Operations & Production

## About

City Green's urban farms are the heart of the organization and consist of three separate food production farms: the City Green Farm Eco-Center in Clifton, City Green Farm at South Branch Preserve, and the Learning Garden in Eastside Park in Paterson. City Green grows over 90 varieties of vegetables and herbs that are not only culturally appropriate for the communities they serve, but healthy, local, and delicious as well. Each farm adheres to regenerative and organic growing practices to ensure healthy soil, healthy farm workers, and a healthy habitat for wildlife. Farming methods include crop rotation, cover cropping, natural pest management, hand weeding, and planting disease-resistant crop varieties.

The produce grown at City Green Farms is distributed to the local community through a network of farm stands, farmer's markets and location-specific deliveries via the "Veggie Mobile," with a goal of providing access to local farm-fresh food along with meaningful job and volunteer opportunities in an agricultural setting. But the importance of City Green's farms goes far beyond its bountiful harvests. Through interaction with the farm operation, individuals are able to create a connection to their food, understand the value and importance of open space, gain an appreciation for nature and local agriculture, and understand the potential of urban farming in revitalizing urban areas and improving public health in local communities. City Green Farms help ensure that farmland remains an important and productive part of the northern New Jersey landscape.







# Regenerative practices

City Green is committed to growing healthy food in a way that benefits both people and planet. Sustainable farming is a method of producing food that meets the needs of the community without compromising the health of the land and soil for present and future generations.

Regenerative agriculture utilizes a variety of sustainable farming techniques which focus on increasing biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and strengthening the health and vitality of farm soil, among other important factors.

Here are just some of the regenerative practices that City Green Farms implemented in 2023:

## No Till System in Clifton

The Farm-Eco Center in Clifton has fully transitioned to a no-till farm. No-till farming does not disturb the deeper layers of soil and the beneficial communities of insects and microorganisms that live there. This practice builds healthier soil, prevents erosion, and helps lower weed, pest and disease pressure on the farm!

## Cover Cropping

At both City Green Farms, fields are rotated each year, meaning 2023's tomato beds might be 2024's zucchini beds! Instead of remaining empty, fields not in use are planted with cover crop for a season, maintaining healthy soil structure and allowing the field to regenerate valuable nutrients for next season's veggies

## Rotational Grazing

Rotational grazing is the practice of moving animals through pasture to improve soil, plant, and animal health. City Green's chickens graze on the Permaculture Hill to help remove invasive weeds while eating pests and adding fertility to the land. The chickens also benefit from a healthy diet and livelihood!



# Innovations and Improvements



**Thank you to our 2023 Farm Team: Henry, Isabel,  
Joe, & Emily!**

- Expanded cultivation at South Branch Farm to 8.6 acres (3.7 acres vegetables, 4.9 acres cover crop)
- Record breaking seasons at both City Green Farms
  - Clifton Eco-Center Farm
    - Lbs Harvested: 72,770
    - Lbs Donated: 8,686
    - Value Harvested: \$157,640.50
  - South Branch Farm
    - Lbs Harvested: 57,318
    - Lbs Donated: 7,010
- Installed and maintained 150' native plant hedgerow with over 30 varieties of native perennials
- Installation of our new pond in the permaculture hill at the Clifton Eco-Center





# Veggie Mobile, Markets, & Community Supported Agriculture



# Markets and CSA



The mission of the City Green Farm Stand and Mobile Market program is to connect with local governments and community organizations in northern NJ to increase the accessibility and affordability of local, farm-fresh food, ensuring good food is available for all. City Green's markets are enhanced by a nutrition incentive program that incentivizes federal food beneficiaries to purchase healthy food grown by City Green and other local farms. When shopping at City Green farm stands, customers gain an appreciation for local agriculture in their own community, support the local food movement, and foster personal connections to food, healthy eating and the environment.

