

2014 ANNUAL REVIEW

growing excellence



GROW DAT
YOUTH FARM



highlights

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Staff hired + Permanent home identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Program launched + 1 partner school + 11 youth + Farmed on 1/4 acre at the Hollygrove Market & Farm while permanent site was designed + Harvested 2,200 lbs. of produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Moved to City Park + 5 partner schools + 20 youth + Granted 4-acre site + Farmed on 1 acre + Harvested 7,250 lbs. of produce + Earned \$12,000 in produce sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 6 partner schools + 30 youth + Farmed on 1 1/2 acres + Harvested 8,500 lbs. of produce + Earned \$17,000 in produce sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Expanded site, markets and program + 6 partner schools + 40 youth + Expanded total site to 7 acres + Farmed on 2 acres + Earned \$35,000 in produce sales

Ten years ago, Grow Dat was merely a seed of an idea, alive only in my mind. Today, four years after we found our beautiful home here in City Park, we've grown over 25,000 pounds of food with 100+ young adults in New Orleans.

This is what we've done, but why? Farming is hard work—what inspires us to continue? We began this farm with the goal to explore a concept: Can we forge new ways to live and work together? Can we find enough common ground across our differences to work together toward a shared vision of social change? Can we build an alternative to our current food system, which puts profits over the health of people and the environment? Can we steward our small space in a way that restores and regenerates, rather than destroys and degrades?

The answer is a resounding yes, and the secret to our success is us—all of us, the many young people and volunteers who have dedicated thousands of hours to transform a piece of a park into a sustainable farm, the hundreds who have generously supported our mission, and even the worms and microbes that have brought health back to our soils.

Wendell Berry writes: The earth is what we have in common. This grounding principle has been a foundation of the community we have created, and it is that community, and our relationship to our place, that will help us weather uncertain times ahead. We invite you to deepen your roots in our community in the coming year.

Johanna Gilligan
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR



a typical day at the farm

6:58 a.m.



Youth volunteer at Créscent City Cafe, a free restaurant located Uptown on St. Charles Avenue. Youth serve guests a delicious and healthy meal. Hands-on service such as this helps make connections between our food system, hunger and inequity.

8:32 a.m.



The crew splits into two smaller groups that work either at the Grow Dat Farm Stand or the Crescent City Farmer's Market.

10:04 a.m.



Back on the farm, a crew works in the fields, learning a variety of agricultural tasks, from compost-building to bed-making to weeding.

11:35 a.m.



Meanwhile, another crew is attending a cooking and nutrition class hosted by our partner organization, Cooking Matters. Each recipe features fresh produce from our farm. At the end of the day, ingredients are given to the group to try making the same recipe again at home.

12:30 p.m.



A game break after lunch. Games are an essential part of our work at Grow Dat—they foster communication and help reinvigorate our spirits for the hard work ahead.

1:02 p.m.



In the afternoon, Crew Leaders, with the help of their youth Assistant Crew Leaders, lead an interactive workshop on hunger, food access and food deserts as part of our Food Justice curriculum.

OUR VISION

We envision a vibrant New Orleans where youth and adults transform their communities, their environment and themselves by engaging in the meaningful work of growing healthy food.



We grow with the farm. You know how a plant starts growing, when first it's just leaves, then the fruit comes? Well, that's how I feel like it went. I started as something small and branched out and grew stronger and eventually became this beautiful fruit. I started growing slowly, but then as I started doing more, I transformed and changed as a person. As we went along, the hard work made me have more pride in what I was doing. It was challenging, but that's what was meaningful about it. —YOUTH CREW MEMBER, 2014

annual highlights

Leadership Program Expansion

This year we increased the number of youth working on our farm by 30%! Thirty-five new Crew Members and six returning Assistant Crew Leaders participated in our five-month Leadership Program. The new Crew Members were selected out of over 90 applicants—a record turnout! These youth made it through our rigorous application process and participated in our group Interview Day in December 2013. Almost 200 guests attended one of our Community Lunches on the farm this past June, enjoying a meal crafted by youth working closely with esteemed Guest Chefs Edgar “Dooky” Chase IV, Dominique Adansi-Bona and Chris Montero. This year we also expanded to a sixth partner school, Lusher Charter High School, and hired our first program alumna, Yasmin Davis, in a staff role as a Crew Leader.



