

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



CULTIVATING A FOOD SOVEREIGN DETROIT

Reflecting on 2016

It's true; there are some things at Keep Growing Detroit (KGD) that don't change much from year to year. Distribution days for the Garden Resource Program (GRP) fall like clockwork on a calendar, the first Wednesday of August is always the Annual Garden Tour, and there's always good food to be found from Grown in Detroit growers on a Saturday at Eastern Market. What does change year to year are the millions of new and different ways that the Detroit urban agriculture community connects and inspires. From residents motivated to grow a garden for the first time to diverse chefs transitioning to purchasing locally grown crops to innovative entrepreneurial models supporting growers and strengthening the economy, there's continuously more and more ways that resident growers are making an impact. This year, as we listened to Senator Stabenow announce the proposed Urban Agriculture Act of 2016 we found ourselves reflecting on the significant ways that Detroit's urban agriculture community is inspiring change far beyond the boundaries of the city. She said it best, "The leaders are in Detroit; nationally, as I talk to people from California to New York, they all say the folks in Detroit are the ones who are doing the best job and understand urban agriculture. We want to take our leadership here and be able to integrate that into larger agricultural policy."

That said, no amount of recognition changes the challenges that Detroiters face every day and the reasons why residents have taken to their shovels to activate change. 2016 was packed with obstacles, from water shutoffs and failing schools to a changing city that not all Detroiters find themselves feeling welcome and supported in. For growers in particular, access to land has been a road block and the continuing struggle for equity and justice in the food system and beyond can feel, on many days, insurmountable. But there is truth in Senator Stabenow's statement and it's reflected in the accomplishments that we've seen in our resilient community that continues to plant the seeds, challenge unjust systems and inspire the change that we demand for ourselves and our community.





Our Growing Community

At Keep Growing Detroit, we are committed to digging in every year alongside Detroit's growers and good food advocates. In 2016, participation in the GRP reached a new all-time high with 1,434 gardens joining the program, picking up over 65,425 seeds and 284,890 transplants to sow in their gardens. These gardens produced an impressive 343,425 pounds of nutritious food for Detroit families and communities, but what draws attention to Detroit gardeners is not just the sheer number of gardens that grow here, but the fact that these gardens are networked. The 432 community, 92 market, 76 school, and 834 family gardens as well as the more than 20 individuals and organizations that joined the GRP as Partners in Food Sovereignty are the key to our recipe for systems change. As the number of gardens grows each year, so does the strength and reach of our network to inspire, educate, and support one another and our ability to collectively cultivate change.

Over the years, we have been humbled by the way that the core programs at KGD have grown through word-of-mouth recommendations from friends, neighbors, and church members. And, each year, we strive to be creative and thoughtful about how to connect with new community members who are not yet directly involved with or benefiting from Detroit's changing food system.

In 2016, KGD made efforts to connect with the community through a number of outreach efforts, including Good Food Blocks campaigns, where we went door-to-door to talk to residents about opportunities for good food in their neighborhood; informational kiosks at our four regional resource centers; dropping our program materials strategically in areas where we know there is limited access to broadband connections; and pro-actively attending a diverse range of over 77 community events, meetings, and celebrations to get to know the over 4,394 residents from across the city who attended these events.

We also attempted to reduce barriers to participating in our programs by translating key program materials, like the GRP application into Spanish, and working to ensure important events, like resource distributions, were accessible by public transportation. We can't know exactly how all of the 578 new gardens that joined the GRP in 2016 found out about us, but we value the opportunity to connect with and learn about Detroit's diverse neighborhoods through these efforts.

Digging In Together

Healthy gardens are a reflection of the time, resources, and tender care that gardeners put in and the reality is that gardening and farming is hard work. Therefore, KGD does everything we can think of to give gardeners the support and encouragement they need to succeed. During 124 site visits this year, KGD helped growers plan for their gardens, examining site attributes, water sources, sunshine, and, most importantly, the soil. KGD assisted gardeners with 222 soil tests to identify soil composition, PH, and lead and assisted gardeners with 95 raised beds and tilled 18 gardens to help them get started or expand. KGD also helped gardeners explore their goals for the garden, with discussions about appropriately scaling gardens based on family and community involvement.