## City Green Market Locations

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- Lou Costello Park, Paterson
- Bloomfield Farmer's Market, Bloomfield
- Passaic City Hall, Passaic
- City Green Farm-Eco Center, Clifton
- Evergreen Manor, Clifton
- Senior Towers of Paterson, Paterson
- Senior Housing of Hazel St., Clifton
- Totowa Senior Nutrition Center, Totowa
- Freedom Village Senior Housing, Paterson
- Passaic WIC Office, Passaic
- Clifton City Hall, Clifton
- The Heritage at Alexander Hamilton, Paterson





# Innovations & Improvements

## Record Donations

When the market week is over and fresh produce is still available, City Green makes weekly donations to community partners in Clifton, Paterson and Passaic. In 2023, City Green made 40 individual donations to 6 community partners: Father English Community Center, Great Falls Military Assistance Pantry of Paterson, St. Peter's Haven, Mt. Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, The Food Justice Fridge, and Local Share. Donations added up to a **record-breaking total of 8,759 pounds of produce**, compared to 7,915 in 2022.

## Adapting New Technology to Serve FMNP Customers

In 2023, the state of New Jersey moved its WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits online. Instead of paper vouchers, FMNP benefits are now built into digital QR codes which require an internet connection to be redeemed at markets. By incorporating an iPad-based POS system equipped with a 5G data plan, City Green was able to serve 2,914 customers with FMNP. Due to these new technological barriers, we were one of only 4 farm stands in Passaic County to accept these benefits in 2023.

## WIC Office Box Markets

In partnership with the Passaic WIC Office, City Green held 2 special markets exclusive to WIC clients, providing 160 families with a discounted box of freshly harvested vegetables from City Green farms. Through these markets, the program seeks to provide better fresh food access to families with WIC in Passaic, where Veggie Mobile sees the highest volume of WIC FMNP redemptions.

## Focus On Seniors

In 2023, City Green's markets experienced a 126% increase in customers with SFMNP. Between 5 senior Veggie Mobile Sites, Total Senior Nutrition Center, Evergreen Manor and Senior Housing of Hazel St. in Clifton, and Senior Towers and Freedom Village in Paterson, 1,246 seniors were able to double their federal nutrition benefits when purchasing farm fresh produce from City Green. This amounted to a record-breaking \$15,797 in SFMNP sales.

