



2024

Impact Report



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Board of Directors

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Elementary School Teacher, Bogota Public Schools

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Director

A structured Credit Analyst with Dominion Bond Rating Services in New York City

JODI MAGEE

Director

Consultant to Non-Profits

Celebrating 20 Years of City Green



In April of 2024, City Green celebrated the 20th anniversary of our founding! Since 2004 City Green has been working to nourish and build communities through supporting gardeners and improving fresh food access.

City Green is now a multi-faceted organization with a robust farm and market operation, enriching outdoor learning programs, a dedicated volunteer base, and a community garden initiative. Please enjoy some of the highlights from the last 20 years.



Women of Faith Community Garden - 2004



1st Garden Camp at the Learning Garden - 2008



Women of Faith Community Garden - 2004



The Learning Garden at East Side Park - 2008



1st Learning Garden Harvest - 2009



First Farm Stand - 2008



Second Year of Growing Strong - 2009



School Field Trip to the Learning Garden - 2010

Celebrating 20 Years of City Green



City Green Expands by Leasing Former Schultheis Farm - 2011



First Good Food Bucks Training - 2011



Development of Farm-Eco Center Begins - 2012



Farm Stand at Paterson City Hall - 2013



Growing Strong Farm Crew - 2014



City Green Veggie Mobile - 2016



City Green Farm Eco-Center - 2014



City Green Learning Farm - 2016



City Green Farm at South Branch launched 2019

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a bunch of fresh radishes. The radishes have bright red, round roots and vibrant green leafy tops. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with a black wristwatch visible on the wrist. The background shows a vast field of similar radish plants stretching into the distance, with rows of plants separated by dark soil and white plastic mulch. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a healthy farm environment.

Farm Operations & Production

Farm Operations & Production



City Green's farms are the heart of the organization and consist of two separate food production farms: the City Green Farm Eco-Center in Clifton and the City Green Farm at South Branch Preserve in Mt. Olive. City Green grows over 130 varieties of vegetables and herbs with an emphasis on culturally appropriate varieties for the communities we serve. Each farm adheres to organic and regenerative growing practices to ensure healthy soil, healthy farm workers, and a healthy habitat for wildlife. Regenerative farming methods include crop rotation, cover cropping, natural pest management, hand weeding, erosion prevention, natural soil amendments and planting disease-resistant crop varieties. As a result, these practices have led to enhanced soil biology, increasing both organic matter and biomass to help mitigate the effects of climate change all while providing a great environment for nutritious veggies to grow.

Regenerative practices

City Green is committed to growing healthy food in a way that benefits both people and planet. 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 2024:

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 2024's tomato beds might be 2025'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!

Program Highlights



- 2024's Season Successes at both City Green Farms
 - Clifton Eco-Center Farm
 - Lbs Harvested: 14,602
 - Lbs Donated: 1,920
 - Value Harvested: \$200,894
 - South Branch Farm
 - Lbs Harvested: 61,226
 - Lbs Donated: 10,879
- Record breaking yields for baby greens (760lbs), cucumbers (2,720 lbs) and fennel (164lbs)
- Planted 25 native trees and shrubs and over 350 native flowers in a hedgerow helping attract beneficial insects, prevent soil erosion and support local pollinators

Thank you to our 2024 Farm Team: Henry, Isabel, Joe, & Emily!



**Veggie Mobile, Markets,
& Community Supported
Agriculture**

Markets and CSA



The purpose 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

- **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**



Program Highlights

Record Donations

When the market week is over and fresh produce is still available, City Green donates to community partners in Clifton, Paterson and Passaic. In 2024, **City Green made 45 individual donations to 6 community partners:**

- United Passaic Organization
- Great Falls Military Assistance Pantry
- St. Peter's Haven
- BridgeHope Community Church
- The Food Justice Fridge
- Local Share

Donations added up to a **record-breaking total of 12,799 pounds of produce**, compared to 8,759 in 2023.

Lou Costello Park Farm Stand

The Lou Costello farm stand experienced its most successful season since its establishment in 2022, **more than tripling its sales from \$3,739 to \$13,352 and more than doubling in customers from 264 to 673** from 2023 to 2024. The importance of this location as a food access market has become increasingly apparent as **64% of customers** at the Lou Costello Park farm stand **used federal benefits in 2024**. This site also accounted for almost 25% of City Green's total SNAP/EBT sales.