From there, KGD encouraged GRP members to be “active,” volunteering their time at least once a year at events like a GRP distribution or a community workday in order to receive additional garden resources and be eligible to borrow tools. With the contribution of 1,525 hours of sweat equity from 668 GRP members, not only were there more resources to go around, but during these events, gardeners connected, shared ideas, and often learned something new. The four Spring Mixers at regional resource centers were a chance for participants to get active while getting familiar with their regional resource centers, where we distributed 352 yards of compost, 690 tomato stakes, 480 feet of row cover and 870 feet of trellis netting this year. The events were full of mingling, tours of the farms, and this year included a kale salad cooking demo.

At seven monthly workdays hosted by gardens across the city from April through October, 76-plus members pitched in to weed gardens, install rain catchment systems, and plant garlic and peppers, and while collectively helping to move gardens – and neighborhoods—forward. We are especially proud of the sweat equity contributed by members of the GRP, who see the value of looking inward to our community to provide the resources that will help us build this momentum towards food sovereignty for ourselves and this city.



Grower Gatherings

If gardeners are anything, they're a busy bunch. Not a week goes by that we aren't planting this, learning that, weeding this, or eating that, which is why one of our favorite things to do as a community is to come together over the food we grow! In 2016, KGD hosted 4 citywide events to connect growers from every edge of the city over tables plied high with good food. We kicked off the 2016 season with the annual winter potluck during a blizzard in February, but that didn't stop nearly 100 growers from coming out to get excited about the season along with our special youth guests, the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network Food Warriors.

In June, 200-plus GRP members rolled out blankets and lawnchairs to the tune of entertainment provided by GRP members, DJ Mosiah and duo La Kinh, and celebrated summer with a giant GRP salad bar! Plates were overflowing with a mix of Detroit greens and salad fixings and topped off with veggies and meat from the grill station where GRP's own Grill King worked his magic. In August, the Annual Tour of Detroit Urban Gardens and Farms packed a record 9 routes into the event, taking over 400 visitors to see gardens both historic and brand new. Eastern Market's Shed 3 was packed with satisfied bellies at the tour reception, which invited guests to feast on tastes of Grown in Detroit produce prepared by local chefs and then weave through the Good Food Bazaar to see all that the budding food entrepreneurs of Detroit are cooking up! Looking forward, we'll be gathering for one last time this season in November for the Annual KGD celebration, which will be a chance to recognize the accomplishments of the season with the gardeners who make it possible and enjoy the fruits of our labor, which make a fantastic community meal!





Detroit's Tiniest Gardeners

Some of the most promising new gardeners of 2016 were the 1,931 children ages birth to five that poked their little fingers into the soil to begin to explore the wonderful world of food. KGD worked in partnership with 35 early childhood centers, including Head Start and Early Head Start, to develop gardens to expose young children to fresh fruits and veggies so healthy food is a part of their diet for the rest of their lives.

In 2016, parents and staff helped to plan and build 18 new gardens. These gardens will not only improve access to fresh fruits and veggies, they will provide opportunities in a classroom setting for education and parent engagement, and may even inspire parents to start a garden at home. Supporting educators and parents to build their own skills is key to the success of these outdoor classrooms, so KGD provided training and support during 8 outreach meetings, 5 basic garden classes, and in 2 'Grow with Me' seasonal newsletters. KGD also trained five providers to use our 'Grow With Me' activity cards, which are age-appropriate activity cards that give step by step instructions on things teachers can do with their students in their garden space.

To compliment the produce grown in center gardens, KGD worked to connect providers and parents to opportunities to purchase local fruits and vegetables. Two of the early childhood centers that we partnered with were awarded Michigan Farm to School grants to facilitate procurement of locally grown produce and one home daycare received vouchers for Michigan produce through Hoophouses for Health program. During 3 field trips to Plum Street Market Garden and one to the Northwest Farmers' Market, parents, children and staff were introduced to opportunities to maximize benefits at farmers' markets using the Bridge Card, Double Up Food Bucks, WIC Project Fresh, and Hoophouses for Health vouchers as well as the pure joy of taking little ones to visit a farm or market in their own community.