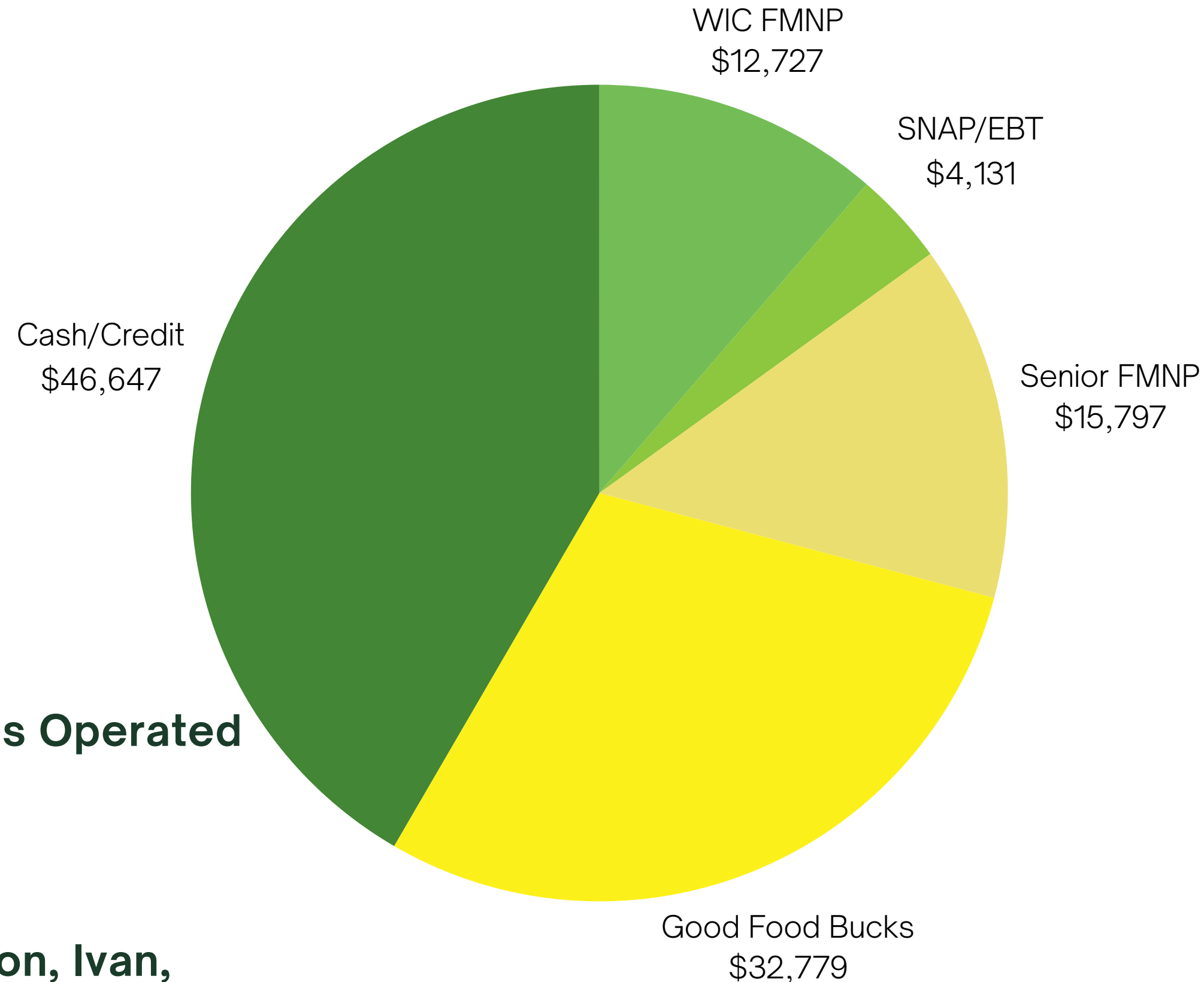


# 2023 Market Sales

**Record-Breaking  
Total Market  
Sales: \$112,084**

- 6,966 Shoppers
- 160 Farm Stands & Veggie Mobile Markets Operated
- 101% Good Food Buck Redemption Rate

**Thank you to our 2023 Market Team: Alex, Ron, Ivan,  
Farrah, Luke & Shanice!**





# Community Supported Agriculture

CSA stands for *Community Supported Agriculture*. It is a partnership between farmers and consumers, where consumers purchase a share of a farm's products in advance. Members typically pay in full in the off-season, providing the income farms need to prepare for the spring. CSA programs directly connect consumers and producers to help create a more participatory and transparent local food system.

City Green started its CSA program in 2020, when the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic called for a safe, low-contact alternative to the crowded market environment. Since then, the program has experienced considerable success, opening new doorways for City Green to build long-lasting relationships with community members and foster education about nutrition and local agriculture.

## Highlights

In 2023, the City Green CSA Program hosted 75 members at the Farm/Eco Center to pick up weekly shares of healthy, organic produce grown on City Green's Clifton and Mt. Olive farms. Each week was an opportunity for neighbors to meet, share stories and recipes, and get more involved in City Green's mission. The CSA program runs for 23 weeks from June-November, and 8 weeks from December-January, allowing members to experience the joy of eating with every season!



Date:  
March 20, 2025





Good Food Bucks



# Good Food Bucks

City Green's Good Food Bucks program is New Jersey's only statewide SNAP Nutrition Incentive Program. City Green provides funding, training, and technical assistance to farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, CSA's, and grocery stores so that SNAP customers can double the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables on their tables, while at the same time supporting the farmers who grow their food. Customers receive Good Food Buck fruit and vegetable coupons, or a 50% Good Food Bucks discount every time they use their SNAP card, to buy fresh produce at a participating market. Since 2011, the Good Food Bucks program has had a powerful impact on NJ residents by making healthy, local food affordable and accessible.



The mission of the Good Food Bucks Program is to support New Jersey fresh produce retailers in their efforts to increase affordability of Jersey-fresh produce for low-income families at their markets, while also creating greater economic opportunities for farmers and local businesses.

City Green provides funding, training and technical assistance to participating retailers to run a Nutrition Incentive Program that incentivizes families to spend their federal food benefit dollars at their local participating farmers' market or grocery store.