Record Sales and Customers

City Green reached record total sales and shoppers in its 2024 farm stand season, proving the continued success and momentum of the market program. There was a

- **76% increase in Federal Benefits sales** overall from 2023
- **109% increase in WIC FMNP sales**
- **61% increase in Senior FMNP sales**
- **28% increase in SNAP/EBT sales.**

Overall **customer counts increased 29%** from 6,966 in 2023 to 8,327 in 2024.

Senior EBT Workshops

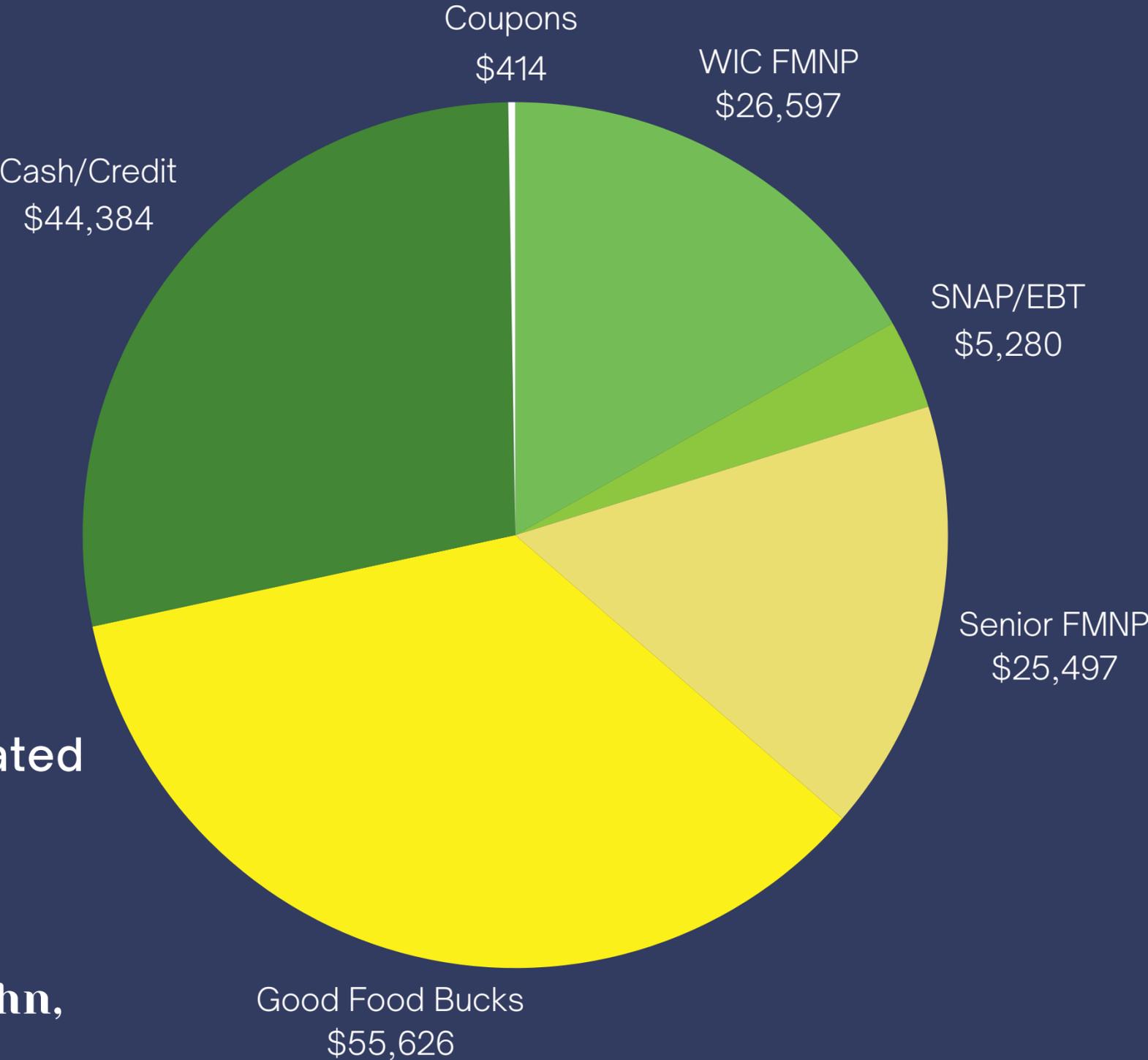
In 2024, we held **“Eat Better Tonight” workshops at 3 senior centers:** Annabelle Shimkowitz Center in Passaic, Lester Herschaft Center in Clifton, and the Totowa Senior Nutrition Center in Totowa. At these workshops, **nearly 90 seniors learned about FMNP benefits** and how to use them at City Green's farm stands, why **eating seasonally** is better for you, and **taste-tested a healthy recipe** made with City Green produce. Attendees received a packet containing the City Green Veggie Mobile schedule, resources about the SNAP and FMNP programs, a healthy recipe card, and Veggie Mobile coupons.