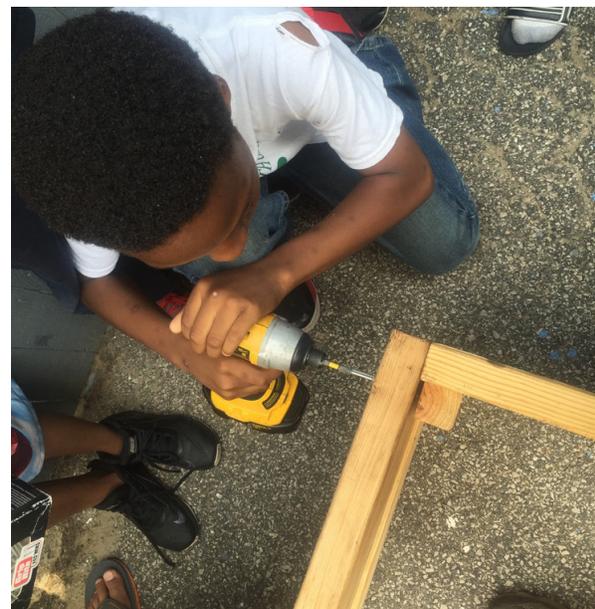
Exposure to healthy food at a young age can have positive health benefits that last a lifetime.

Cultivating Young Leaders

This summer, the energy on farms across the city was high with the involvement and leadership of young adults who were cultivating their gardens, building skills as young entrepreneurs, and growing their knowledge of the food system. Sixty-five of these young growers and their adult allies participated in Youth Growing Detroit, digging in at 4 work exchanges and skill shares to network and learn alongside their peers. Each of the 5 gardens participating had the opportunity to learn and practice skills of excellent customer service, running a cash box, and sharing tips on local produce during their market shifts at the Grown in Detroit table at Eastern Market.

Over at Plum Street Market Garden, 6 dynamic young Detroiters spent almost 7 weeks of their summer as Youth Apprentices developing their growing, leadership, and culinary skills alongside KGD's staff and community. Complementing their weekly work on the farm, apprentices gained job readiness skills and practiced public speaking as they led tours of the farm and had learning exchanges with dozens of visiting peer groups. A memorable exchange was teaching youth from Detroit Food Academy how to harvest produce and learning from them how to cook using those very ingredients. These new cooking skills came in handy during the 4 friendly, yet competitive iron chef cook-offs between apprentices.

Finally, youth hit the road to visit numerous food businesses, including 2 urban gardens and Robin Hill and Get Down Farms, both near Ann Arbor, where they were exposed to different growing methods, educational opportunities, and potential future job opportunities. Four of the youth apprentices were so engaged and motivated by their summer experience that they were invited to continue on throughout the school year to further develop their leadership skills. In October, youth presented at the Michigan Good Food Summit and got rave reviews. Upon successful completion of their training over the next few months, we look forward to inviting these youth back as crew leaders for the 2017 Summer Youth Apprenticeship!



Rooted in Knowledge

URBAN GARDEN EDUCATION SERIES

In 11 years the Education Series has hosted classes on more than 200 different topics. The wealth of knowledge on gardening and food ways shared with and among Detroiters in these classes is immense. This year alone 655 people dedicated 4,257 hours to learning a virtual A to Z of farm and food techniques during 46 sessions, including new topics such as Aquaponics, Cultivating Mushrooms, and Yoga for Gardeners. The format for the classes, hosted in gardens, hands-on, and taught by a diversity of teachers, makes them much more than just the “how to, step by step.” Classes offer an avenue to network with other growers, which can be encouraging in years like 2016 when gardeners were challenged with drought, weeds, and pest pressure. And if that isn’t enough, the classes were also tasty! Local chefs, including Demitart Gourmet’s Lester Gouvia and Selden Standard’s Andy Hollyday, taught 7 cooking and food preservation classes this season, taking tomatoes and eggplant to the next level and sending gardeners home inspired to try new things in the kitchen!