**Thank you to our Good Food Bucks Team: Lisa & Robbie!**



# Good Food Bucks Impact



## USDA GusNIP

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In September 2021, City Green received a USDA GusNIP (Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program) grant to expand and evolve the Good Food Bucks program to more locations and more NJ counties. With this \$500,000 award, we raised an additional \$500,000 in matching funds from local foundations. As the only statewide SNAP nutrition incentive program for NJ farmers markets and grocery stores, Good Food Bucks is now on its way to being available at 40 different locations spanning 14 counties statewide.

## Supermarket Expansion

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With GusNIP funding, City Green has been able to bring the Good Food Bucks program not only to farms and farmers markets, but also to brick-and-mortar grocery stores. This program expansion means Good Food Bucks can reach more NJ residents in more locations on more days of the week. In 2023, Good Food Bucks can be found at the ShopRite of Newark, Dry Goods Refillery, and the ShopRite of East Orange, with more stores coming soon!

## USDA FMPP

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With support from a three-year USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) grant, City Green launched its “Farmers for Food Access” Resource Hub to help connect more NJ farmers and farmers markets with nutrition assistance programs like SNAP, WIC, FMNP, and Good Food Bucks. New resources include webinars, SNAP and WIC authorization workbooks, and dedicated technical assistance. FMPP funding also supports statewide marketing for the Good Food Bucks program at farms and farmers markets, and provides professionally designed videos, banners, flyers, sandwich boards, digital ads, so that Good Food Bucks can become a household name in New Jersey!



# Good Food Bucks Across New Jersey

**In 2023 Good Food Bucks are offered at 30 farms & markets and 3 brick-and-mortar partners across 14 NJ counties. In total, over 18,000 people use Good Food Bucks every year, and 92 local and regional farmers earn additional revenue from Good Food Buck purchases**

## **Brick and Mortar**

- ShopRite of Newark, Newark
- ShopRite of East Orange, East Orange
- Dry Goods Refillery, Montclair

## **Farms & Markets**

- Alstede Farms, Chester
- Asbury Fresh, Asbury Park
- Beth Greenhouse Farmers Market, Newark
- Blairstown Farmers Market, Blairstown
- C.R.O.P.s Markets, Linwood
- City Green Inc., New Jersey
- Cook's Market at Rutgers Gardens, North Brunswick
- Down Bottom Farmers Market, Newark
- East Orange Farmers Market, East Orange
- Greater Newark Conservancy Farm Stand, Newark
- Greenwood Ave Farmers Market, Trenton
- Highland Park Farmers Market, Highland Park
- Montclair Community Farms, Montclair
- Montclair Farmers' Market, Montclair
- NDD Common Greens Farmers Market, Newark
- New Brunswick Community Farmers Market, New Brunswick
- Norz Hill Farm & Market. LLC, Hillsborough
- Nutley Farmers Market, Nutley
- Princeton Farmers' Market, Princeton
- Riverview Farmers Market, Jersey City
- Rosie's Farm Market, Mullica Hill
- The Harvest at New Hope Community Ministries, Prospect Park
- Grow It Green Morristown, Morristown
- West Windsor Community Farmers' Market, West Windsor
- Collingswood Farmers Market, Collingswood
- Enlightened Farm Mobile Market, Egg Harbor City



A photograph of two women smiling and holding a large yellow sunflower in an urban setting. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a red top. The woman on the right is wearing a blue shirt, a grey cap, and glasses. In the background, there are modern grey apartment buildings, a red brick building, a white SUV, and a white Penske truck. A utility pole with solar panels is also visible. A green rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "Community Engagement & Advocacy" in white.

# Community Engagement & Advocacy



# Community Engagement and Advocacy



The mission of the Engagement & Advocacy Department is to foster broad support and interaction with City Green's programs and mission through community events, building new relationships, strengthening partnerships, and disseminating information. Through these efforts, community members, organizations, and decision-makers will be informed of City Green's opportunities and resources.

Community Engagement works to connect the entire City Green team and body of activity with the people it hopes to serve. The communications strategy engages casual followers, close friends, and potential supporters. The department also creates experiences throughout the year for the public to enjoy. In collaboration with other departments, the communications team plans and coordinates community festivals, Veggie Mobile events, volunteer projects and more.

Through the activities of the Department of Community Engagement and Advocacy, all of City Green's amazing work can be enjoyed by the community.