2024 Market Sales

**Record-Breaking
Total Market Sales:
\$157,798**

- 8,332 Shoppers
- 152 Farm Stands & Veggie Mobile Markets Operated
- 97% Good Food Buck Redemption Rate

**Thank you to our 2024 Market Team: Alex, Pam, John,
Imani & Adrian!**



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 2024, the City Green CSA Program hosted 50 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 purpose. 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!



PHARMACY HOURS

Monday-Friday 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM
 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 Sunday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Pharmacists
 Donghyun "David" Yang
 Huone Tran



USE YOUR SNAP CARD HERE! SNAP

Ask Us About SNAP Benefits & Good Food Bucks!

Families First
 GOOD FOOD BUCKS
 DOUBLE Your SNAP

Good Food Bucks help you buy more fresh fruits and vegetables at New Jersey farmers' markets and other grocers!



Use SNAP to buy \$5 or more of fresh produce

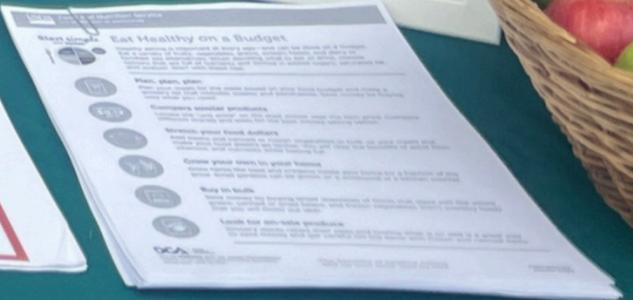
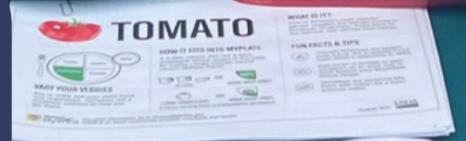
Enter your ACME loyalty phone number at checkout

Check your receipt for a Good Food Bucks coupon!

NJ Seasonality Chart

Month	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Jan				
Feb				
Mar				
Apr				
May				
Jun				
Jul				
Aug				
Sep				
Oct				
Nov				
Dec				

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 purpose 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 & Chase!

Good Food Bucks Impact



USDA GusNIP

In August 2024, 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 \$2,048,422 award, we raised an additional \$2,048,422 in matching funds from local foundations. As the leading statewide SNAP nutrition incentive program for NJ farmers markets and grocery stores, Good Food Bucks is now on its way to being available at over 80 different locations spanning 20 counties statewide.

Supermarket Expansion

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 2024, Good Food Bucks can be found at 12 ACME locations, 4 ShopRite locations, Dry Goods Refillery, Frutera 5 Esquina and A Better Market, with more stores coming soon!

USDA FMPP

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 2024, Good Food Bucks were offered at 32 farms & markets and 18 brick-and-mortar partners across 20 NJ counties. From 2021-2024, over 24,000 households have used the Good Food Bucks program, and 92 local and regional farmers earned additional revenue from Good Food Buck purchases