URBAN ROOTS

Looking back on 12 years of graduates, it is phenomenal to connect the dots of the nearly 400 leaders that are linked together through their shared experience as Urban Roots students. Every year, a new group of over 30 diverse leaders come together for the course, from beginning growers to seasoned organizers, all committing to learn the skills to create and expand community garden projects in their communities. In 2016, over a third of the 34 students in the course represented 10 well-established gardens and urban farming organizations, illustrating just how much Detroit's community of growers values Urban Roots as resource to train and support their staff and community as they establish or expand their gardens and farms. While it is difficult to fit into just a 9-week session, the curriculum continues to grow and change to include new topics and themes each season. With every new theme covered in the class, from an introduction to global food systems to a panel discussion on programming ideas to engage residents of all ages, the graduates are prepared to thrive in the ever-changing Detroit food system environment.



Tools of the Trade

SWEET ON DETROIT

In recent years we have seen record hive losses globally due to pest and disease pressures and impacts of the industrial food system. As most people know, bees play an important role in pollinating food crops and that is just one of the reasons KGD feels it's so important to support beekeeping in Detroit. Now in its ninth year, Sweet on Detroit is a beekeeper training program and club for GRP members. The Bee-ginner Beekeeper training program is a series of 5 classes covering the fundamentals of beekeeping. As part of the class, participants are paired with experienced "bee buddies" to get hands-on experience opening and maintaining hives. In 2016, 21 bee-ginners completed 327 hours of training and 63 hours of bee buddy visits. And that's just the start! Beekeeping is unique in the world of animal husbandry, there are many ways to manage bees, solve problems, and process products - all of which can be overwhelming to navigate. For this reason the Beekeeping Club exists to help experienced beekeepers network, order supplies together, and share ideas. This year 27 members participated to glean ideas from regional conferences, try their hands at grafting queens and troubleshoot ways to best address pest issues.

FARM TRAIN

For the second year in a row, KGD offered Farm Train, an advanced farmer training program, for 20 market growers seeking to improve their planning skills. Knowing that growers learn best from other growers, the 5-session course was peer-led by farmers representing a wide range of growing and marketing expertise. Attendees were guided through the process of mapping their farm, choosing crops, and designing a unique planting and harvest schedule. Teachers also highlighted marketing options in the city, including Grown in Detroit. Throughout the course, participants were encouraged to share personal experiences growing and selling produce in the city—invaluable information for new marketers and those seeking to farm collaboratively. In between class sessions, attendees met in smaller groups to help each other work on their 2016 farm plans. In addition to receiving a number of farm planning tricks and tools, the attendees left having built stronger connections to each other.





Our Land & Water

Over the years, as our farming community has grown in size and skill, KGD has worked alongside growers to develop their capacity to navigate the road blocks encountered while creating and sustaining urban agriculture projects. In 2016, we focused on providing technical assistance related to land security, policy development, and water security.

Land security is a critical component of a successful small farm business. With nearly 120,000 vacant lots and just as many potential owners, navigating property ownership and the various programs for leasing and purchasing can be a nightmare. In 2016, KGD supported over 30 gardeners with basic property ownership searches; 20 gardeners with land acquisition; and 5 with long term planning for site selection and security. However, despite the progress, the City's policies and processes still stifle potential land security for many. In 2016, KGD worked and partnered with organizations, including the Detroit Food Policy Council and City Planning Commission Urban Agriculture Workgroup, to elevate issues, advocate for gardeners, and lend our community's experience and expertise to the development and implementation of new policies, including the urban livestock ordinance.



A community isn't water secure unless it has access to adequate quantities of clean water for preserving ecosystems and sustaining human well being, including a healthy food system. This year, with a growing season plagued by drought, water security wasn't far from many growers' minds. In an effort to make sure growers had adequate access to water, KGD built 7 water collection and irrigation systems at sites across the city. Not only will these systems help growers capture and use water for years to come, they inspired an easy-to-build design that will be shared with GRP members this winter. To ensure that our community has access to fresh water in the long run, KGD grew 2,400 native plants at Plum Street Market Garden and collaborated with Sierra Club, Friends of the Rouge, and residents on Detroit's eastside to install 15 new rain gardens. These gardens will help slow down and filter rain water so that it doesn't negatively impact local rivers and lakes during heavy rainfalls. Together, these strategies will help protect nearly 7,400 gallons of water every time it rains.