Farm and Market Expansion

In the fall of 2013 we announced the expansion of our farm site from 4.2 to 7 acres. In close collaboration with our core partners, Tulane University (led by Tulane City Center) and City Park, we have increased our field production space from 1.5 to 2 acres. This agricultural expansion positions Grow Dat to grow more food, earn more income and hire more young people for our Leadership Programs. Last spring, we launched both our on-site Farm Stand and our first ever Farm Share CSA Program. We offered 30 Farm Shares, which sold out well before the sign-up deadline.

In addition to our weekly booth at the Crescent City Farmers Market, we now sell youth-grown produce directly from our farm every Saturday morning, from 9am to noon, January through June.

Site Expansion and Birding Corridor Partnership

The Birding Corridor is a collaborative project between Audubon Louisiana, New Orleans City Park, Grow Dat Youth Farm and the Orleans Chapter of the National Audubon Society. The first phase of the plan includes

invasive species management, which will enhance bird habitat and create a small bird-viewing pavilion and bird-watching trail on the 1-acre space behind our eco-campus. Future plans include trails that will meander through other parts of the park, around lazy bayous and underneath majestic oak and cypress trees. With various species of birds present in City Park on any given day, there will be a lot to hear and see from our feathered friends. The enhancement of this space will create tremendous opportunities for youth employees, students visiting on field trips and the wider public to learn about how to protect spaces in our region that are critical to the ongoing survival of many incredible species of birds.

Graphic Rebranding

Have you noticed our new look? Since the start of the new year we’ve been working closely with the talented staff of Right Hat, a marketing and design firm that specializes in strategic brand consulting and design. Right Hat is providing \$75,000 in pro bono work to Grow Dat to help streamline our look. Stay tuned for more beautifully designed graphics and products as we continue to roll out Right Hat’s work over the coming year.

INCREASING FOOD ACCESS IN NEW ORLEANS

$$10,000 \text{ lbs. of food grown} = 6,000 \text{ lbs. of food sold} + 4,000 \text{ lbs. of food donated}$$

$$2 \text{ acres of land under cultivation} = \$35,000 \text{ sales from our produce in 2014*}$$

FUNDING SUCCESSES INCLUDED:

Funding 20% of our annual operating budget through our internal revenue-generation activities, including produce sales, learning tours, event rentals and consulting.

Grow Dat’s second annual Hootenanny Barn Dance Benefit, which featured square dancing, music by Bruce “Sunpie” Barnes and the Louisiana Sunspots, and small plates from New Orleans culinary heavyweights including Good Eggs, Slow Food, Dante’s Kitchen, Pagoda Café, Mondo, Café NOMA, St. James Cheese Company, Nola Pie Guy and Bittersweet Confections. We appreciate everyone who supported Grow Dat by buying tickets, volunteering and donating to the Hootenanny, especially Entergy, IBERIABANK, NOLA Aikido, New Orleans Slow Food, Twelve Mile Limit, The Coca-Cola Co., Atelier Vie, Pearl Wine Co., The Barman’s Fund, Massey’s, Louisiana Children’s Museum, Home Depot, Good Eggs, Dismas Security, Pistil & Stamen Flower Farm and Studio, The New Orleans Advocate, The Gambit, Yelp and City Park for use of their beautiful Arbor Room.

Our third year of ongoing support from Capital One Bank.

Receiving a \$3,000 grant award for our farm expansion from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

The Fox Family Foundation and Jones Family Foundation providing generous general operating support.

A \$15,000 contribution from the Kabacoff Family Foundation, funding a year of collaborative learning with our sister organization, Urban Roots.

Grow Dat being selected as one of eight grantees in the most recent funding cycle of Baptist Community Ministries, and being awarded \$300,000 of support over the following three years.

