

THE BIG GARDEN



HARVEST REPORT
FOR 2022



A LETTER FROM TOM



Dear Friends of The Big Garden,

2022 was a good year for The Big Garden for many reasons. We re-evaluated our mission and broke it down into three major areas of focus: *Teach, Build, and Grow. We Teach People, We Build Communities and We Grow Food Sovereignty.*

We Teach! This area of focus consists of several educational programs, including Grow Your Own, Farm to School, and Garden to Table. We also include adult learning courses, such as new garden and grove stewardship, small space gardening, and seed starting, to name a few. Working with children, we start in early education centers, daycares, and elementary and middle schools, from ages three to 18. We focus our learning curriculum on STEM-based programming, but the main topics include soil preparation, composting, planting, cultivating, harvesting, food preparation, and food preservation. All our classes are age-appropriate, but as students age, they learn more complex aspects of urban agriculture, in gardens built at school sites. This hands-on approach is very effective at fighting food insecurity by teaching the skills needed to produce fresh, healthy food. In 2022, we had over 4,300 students in attendance for our programs!

We Build! We evaluate, provide the tools and materials, plants and trees, and provide training for locations where we install community gardens and food forests for many community locations. We do this to have a community location where people can either grow their own food, grow for their pantry or grow for donation to other locations in need. We also build gardens in each school where we teach for hands-on experience for the students we serve. To date, we have installed nearly 300 community gardens and food forests across Nebraska, Kansas, and Western Iowa, and based on our data collection, 92% are still operational, even after 17 years of building!

We Grow! On our campus, we have two greenhouses, two high tunnels, and ample room to grow fresh produce that we harvest and donate regularly throughout the year to food banks, pantries, and shelters to provide fresh alternatives to the typical canned goods they receive. Because we can grow year-round, we are able to produce literally tons of vegetables and fruits each year. We also manage a few other locations in North and South Omaha to increase our growing capacity.

We also have a farm stand program, in partnership with Whispering Roots, where we get produce and take it into neighborhoods where the need is high, and we help people select vegetables and fruits for their needs using SNAP funds. Through a partnership, we can match the SNAP funds, doubling the spending power for people and we also provide easy, wonderful recipes that people can use in food preparations. Last year, we matched over \$10,000 in SNAP funds, meaning we provided over \$20,000 in produce to help stretch the budget dollars of community members! Finally, we honored a recently passed and long-time supporter, by creating the Marilyn Stewart Memorial Herb Garden on our campus, complete with medicinal, culinary, and tea herbs.

2022 was a year of growth and the outlook for 2023 continues to shine! Thanks to all who have helped to support us, either through funding, volunteerism, or gifts in kind! Thanks also for helping us to spread the word about The Big Garden through social media, or by having a speaker come out to your location to tell our story. Finally, thanks to all who supported us by purchasing organic or heirloom seedlings for your own gardens. All support is very much appreciated...we couldn't do it without all of you!