Growing a Healthy Economy

If sustainable and locally grown fruits and vegetables is what you're after, you need look no farther than the tables of Grown in Detroit, which has been providing an abundance of fresh choices for over a decade to its farmers' market customers. Grown in Detroit (GID) was an essential stop for many customers during 51 market days at Eastern Market on Saturdays and Tuesdays this year and customers and growers alike were thrilled by plans that expanded GID presence by two weeks in both the spring and fall. The result was that 53 participating farmers from Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck earned a record breaking \$50,000 through their sales at market.

Eleven new gardeners joined GID this season at market after participating in one of four New Marketer Orientation workshops. The orientation equipped growers with best practices for harvesting and packaging their produce and growers that needed a little more support were paired with a market buddy to make their first few trips to the market a little easier. Committed to tackling the ever changing needs of the growers and the GID customer base, the GID Workgroup met 9 times throughout the season to discuss making adjustments to existing systems, boosting sales, and addressing other concerns.

To meet the needs of the added market days this season, the Workgroup made a decision to increase required volunteer hours. GID members jumped in to fulfill this need, clocking over 750 hours of volunteer service, knowing that their commitment and effort would contribute to growing their small businesses.

Another opportunity for growers to expand their businesses this year was participation in the GID Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, which was offered twice this season with a 9-week spring session and a Thanksgiving share. With guaranteed sales for their seasonal produce, the CSA offered the incentive of financial security for growers, which can be fragile if relying solely on farmers' markets. The low cost of the box and the opportunity to cook and eat seasonally offered a great incentive for the 19 shareholders this spring. To help them with the challenge of how to prepare and cook the fresh produce and herb selections in the box each week, the weekly "Shared News" highlighted recipes that incorporated at least three of the seasonal items as well as an opportunity to learn about a participating farm business. With nearly 20 shares sold to date for the Thanksgiving share, all are likely to be thankful for the abundant offerings from Detroit's farms this season.



Expanding Access

GROWN IN DETROIT IN STORES AND RESTAURANTS

We know residents who grow their food eat 2.5 servings more fruits and vegetables than their non-gardening neighbors. But where do we go when we don't have time to cook at home or want to dine out on the town? Gratefully, there are more options than ever to choose from in Detroit's budding culinary community, with fresh choices popping up every week. Many long-standing and emerging food businesses appreciate and value locally grown produce, and feature it prominently on their menus. As Grown in Detroit continues to grow beyond our customer base at the farmers' markets, growers are seizing the opportunity and together we're finding new outlets for our bounty. This year 27 market gardens sold through Grown in Detroit wholesale. Combined with the output from Plum Street Market Garden, Detroiters have sold more than \$23,000 to 42 local food businesses – 21 that purchased in 2016 for the first time. In the coming years, we anticipate more growers contributing even more to these sales as our business continues to scale up and we begin selling to more local institutions.



PRODUCE FOR PANTRIES

In a city where over 1/3 of the population lives below the poverty line and food insecurity is double the national average, emergency food pantries play a bigger role in the food system than you might think. At the same time, people who rely on food pantries are faced with few healthy options and often take home highly processed foods to their families. To begin to address this need, KGD worked in partnership with Gleaners and 3 client choice pantries to launch Detroit Produce for Pantries to connect Detroit growers who have extra produce to emergency food pantries that have a need for fresh produce. Since its launch in July, the program has donated over 800 pounds of produce reaching almost 1,000 families. So far, the produce has gone beyond adding to the diversity of food available at the pantries; it's evoked vivid memories of cooking collards with mom, growing chiles in Mexico, and shelling peas with grandparents. As clients continuously hear about the Garden Resource Program through the initiative, we hope to see many more pantry clients gardening, eating, and selling their own produce.





What's Growing on Plum Street

Since 2010 our staff has lovingly developed The Plum Street Market Garden at MGM Grand into a place of learning and community engagement. Although we're growing food there year-round, the farm's primary function is to be an outdoor classroom and resource hub; modeling sustainable farming practices for GRP members, youth apprentices, and the broader Detroit community. With the help of GRP members and many, many volunteers, the fields produced over 9,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables this year for both Grown in Detroit customers and our Produce for Pantries partners. In addition to growing over 120 varieties of familiar crops like onions and potatoes, we also trialed new crops such as yard-long beans, celery, and kalettes with the intention of encouraging growers to try something new in their own gardens.