Farms & Markets

- A.T. Buzby Farm, Mullica Hill
- Alstede Farms, Various Locations
- Asbury Fresh, Asbury Park
- Beth Greenhouse Farmers Market, Newark
- Blairstown Farmers Market, Blairstown
- Bridgeton Community Garden, Bridgeton
- C.R.O.P.S. Markets, Atlantic City
- City Green Inc., New Jersey
- Closter Farm, Closter
- Collingswood Farmers Market, Collingswood
- Cook's Market at Rutgers Gardens, North Brunswick
- East Orange Farmers Market, East Orange
- Enlightened Farm Mobile Market, Egg Harbor City
- Greenwood Ave Farmers Market, Trenton
- Grow It Green Morristown, Morristown
- Highland Park Farmers Market, Highland Park
- Kumarie's Garden, Millville
- Main Street Burlington Farmers Market, Burlington
- Matawan Farmers Market, Matawan

- Montclair Community Farms, Montclair
- Montclair Farmers' Market, Montclair
- Norz Hill Farm & Market. LLC, Hillsborough
- Nutley Farmers Market, Nutley
- Ramblin' Sol Farm, Brick
- Rancocas Woods Farmers Market, Mount Laurel
- Riamede Farm, Chester
- Riverview Farmers Market, Jersey City
- Rosie's Farm Market, Mullica Hill
- STEAM Urban's Artisan Farmers Market, Newark
- Stony Hill Farm, Various Locations
- The Harvest at New Hope Community Ministries, Prospect Park
- West Windsor Community Farmers' Market, West Windsor

Brick and Mortar

- ShopRite - Newark, East Orange, Sicklerville, Lawnside
- ACME - Fort Lee, Browns Mills, Wildwood, Vineland, Jersey City, West New York, Manahawkin, Seaside Heights, Pennsville, Sussex
- A Better Market, Paterson
- Dry Goods Refillery, Montclair

Good Food Bucks Impact

By The Numbers

- **In 2024**
 - **\$256,000+ redemptions**
 - **Offered at 32 farms & markets and 18 brick-and-mortar partners (81 locations total)**
 - **Available in 60 municipalities across 20 NJ counties**
 - **92 Farmers benefitting from Good Food Bucks**
- **From 2021 - 2024**
 - **\$620,000+ redemptions**
 - **24,000+ Households using Good Food Bucks**
 - **120,000+ transactions made exchanging Good Food Bucks for fresh produce**

Partner Testimonial

”The Good Food Bucks program is a huge help to our community to get fresh and affordable produce, especially being in an urban area where grocery stores are inaccessible. Our customers are always put in the best moods when we tell them about this program and often come back week to week for more.” -Kimberly Mania, Nutritionist Lead with Beth Greenhouse Farmers Market at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center





Community Engagement & Advocacy

Community Engagement and Advocacy



The purpose of the Engagement & Advocacy Department is to foster broad support and interaction with City Green's programs and purpose 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

Earth Day Festival

The Earth Day Festival, held in Eastside Park, is a celebration of our community as a valuable and inseparable part of nature and the local ecosystem. This event brought in over 150 attendees who took time to plant in the garden, take part in nature-based activities, and learn more about the environment!

Harvest Festival

Harvest Festival In 2024, City Green's annual Harvest Festival drew over 300 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.

Farm Fests

City Green's Farm Fests held in July and August 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 like 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.

Thanksgiving Market

City Green's annual Thanksgiving Market is always a wonderful way to end each farm and market season. In 2024, the 6th Annual Thanksgiving Market hosted 14 other local vendors and over 430 shoppers for a great day of holiday shopping and community!

Greenest Place in Paterson Garden Contest

City Green celebrated Paterson gardeners and honored its garden contest winner at this event at the Farm-Eco Center where neighborhood gardeners gathered, supported each other and shared their home gardening stories. Four long time participants were inducted into the Garden Contest Hall of Fame!



Workshops at the Farm Eco Center

City Green provides adults with a wide variety of workshops and learning opportunities to deepen their connection to nature and provide practical information on home and community gardening. In 2024, we offered workshops such as:

- Botanical and Nature Crafts
- Beekeeping
- Farming and Gardening Workshops
 - Dirt Matters
 - All About Tomatoes
 - Ask a Farmer
- Nature Therapy Forest Walks
- Farm to Vase Workshops
- Paint and Sip on the Farm

Paterson and Passaic Market Taste Tests!

City Green hosted 8 weekly seasonal taste tests at our Paterson and Passaic Farm Stands. Recipes included cucumber lime agua fresca, and herbed salad dressing and vegetable dips!

