



Olivewood™  
Gardens & Learning Center

2021 - 2022

# Annual Impact Report

*Advancing Education  
Equity*

*Improving Food & Outdoor  
Access*

*Championing Health &  
Environmental Justice  
through Advocacy*

*Building Community &  
Celebrating Culture*



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Thank you!

# A Message from Olivewood

For any organization to thrive, it takes a special recipe of dedicated time, support, data, passion and vision. This must be combined with a mission and vision that resonates with the community and a roadmap to bring the mission to life. **At Olivewood, we are extremely grateful to be aligned with like-minded organizations, committed volunteers, generous supporters, and an incredible staff and board.** Throughout our impact report, you'll see data that shows how many people were impacted by our programs, but you'll also see stories and photos that show how our mission comes to life.

Over the past year we've dug deeper into community building and celebrating place, and have spent time aligning our organization with partners who have similar values. **We are determined to build an organization that breaks down systemic barriers and partners with our community to advocate for access to healthy food, clean air, climate justice, education, and resources.**

We remain **committed to growing food for families facing food insecurity, educating youth and adults in environmental and nutrition science, and building skills and connecting opportunities for youth and Kitchenistas.** As our programs and partnerships continue to grow, we feel a deep sense of responsibility to listen, learn, and act.

We hope you'll enjoy reading our collective successes. **We couldn't be more excited to continue this work and welcome you to join us at the garden soon.**

## Fiscal Year 2022 (July 2021 - June 2022) Participants

Youth Served: ~6,000

Adults Served: ~2,000

# Our Mission, Core Values, & Commitment to Equity

## Our Mission

To inspire youth and adults to be healthy and active citizens through organic gardening, environmental stewardship, and nutrition education.

## Our Core Values

**Equity:** Inclusive and culturally responsive, we are committed to acting with respect, openness, and a desire to understand, value, and support our community.

**Community:** Olivewood welcomes all residents of National City, south San Diego and beyond. Our kitchen and garden are inclusive to all, and reflect the warmth of the community we serve.

**Health:** Olivewood's programs are centered in wellness and health. We serve as a resource for people looking to live a healthier lifestyle.

**Integrity:** Guided by honesty, loyalty, and a commitment to confidentiality, Olivewood is responsive and respectful to the needs of all our program participants, guests, volunteers, supporters, and staff. We pride ourselves in doing what we say we are going to do and creating a safe space for our community.

**Transformation:** Using innovative and data-driven approaches, Olivewood's activities create deep, impactful, and sustainable change

## Our Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Goals

**Goal 1:** Develop and adapt JEDI-based and integrated structures, policies, procedures, and best practices across the organization.

**Goal 2:** Ensure board and staff have the ability to effectively guide, support, and advance Olivewood's mission using a JEDI lens.

**Goal 3:** Create an Olivewood culture of inclusion with staff, board, partners & the community through trust-building, connectedness, and place-making.

### *What does this look like in action?*



Updating job and board descriptions and requirements to be more inclusive of and honor the value of different backgrounds and experiences.



Centering and prioritizing our community's needs and input.



Incorporating pay-what-you-can and sliding scale models into events and fee-based programs.

# Current FY23 Staff & Board

**Jeni Barajas**, *Director of Youth Programs*

**Ellyse Briand**, *Teen & Adult Program Specialist*

**Patty Corona\***, *Director of Kitchenista Engagement & Cooking for Salud*

**Taylor Garcia**, *Development Coordinator*

**Angelica Gastelum\***, *Communications & Marketing Manager*

**Claire Groebner**, *Associate Director*

**Morgan Harris**, *Youth Nutrition Education Specialist*

**Sabrina Heimer**, *School-Based Environmental Education Specialist*

**Monica Lim\***, *Kitchenista Program Coordinator*

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**Ari Beer**, *Energy Risk Manager, San Diego Gas & Electric*

**Rita De La Fuente**, *Communications & PR Consultant*

**Angela Elo-Rivera**, *Media Communications Specialist, UCSD T. Denny Sanford Institute of Empathy and Compassion*

**Sabrina Falquier Montgrain**, MD, CCMS – *Board Vice Chair, Culinary Medicine Physician, Consultant, Sensations Salud, LLC, Founder & CEO*

**Daisy Gordon Crompton** – *Board Secretary, Manager, San Diego City-County Reinvestment Task Force, San Diego Housing Commission*

**Rocina Lizarraga\***, *Garden Support Specialist & Transit Project Coordinator*

**Jen Nation**, *Executive Director*

**Paola Orjuela**, *Accounting Coordinator*

**Kelsey Pennington**, *Youth Program Coordinator*

**Octavio Rodriguez**, *Garden Support Staff*

**Sarah Suarez**, *Volunteer Coordinator*

**Adan Teposte**, *Garden Support Specialist*

**Jannet Valdes Ramirez**, *School-Based Environmental Education Specialist*

**Leonard Vargas**, *Director of Gardens & Facilities*

**Alyssa Zurita**, *School Garden Specialist*

**Esperanza Guerrero\***, *Former Restaurant Owner, Olivewood Kitchenista*

**Stephanie Jensen** – *Board Treasurer, Realtor, Keller Williams*

**Teresa Palzkill**, *Home Economist, Retired School Administrator*

**Marisa Aurora Quiroz**, *President & CEO, International Community Foundation*

**Blanca Meléndrez**, *Executive Director, UCSD Center for Community Health Altman Clinical and Translational Research Institute*