The Advocacy Initiative works to elevate our grassroots efforts toward greater system and policy change through legislative advocacy, connecting with lawmakers and community stakeholders, educating decision makers on program impact and how policies can strengthen and improve the reach of City Green's work.

**Thank you to our Community Engagement and Advocacy Team: Jennifer, Jasmine, & Erin!**



# Community Building & Amplification

## Farm Fests

City Green's Farm Fests held in July, August, September were a huge success, drawing hundreds of families out to bask in the beautiful summer weather and picnic with their neighbors in the festival space at the Farm Eco-Center. Guests shopped at the farm stand, enjoyed refreshments from local vendors Ghost Hawk and Montclair Brewery, listened to a wide range of live music, and soaked in the beauty and color of the farm and gardens in the height of the season.

## Clifton Community Baby Shower

Hosted by the Clifton Health Department, this free event provides resources for mothers and families. City Green's outreach team attended to promote the Veggie Mobile, Good Food Bucks, and family and youth programming!

## Thanksgiving Market

City Green's annual Thanksgiving Market is always a wonderful way to end each farm and market season. In 2023, the 5th Annual Thanksgiving Market hosted 9 other local vendors and over 430 shoppers for a great day of holiday shopping and community!

## Lou Costello Senior Day

City Green held two "Senior Day" Events at Lou Costello Park to draw SFMNP customers from nearby senior residences and promote the new Lou Costello market location in Paterson. These fun events were a collaboration with the Paterson Alliance, SNAP-Ed and the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, and involved apple tasting, music, raffles and giveaways for seniors.

## Harvest Festival

Greenest Place in Paterson Garden Contest Harvest Festival  
In 2023, City Green's annual Harvest Festival drew 375 attendees to Paterson's Eastside Park, where they enjoyed festive family activities such as pumpkin bowling, apple cider pressing, a petting zoo, and nature jewelry making.

## Inclusive Healthy Communities Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting

City Green was joined at the Farm Eco-Center by officials from the State of New Jersey, the City of Clifton & Passaic County for the official ribbon cutting of our Gardens For All! initiative to improve disability access at the Farm Eco-Center and throughout City Green's Dig In! community garden network.

## Good Food Bucks in the White House

City Green's Advocacy team has built strong connections with the offices of local and federal legislators like State Senator Teresa Ruiz and Senator Cory Booker. As a result, City Green has provided written and spoken testimonial about the importance and impact of SNAP nutrition incentives at both state and federal level listening sessions with the aim of influencing the 2023 Farm Bill and establishing state legislation for continued funding of nutrition incentives.

## Greenest Place in Paterson Garden Contest

City Green celebrated Paterson gardeners and honored its garden contest winner at this event in Eastside Park, where neighborhood gardeners gathered, supported each other and shared their home gardening stories.



# Legislative Priorities

## **Secure State Investment into SNAP Nutrition Incentives**

Through years of advocating with state and federal legislators, City Green was able to successfully pave the way for New Jersey to fund, for the first time, SNAP Nutrition Incentives.

Additionally, our advocacy efforts have resulted in the introduction of legislation to establish a State of New Jersey Fruit and Vegetable Incentive Program. Bills have been introduced in both the New Jersey State Senate and State Assembly. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are in support of nutrition incentives for New Jersey.

City Green successfully advocated for funding in the state budget for Good Food Bucks. A coalition of state Senators and Assemblypersons supported the budget appropriations of \$500,000 - New Jersey's first ever state award to SNAP incentives.

Other priorities include:

- Municipal and county-level policies to support increased fresh food access and affordability
- Municipal and county-level policies to promote and sustain farmers markets and farm stands
- State policies and legislation to support land availability and funding for urban agriculture and growers





# Volunteers

City Green offers volunteer and internship opportunities for members of the community to further our mission of enhancing and maintaining preserved open spaces, producing local, healthy food, educating both adults and children, and taking an active role in environmental stewardship. City Green offers a variety of volunteer and internship opportunities so that members of the community can participate in ways that fit their interests and schedule. The Wednesday Volunteer Program offers a way for individuals and small groups to lend a hand to the Community Horticulture and Agriculture Teams at City Green in a fun and productive way.