Advocacy in New Jersey

25th Annual Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards

City Green was awarded the Environmental Justice Award for being a trailblazer in delivering improved environmental quality and access to natural resources for New Jersey's historically disadvantaged and overburdened communities.

“Through its Dig In! program – a collaboration with the Passaic County Board of County Compurposeers – City Green is working to address the lack of green, natural spaces in urban neighborhoods and helped to create more than 75 community gardens in the county, particularly in overburdened communities. The program offers financial, technical and educational assistance in developing, building and supporting community gardens and neighborhood farms.”

- Department of Environmental Protection

Organic & Regenerative Farming Board of New Jersey

In 2024, the Governor appointed the first members of the Organic and Regenerative Farming Board of New Jersey with City Green's Jasmine Moreano being one of them! The Board reports to the State Board of Agriculture and work to develop, administer and oversee programs in consultation with the Department of Agriculture on important topics relating to organic and regenerative farming. Through this role, City Green will have a larger voice and seat at the table to advocate for policy change and programs at the state level.

- Department of Environmental Protection



Volunteers



In 2024 we hosted 488 Volunteers who contributed over 1,200 volunteer hours to support City Green's farms and gardens. This included 4 large projects completed by corporate volunteers.

City Green offers volunteer and internship opportunities for members of the community to further our purpose 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 313 people for over 760 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. 175 people from 10 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

- **Valley National Bank**
- **Enterprise**
- **Paramount**
- **Give to Get**
- **Samsung Interns**
- **Natixis**
- **Apple**
- **Effern**
- **Samsung**
- **EY**





Dig In!

Dig In!



The purpose 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 2024, the Dig In! program awarded grants to support 16 community gardens and 32 Tree, Bulb, and Perennial projects encouraging the creation and sustainment of 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 15 Dig In! garden partners this year, in addition to 6 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 11 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 2024, City Green planted 16,000 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 purpose 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 742 children had unique outdoor learning experiences at 7 different City Sprouts Gardens with 21 programs throughout the season. The curriculum was taught through 156 different weekly lesson sessions covering 20 different topics, each lasting 30-60 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!

By the Numbers:

- **742 Youth Participants**
- **39 Varieties of Vegetables Grown**
- **151 Lessons Taught**



“

”

One student asked “Why are we putting leaves on our garlic?” Another student answered “So that they can stay warm in the winter and grow in the spring!” – Camp YDP, Fall

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

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



Meet our Partners

Garden Camp

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

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

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.

In 2024, City Green added 5 school gardens to the School Grounds network which as of 2024 consists of 60 different schools. School Grounds supports outdoor learning gardens in 36 different municipalities. 10 New Jersey teachers were trained in gardening techniques and specialized garden curriculum this year alone.

By the Numbers:

- **110 School Grounds Partners To Date**
- **55 Active School Grounds Partners**
- **10 Teachers Trained**
- **5 New School Gardens added to our network**
- **7 Part Workshop Series for Educators**
- **467 Children hosted at City Green for fun and interactive field trips!**

“

“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**

Thank you to our 2024 School Grounds Team: Kirsten & Garden Educators!

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 2024, the Growing Strong program provided 13 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!

By the numbers...

of Students Hired: 13

of Food Justice Workshops: 6

of College + Career Readiness Workshops: 1

of Days Worked: 22

of Field Trips: 3

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

“As I finish this internship, I'm glad to have made new friendships/relationships, a different mindset on food justice, learning how to harvest/garden, be professional and most importantly hav[e] fun. Throughout the six weeks, I feel that I have bloomed more as a person. I’m so grateful for this opportunity that words can't describe! This internship has allowed me to get closer to my roots. I live in Botany Village (downtown Clifton) where you rarely see any green at all. I’ve been able to grow a garden in my backyard & teach my younger sister how beneficial it is.” – Kelly Franco



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 Passaic County Technical Institute, Paramus High School, Clifton High School, Henry P. Becton Regional High School, Diana C. Lobosco STEM Academy, and Hackensack High School 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 Teen & Community Garden Program Manager 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.



By the numbers...

- # of Participants: 9
- # of Towns Served: 7
- # of Meetings: 21
- # of Volunteer Hours: 16
- # of Field Trips: 2
- # of Guest Speakers: 2

Thank You to our Funders!

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