

# COMMUNITYGROWS

PLANTING SEEDS. EMPOWERING YOUTH.



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

# A Message from the Director

2017 was a tumultuous year for our country, our community, and our organization. The amazing children and youth we work with continued to face challenges in a society that was debating how much they matter. Many in our nation fought against the erosion of environmental and social protections, principles we thought united us as a nation were challenged on a daily basis. At CommunityGrows, we said thank you and "see you soon" to our Founder and former Executive Director Barbara Wenger, who created and guided our work for over 23 years. We said hello to several new amazing educators and goodbye to beloved staff taking their next professional steps.

As CommunityGrows enters its 24th year, and my first as Executive Director, I am leading this organization with purpose through its continued evolution. I couldn't be more proud or humbled by the mantle of this vital work— making sure that ALL kids have the same access to outdoor spaces, education, and healthy food that kids in wealthier and "safer" neighborhoods enjoy. Positive engagement with the environment is proven to have lasting effects on children's physical and mental health, and we want to ensure that all kids have the same chance at being healthy and pursuing their dreams.

**In 2018, we are going to turn a major corner in terms of financial and programmatic sustainability, increasing our involvement in community events, and becoming a leader in plant-based wellness in the Western Addition and beyond.** We have an amazing staff of dedicated, caring, and creative educators who are paving the way for the next generation of eco-literate leaders.



In gratitude and community,

Kelly ErnstFriedman  
Executive Director  
CommunityGrows





## **OUR MISSION**

To cultivate healthy youth through growing gardens in low-income, diverse communities.



# Our Impact

Positive engagement with the environment is proven to have lasting effects on children's physical and mental health. In order to cultivate health in kids, CommunityGrows provides children and youth in San Francisco with consistent, free access to safe outdoor spaces and educational opportunities.

"What I really like is when we get to water the plants, eat some berries, and just walk around, get to know the place, and feel that nothing could harm me. I feel like I'm meant to be there."  
- 5th Grader



**91%**

## **Students Increase Test Scores**

Our in-school garden education program helped increase science scores for 91% of students by an average of 33 points.

**80%**

## **Kids Eat More Healthy Foods**

80% of kids who took our cooking classes say they increased their consumption of nutritious food.

**75%**

## **Teens Continue Their Education or Acquire Higher Paying Jobs**

75% of youth that participated in our program graduated high school, went on to college, or acquired higher paying jobs.

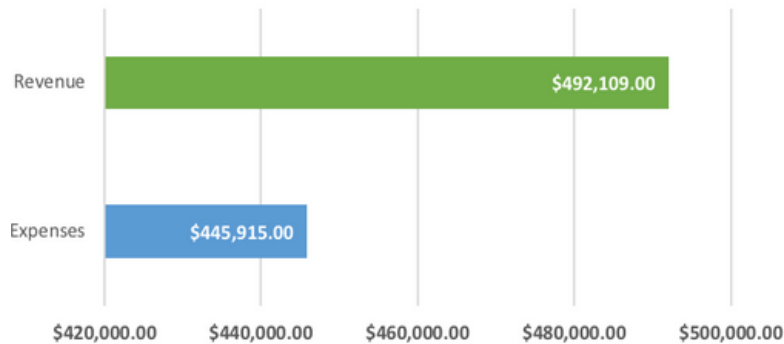
"I have radical and different ideas and I deserve to be heard. I'm not afraid of speaking my ideas. (Being on the BEETS Leadership Crew) puts in perspective how your ideas can impact the program."  
- 2017 BEETS Graduate

# Finances & Programming

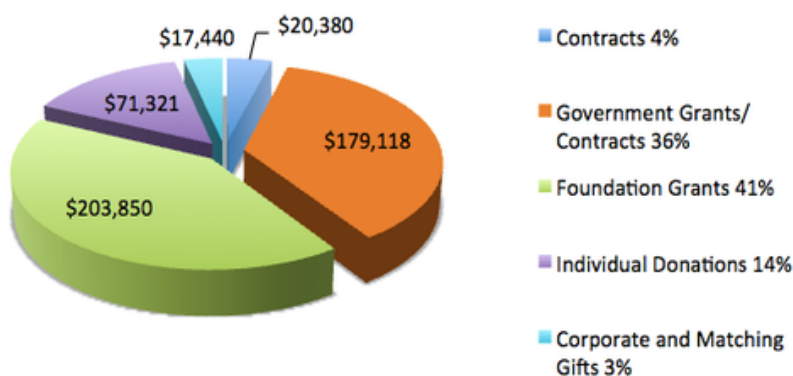
CommunityGrows has had the privilege of serving and working with the Western Addition and Hayes Valley neighborhoods since 1994. Our programs are supported by incredibly generous and dedicated partners, neighbors, and friends in this community as well as foundations and City grants.

As we said goodbye this year to Founder and friend, Barbara Wenger, we created a **Legacy Fund** to carry forward Barb's vision and work into the coming years.

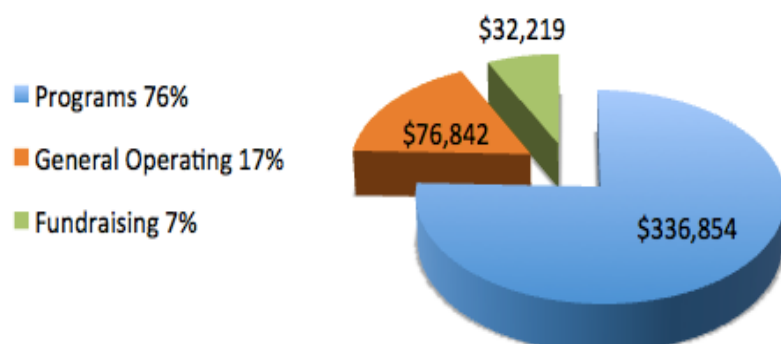
## 2017 Financial Snapshot



## Revenue



## Expenses



## Our Vision

To support and nourish low-income young people from diverse backgrounds, so all youth have the opportunity to reach adulthood as healthy, eco-literate leaders of their communities.



## Our Programs

Click to learn more:

**Environmental Education  
Garden Program**

**Seed-to-Mouth  
Cooking Classes**

**BEETS  
Job & Life Skills Training**



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

**We would like to thank all of our donors and supporters and extend a special note of appreciation to Nanny Almquist, Phyllis Friedman, Cissy Geballe, Pam Jackson, and the Koshland Foundation.**



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- Youth Outside





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- Camping at the Presidio
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- Good Samaritan Family Resource Center / Vision Academy
- Green Gulch Farm & San Francisco Zen Center
- Green Streets
- Hayward Rec Connect
- Japanese Community Youth Council
- John Muir Elementary School
- Magic Zone
- Mo' MAGIC
- Plaza East Associates, LP
- Prince Hall Learning Center
- Rosa Parks Elementary School
- San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department
- Up On Top
- Village Project
- Western Addition Beacon Center
- Willie Mays Boys & Girls Club at Hunters Point

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"To me, the garden represents a place for growth and new beginnings..."

Like the garden, our lives are constantly changing. We don't recognize change in ourselves but it's there. We just need to look back to see how much we've grown."

- 2017 BEETS Graduate