City Green's weekly “Wednesday Weeders” volunteer program hosted over 214 people for over 581 hours in our farms and gardens. Volunteers helped harvest food for City Green's Veggie Mobile and Farm Stand program and maintained the farm's native plant gardens and landscaping. 89 people from 7 different Corporate Volunteer Groups completed and sponsored full-day projects at City Green's Farm Eco-Center, contributing financial support and labor to City Green, while participating in a day of team building out in nature.

## Corporate Volunteer Partners

- Paramount
- Samsung
- Samsung Group 2
- EY
- Nuveen
- Ferring
- Blue Onyx



In 2023 we hosted **303 Volunteers** who contributed **827.5 Volunteer Hours**

Including **7 Large Projects** completed by **Corporate Volunteers**





**Dig In!**



# Dig In!



## Dig In!

The mission of the Dig In! program is to support the creation of vibrant gardens in urban, suburban and rural areas of Passaic County for the production of healthy food, habitat restoration, neighborhood beautification and community enhancement. Through participation in Dig In! community members gain access to financial support, educational workshops, technical assistance and materials and resources for the successful establishment of sustainable garden projects and access to City Green's Tool Lending Library.

In 2023, the Dig In! program awarded 9 different grants to support community gardens and neighborhood farms, tree and habitat restoration gardens, and water supplies for existing gardens in Passaic County.

**Thank you to our Dig In! Team: Liz & Miranda!**





# Dig In! Highlights

- City Green offered on-site technical assistance to 4 Dig In! garden partners this year, in addition to 18 workshops held at the Spring Garden Conference and City Green totaling nearly 20 hours of educational gardening and skill-enhancing workshops
- A Garden 101 presentation featuring basic garden skills lessons was also available online for Dig In! partners to access at any time.
- Partners also took advantage of City Green's Tool Lending Library, with 6 different gardening groups borrowing tools this year. The Tool Lending Library allows grantees to use their funds for items other than expensive gardening equipment like wheelbarrows and shovels!
- The Passaic County Daffodil Project is made possible by City Green and Passaic County's Dig In! Community Garden program. In 2023, City Green planted 20,800 daffodil bulbs in parks across Passaic, Paterson, and Clifton in parks and public schools
- The Dig In! Garden Menu was created in 2022 and allows Dig In! grantees to select garden items from a pre-made menu that includes new garden beds, additional soil, garden pots, tools, irrigation supplies, etc., which City Green will then procure and deliver to their community garden. This saves gardeners the time of having to shop around and use their grant money to pay for additional shipping or inflated material costs
- Monthly Volunteer Days at Weaselbrook Park were run by City Green to support its community garden partners in caring for the established perennials





# Youth Programming

- City Sprouts
- School Grounds
- Growing Strong



# City Sprouts

The mission of City Sprouts is to create safe, beautiful vegetable and flower gardens for children in urban communities, enhanced by an outdoor education program that ensures interaction with the natural world, access to hands-on experiential learning, and an understanding of where food comes from. Children are further engaged through community partnership and family participation. Through participation in City Sprouts, children develop an appreciation for the natural environment and for the taste and health benefits of freshly picked veggies.

The City Sprouts program takes place in three seasonal sessions: Spring, Summer, and Fall. This year 580 children had unique outdoor learning experiences at 7 different City Sprouts Gardens. The curriculum was taught through 106 different weekly lesson sessions covering 20 different topics, each lasting 30-45 minutes. These outdoor lessons not only introduce children to new knowledge, skills, and vocabulary, but also give them an opportunity to channel their after-school energy into the sensory experience of the garden. Through City Sprouts, students are able to make meaningful connections between food and nature that will last a lifetime!