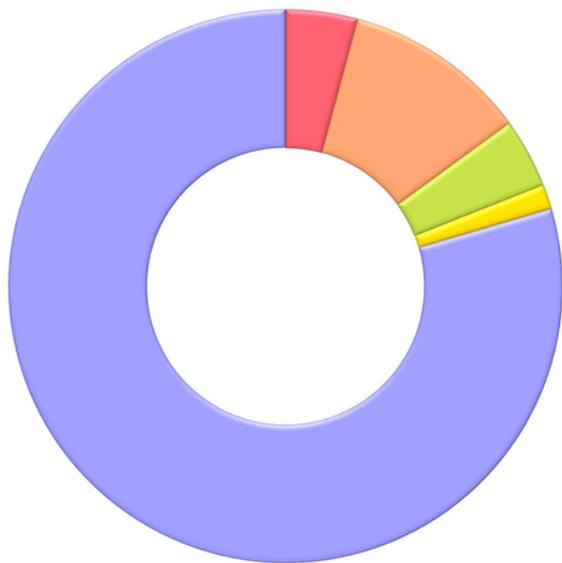
This year, Plum Street Market Garden took a step forward in its evolution—attracting more local gardeners and farmers than ever before with the addition of KGD office hours on the farm, weekly open hours for volunteering, and Learn and Earn sessions for GRP members. Moving GRP Office Hours to the farm encouraged members to take advantage of the wide range of resources available to them, including time spent with farm staff and exposure to live examples of larger scale farming practices. During 9 Learn and Earn Sessions participants had the opportunity for hands-on learning on topics ranging from planting garlic and growing sweet potatoes to building raised beds before receiving those resources for their own gardens. Many of these gardeners came back for the 65 open hour sessions where GRP and community members practiced 718 hours of sustainable urban farming with seasonal tasks like growing transplants for the GRP, planting beds, and harvesting alongside our farmers. In addition to GRP members, open hours and Dig in Detroit volunteer days were packed with 1,627 volunteers from near and far that arrived excited about getting their hands dirty, contributing 4,129 hours of growing food together and learning about the urban agriculture movement in Detroit.



2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

2015 REVENUE

\$720,285



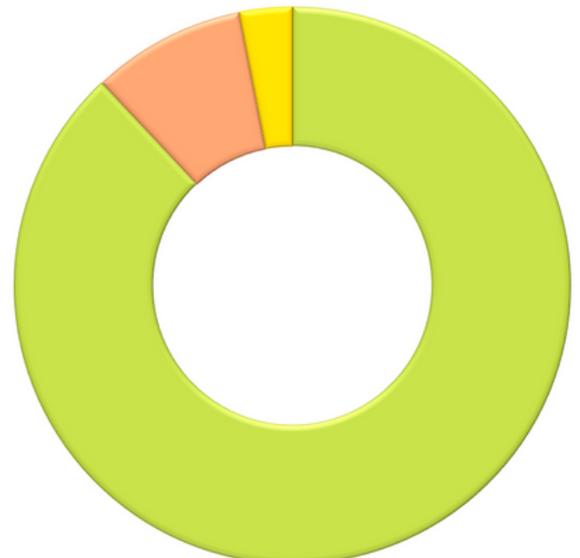
- 1% Events and Tours
- 4% Produce Sales
- 4% Individual and Contributions
- 11% Program Revenue
- 80% Grants

9% OF GRP MEMBERS DONATE TO KGD

2015 EXPENSES

\$539,203

- 88% Direct Programming
- 9% Management
- 3% Fundraising



ABOUT US

OUR MISSION

Keep Growing Detroit exists to promote a food sovereign city where the majority of fruits and vegetables consumed by Detroiters are grown by residents within the city's limits. Our strategic approach to achieving our mission includes work that fosters relationships to food, grows the knowledge of food and farming, builds leadership skills and capacity within Detroit's urban agriculture community, and changes the value of food while developing community assets.

To remain accountable to the community we serve Keep Growing Detroit practices open book management. That means our entire staff and board are involved in all aspects of day-to-day operations and management, including budgeting and reviewing financial statements on a monthly basis.

STAFF

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