Tom Neal

TOM NEAL

Executive Director

WE TEACH

71 Pre-School Classes

13 Elementary School Classes

360 Middle School Classes

4497 Students Reached



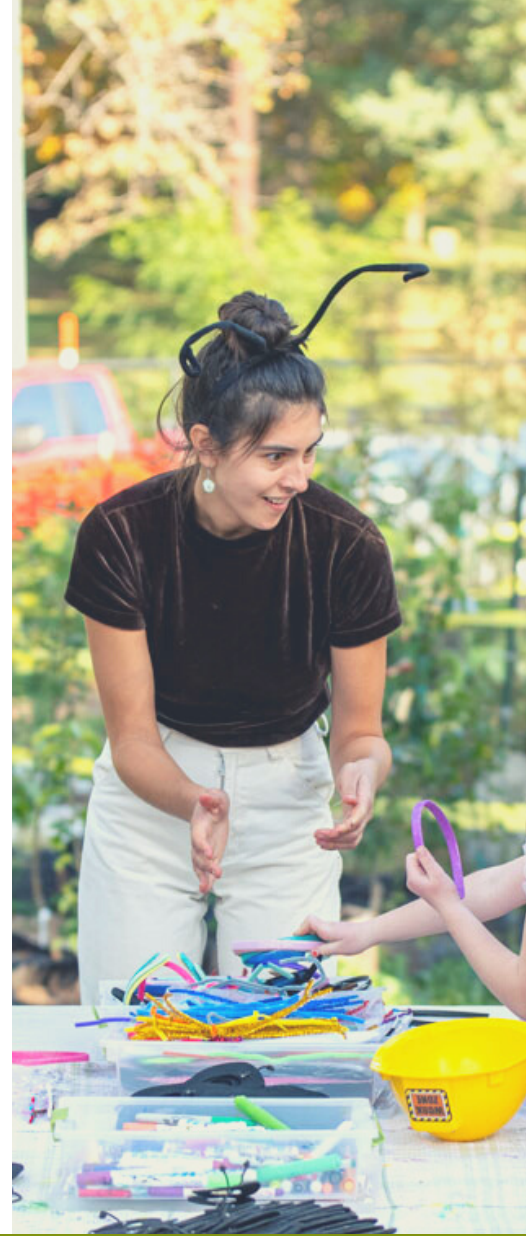
TEACH. BUILD. GROW. TEACHING PEOPLE. BUILDING COMMUNITIES. GROWING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY.

WE BUILD IN NEBRASKA

7 New Community Gardens

6 Community Gardens Repaired

1 Community Garden Expanded



TEACH. BUILD. GROW. TEACHING PEOPLE. BUILDING COMMUNITIES. GROWING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY.

WE BUILD IN KANSAS

2 New Community Gardens

9 New Orchards Planted

77 Fruit Trees Planted



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WE GROW

3407 Pounds of fresh produce

20,000+ Seedlings

500+ Volunteer hours were served



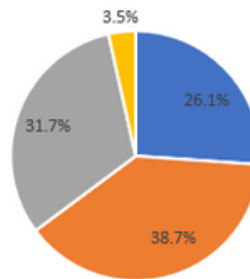
TEACH. BUILD. GROW. TEACHING PEOPLE. BUILDING COMMUNITIES. GROWING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY.

FINANCES

MAJOR GRANT FUNDING

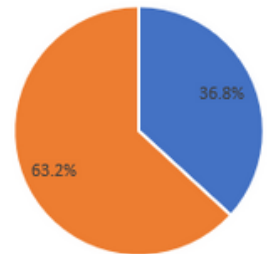
Collective for Youth
Sherwood Foundation
Wm Ruth Scott Foundation
Weitz Foundation
Mutual of Omaha Foundation
KS Healthy Congregations
BCBS of Topeka
Semerad Foundation
Creche Foundation
Farm Credit Services

2022 Income



■ Individual Donations ■ Grants ■ Conference Support ■ Other Income

2022 EXPENSES



■ Operating ■ Programs

Special thanks to all who donated individually, whether financially, through volunteerism, or through in-kind gifts to The Big Garden.

Thank you to the countless United Women In Faith volunteers who made plant stakes, to the hundreds of volunteers who came out to our campus or build sites to help with our mission, and to the people who supported us through our annual Plant Sale.

We could not do this without all of you!



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STAFF AND BOARD

BIG GARDEN STAFF

Thomas Neal, Executive Director
Kay Carlson, Director of Campus and Volunteer Activities
Alajia McKizia, Co-Director of Education
Kaya Baker, Co-Director of Education
Sara Atkins-Rauwald, Marketing and Communications Manager
Brittany Beyer, Gardens and Giving Grove Manager-NE
Molly Baurain, Gardens and Giving Grove Manager-KS
Dioselina Estevez, Education Assistant
Emily Hefeli, Education Assistant
Mara Bullock, Education Assistant
Alaiya Cave, Education Assistant-PT
Stephanie Finklea, Education Assistant-PT
Amy Gee, Campus Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Big Garden



Teach Build Grow

@BigGardenOmaha



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Marilyn Stewart Herb Garden Memorial



BigGarden.org