*"I want to thank City Green and the volunteers, interns and participants that helped to make the summer 2022 gardening experience a very successful one at the Club. Today, I overheard one of our campers say that he should have joined from the very beginning of camp, because he missed out on a lot of information. I also heard another camper say that he never liked tomatoes, but he popped a cherry tomato in his mouth and he loved it! Our campers had so much fun and learned so much this summer—and there are more vegetables still growing."*

*Debra Lesnick, Educational Director of Boys and Girls Club of Clifton*

## By the Numbers:

- **580 Youth Participants**
- **28 Varieties of Vegetables Grown**
- **106 Lessons Taught**



# City Sprouts

## Sample Our Lessons

- Starting the Spring Garden
- Garden Compost
- Planting Flowers for Us and the Bees
- Eating Seasonally w. Strawberry Radish Salsa
- Summer Crops
- Art in the Garden
- For the Birds
- All About Bugs
- Herbs in the Garden
- Salsa!
- Why Do Leaves Change Color?
- All About Apples
- Pumpkins, Pumpkins, Everywhere
- A Harvest Salad
- Getting the Garden Ready for Winter



## Meet our Partners

### Garden Camp

- Paterson Recreation
- Boys & Girls Club of Garfield
- Stars Academy
- Faith Chapel

### City Sprouts

- Paterson Main Branch Library
- Clifton Public Library
- Boys & Girls Club of Clifton
- Boys & Girls Club of Paterson
- Boys & Girls Club of Passaic
- Camp YDP
- Friendship Corner

**Thank you to our City Sprouts Team Liz, Kirsten, Brianna, Miranda, & Marri!**



# School Grounds

School Grounds provides outdoor garden classrooms, teacher training, and ongoing support for partner schools in NJ, with a focus on at-risk urban communities, while also enhancing academic achievement across disciplines, and ensuring student interactions with the natural world, access to hands-on experiential learning, and an understanding of where food comes from. Collaborating teachers gain curriculum, resources, knowledge, and enthusiasm to use this outdoor educational classroom as a tool for cultivating a farm to school culture that values and celebrates garden education as an integral part of developing the whole child.

**Highlights:** In 2023, City Green added 13 school gardens to the School Grounds network which as of 2023 consists of 108 different schools. School Grounds supports outdoor learning gardens in 36 different municipalities. 243 New Jersey teachers were trained in gardening techniques and specialized garden curriculum this year alone.

## By the Numbers:

- 108 School Grounds Partners
- 243 Teachers Trained
- 13 New School Gardens added to our network
- 21 Part Workshop Series for Educators
- 29 Farm to Pre-K Partners
- 36 Pre-School Visits
- 430 Children hosted at City Green for fun and interactive field trips!

**Thank you to our 2023 School Grounds Team: Emma & Garden Educators!**

“

*“I had three teachers in particular come to me and say, ‘I want to be part of the leadership team for those gardens.’ And those teachers worked hard all year long in building this. They went to weekend symposiums, they went to workshops, they studied under the tutelage of City Green staff... and they brought their desire to work with students.”*

*Mike Ollo, Vice Principal,  
School 2 in Paterson*



# In their Own Words...

- *"The City Green Team is FANTASTIC! They are extremely organized and very patient!! The teachers and children are in awe every time we are together!" - **Director of Gingerbread House, Boys & Girls Club***
- *"Children develop an understanding of where fruits and vegetables come from, they may be more eager to try fruits and vegetables as their understanding and taste for fresh fruits and vegetables develops, children learn about life-cycles of plants, children become engaged in hands-on learning, children spend more time outside, and teachers learn new ways to engage students through planting lessons." - **Vice Principal of Clifton Early Learners Academy***
- *"I like to see happy students and happy teachers. Happy students learn better. And students who see the product of their hard work in the gardens are happy. That's my job, to create happy, healthy school cultures." **Mike Ollo, Vice Principal, School 2 in Paterson***



# Growing Strong

Growing Strong provides paid summer employment to high school students from at-risk communities in Paterson and Clifton, enhanced by a youth development program that ensures college and career readiness. By working in an urban farming and market enterprise or educational garden camp program, interns positively engage with their community, benefit from purposeful mentorship and peer collaboration, and foster a personal connection with food systems, healthy eating, and the environment.

Since its inception in 2008, Growing Strong has grown in capacity from 3 students to 17, with a competitive application process. Often, former Growing Strong interns will return to City Green for future employment opportunities, allowing them to continue building their skill sets over years and providing City Green with a resource pool of more trained and knowledgeable staff.