The Edgar “Dooky” Jr. and Leah Chase Family Foundation providing support for one of our Community Luncheons on the farm this past June.

Funding from the ConAgra Foundation to be applied to our Shared Harvest program (our commitment to share 40% of what we grow). Over the coming year, we will work closely with Shared Harvest partners to create more chances for youth who work at Grow Dat to share their knowledge about growing and eating healthy food.

In-Kind Supporters Include:

- The Barman’s Fund
- Big Ass Fans
- Harbor Communications
- Hike for KaTREEna
- Right Hat
- Trident Environmental Services and Consultants
- Tulane City Center
- Tulane University
- Whole Foods



We expanded our Shared Harvest partnerships this year to include more service activities led by youth.

2014 Shared Harvest partners:

- + Grow Dat youth and families
- + YEP (Youth Empowerment Project)
- + Crescent City Cafe
- + Stand with Dignity
- + Congress of Day Laborers
- + ReThink
- + The 7th Ward Community Garden Project
- + Original Big 7 Social Aid and Pleasure Club
- + Second Harvest Food Bank

*Produce sales in 2014 were \$5,000 over our target goal! Our inaugural Farm Share CSA Members were a financial cornerstone in reaching this ambitious goal—thank you to everyone who joined! New membership sign-up will begin in early 2015.



thanks to our supporters

Inaugural Farm Share Members

Ryan C. Albright
Serafina Alfieri
The Barksdale Family
Kelly Bond
Donna Cavato
Aaron Clark-Rizzio
Leo D. Dunn
Daniel Etheridge
Madeline J. Futrell
Rachel Houge
Sanjay Kharod
Julianne M. LeBlanc
Dana Logsdon
Kristy Magner
Addie Martin
Alexander Merrill-Langen
Bryn C. Morgan
Janet Parrish
Marie-Isabelle Pautz
Emily H. Posner
Helen Regis
Corey Rittvo
Ariel Roland
Susan R. Sakash
Elaine and Bill Schwartz
Savannah Shange
Roblyn G. Sliwinski
Jennifer Snape
Gaynelle L. Stewart Davis
Ryan Thibodaux
Lisa W. Wall

2013 Growing the Green Peer-to-Peer Fundraisers

Molly Ariail
Jeanne Firth
Clare Giesen
Gwen Gilligan
Johanna Gilligan
Sean Gilligan
Leo Gorman
Sarah Howard
Casey Miller
Jenga Mwendo
Emily H. Posner
Josh Schoop
Nikki Thanos

\$50,000 and Beyond

Blue Moon Fund
Greater New Orleans Foundation

\$25,000-\$49,999

Baptist Community Ministries
Capital One Bank

\$10,000-\$24,999

Stephanie and David Barksdale
Fox Family Foundation
Kabacoff Family Foundation
Martha Murphy

\$5,000-\$9,999

BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana
Brinton Family Health & Healing Center
Cathy and Hunter Pierson

\$2,500-\$4,999

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
Jones Family Foundation

\$1,000-\$2,499

Anonymous
Entergy New Orleans, Inc.
Gwen Gilligan
Nancy and Leo Gorman
Jim and Susan Roland
Liz Sloss

\$500-\$999

Edgar "Dooky" Jr. and Leah Chase Family Foundation
IBERIABANK
Charlie London
Mission Pie
Namaste NOLA
Omidyar Network Fund, Inc.
Emily Schoenbaum
Stephanie Stone and Ludovico Feoli

\$200-\$499

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Boris Bowlsky

Macon Fry
Natasha Fund
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Tom Perrault
Kristy Magner
Teon Donté McGuire
Nati Passow
Joann M. Ricci
Myron Rogers
Marshall Scallan
Arturo Moises Silva
Paul Soniat
Nancy and Chuck Striffler

\$100-\$199

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Ann Bastian
Scott and Carrie Bernhard
Andy and Jennifer Black
Bridget and Bobby Bories
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Betty Burkes
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Thanks to
our home at
City Park.