**Thank you to our Growing Strong & Youth Climate Capstone Team: Isabel, Miranda, & Erin!**

## *Highlights*

In 2023, the Growing Strong program provided 14 high-schoolers with paid summer employment. Over the course of the 8-week program, interns worked in one of three groups. Farm Crew harvested thousands of pounds of food from the Clifton Farm Eco-Center, Market Crew sold fresh produce to their communities, and Farm and Garden Camp educators taught enriching outdoor curriculum to farm and garden campers in Clifton and Paterson. Built into the Growing Strong program are weekly Food Justice and professional workshops led by City Green staff which seek to contextualize the work Growing Strong does at City Green and prepare them for entering the professional world after high school. Through these workshops, students are able to feel empowered about the work that they do and inspired to keep seeking positive change in the world around them!



# In Their Own Words

“With all of the stigmas that come with growing up in a low-income and underfunded community -”ghetto” is one of them. City Green shows that no matter how much people try to take the last pieces of green left in the “ghettos” (that they purposely fill with fast food restaurants, unfinished projects, and other plans that harm our youth and earth) ghettos still get green. Showing the youth growing up in Paterson that there’s another way, that the roots hold the real nutrients that will nourish their mind, bodies and souls- is a form of rebellion to those who took away those resources in the first place.” **Mari Gebril**

“If I could describe what City Green does to someone, the first word that I would think of is ‘cultivate’. The Growing Strong program cultivated me like a crop. I deepened my understanding [of] agriculture and became more responsible. I made a resume for the first time. I had my first job at City Green. I’m thankful for who I have become.” **Madiha Aslam**

“Whether the weather is hot, rainy, or bad, I’ve learned to work hard and regularly thanks to City Green. When I do the planting and harvesting there, I almost forget how time passes and I surrender myself to nature. Every single day I stepped through the door at City Green enlightened me with the unique sounds of birds, the smell of mint in the air, and the vibrant color of fresh vegetables, and this program I was in helped me learn a lot of information and research resources under the title of ‘food access’.” **Nazli Yildiz**





# Climate Action Collective



- Adapted from City Green’s Youth Climate Action Capstone Project, the Climate Action Collective is a 3-month long group learning opportunity that deepens students understanding of climate change and empowers them to take action against it in their communities.
- In weekly meetings, volunteer sessions on the farm and in the gardens, and field trips, students from Clifton High School, Paterson STEAM High School, Hackensack High School, and the Passaic County Technical-Vocational Schools learned foundational knowledge about the climate crisis, discussed material from climate justice leaders, completed hands-on activities about art and ecology, and developed their personal leadership styles. Guided by City Green’s School and Community Garden Coordinator Miranda Madrazo, the students followed a series of 8 climate change themes.
- Participants independently researched and wrote educational toolkits on each of the themes covered by the program. To culminate the program, participants hosted a Climate Gallery Walk for family, friends, and other invited community members to attend and learn more about climate change, featuring their toolkits on display.



# Thank You to our Funders!

## **Farms and Markets:**

Partner for Health Foundation  
USDA AMS FMPP (Farmers Market Promotion Program)  
Reinvestment Fund's Healthy Food Financing Initiative  
Market Income

## **Good Food Bucks:**

USDA NIFA GusNIP (Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program)  
USDA AMS FMPP (Farmers Market Promotion Program)  
Russell Berrie Foundation  
Victoria Foundation  
Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey  
Schumann Fund for New Jersey  
Vermont Community Foundation  
Whole Cities Foundation Newark Fresh, Healthy Food Access Grant  
Nourishing Newark Community Grant  
New Jersey YMCA State Alliance SNAP-Ed Implementation Grant  
New Jersey State Appropriation  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Nutrition Incentive Hub Participany Survey Stipend Grant

## **Growing Strong and Climate Capstone Project:**

Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation  
Community Foundation of New Jersey  
The Elizabeth and Barrets O. Benjamin Charitable Foundation

## **School Grounds:**

USDA Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant  
Fee for Service Programs  
Emerson Collective Community and School Garden Special Initiative

## **Community Horticulture and Agriculture:**

USDA NRCS UAIP (Urban Agriculture Innovation Program)  
Passaic County Board of County Commissioners  
The Highlands Council Sustainability Grant

## **General Operations:**

Geraldine R Dodge Foundation  
Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation  
Starbucks Neighborhood Grant  
McMaster Carr  
Tepper Foudation