**Evelyn Wiggins** – *Board Chair, Attorney, Littler Mendelson*

\*Kitchenista



# Education: Making Nutrition, Garden, and Environmental Connections...and more!



## National School District Partnership

After 12 years of building our National School District (NSD) partnership, we took our collaboration to the next level. In addition to offering a 3-part field trip series for all NSD 4th graders, we now provide **year-round school-based environmental and nutrition education at all 10 NSD schools, for all 4,700 TK-6th grade students utilizing school gardens as outdoor classrooms.** We brought on three new school-based staff to spearhead this expansion!

## Day Camp



We were excited for the opportunity to collaborate with Ocean Connectors, another National City organization serving NSD, during the summer of 2021. **We offered two weeks of full-day summer camp for 41 NSD students.** Students spent half of the day learning about nutrition and garden science, and the other half focusing on ocean science and the watershed.



## Chefcitos & Family Programs

This year solidified our monthly Chefcitos program as a favorite weekend past-time for San Diego kiddos! **We sold out every single Chefcitos class!** We also hosted our annual Day of Play with both in-person components for National City families and livestream activities for families countywide. Our annual Healthy Haunted Garden was back in full force, with nearly **1,000** attendees!



*"I cannot tell you enough how thankful I am for these field trips. They are so meaningful to me as a teacher and my students love them. Today, students were talking about how they would have never tried a quesadilla with vegetables if it weren't for the field trip and that they did not think that they would be so tasty." - NSD Teacher*



# Education: Making Nutrition, Garden, and Environmental Connections...and more!



## Sustainable Urban Agriculture Entrepreneurship Academy

This year, we redesigned our Sustainable Urban Agriculture Internship Program to incorporate an Entrepreneurship Academy. **Local high school students participated in a 20-week internship**, learning the ins and outs of planning for a plant sale – including inventory development, propagating from seed and cutting, marketing, cash management, and more! Students raised over **\$5k** through sales.

## Garden 2 Kitchen

During Spring 2022, we hosted two **Garden 2 Kitchen** high school internship cohorts for a total of **42 students** due to the large number of applicants to the program. Students spent time in the garden and the kitchen, learning how to grow and prepare nutritious meals. The internship culminated in a graduation with family members featuring a meal developed and created by students.

## Cooking for Salud

This 8-week program has been a cornerstone of Olivewood since its first generation in 2013. What started as a cooking series, is now so much more – building confidence, community, and leadership and led by program graduates – Kitchenistas. During the 2021 – 22 year, we **graduated virtual and simultaneous Generations 19 & 20, and in-person Generations 21 & 22, totaling 54 graduates!**

## Adult Classes



This year we hosted nine adult cooking classes for **130 community members**. We partnered with the High Tech Graduate School Deeper Learning Conference to offer a food systems training for **24 educators**, and partnered with several local organizations to offer team building classes.



# Improving Food & Outdoor Access

## BrightSide Produce Partnership



Another exciting partnership development was our work with BrightSide Produce, a student-driven, social-venture nonprofit from San Diego State University. Throughout the year, we grew produce for BrightSide that they placed in local cornerstores in neighborhoods with limited fresh food access. **There are now over a dozen cornerstores in National City and San Diego with Olivewood-grown produce!**



## Paradise Creek Family Garden

In the fall of 2021, Paradise Creek Family Garden had its Grand Opening and became officially open to the public.

**This unique partnership and project is an exciting example of what is possible through over a decade of community activism alongside cross-sector partnership.**

Located on National City-owned land and managed by the CommunityHousing Works Paradise Creek Affordable Housing Complex, Olivewood provides fiscal sponsorship to Mundo Gardens, our partner organization that manages the community garden!



## Building Sustainable Communities: Youth Leadership Program



During the Summer and Fall of 2021, the high school students participating in our year-long Building Sustainable Communities program in partnership with A Reason to Survive (ARTS), completed the creation of a garden in partnership with First Christian Church in National City. **Students build raised beds and fencing, planted flowers and edibles, and more alongside community members.**



**Student Highlights:** *“learning more about the agriculture around me and how to grow my own food,” “getting feedback from my neighbors about suggestions to improve our community,” and “learning how to grow plants and eventually harvesting one of them.”*



# Improving Food & Outdoor Access



## National School District School Gardens

Since 2019, Olivewood has worked alongside NSD and collaborator Healthy Day Partners to bring school gardens to all 10 NSD schools. During the 2021-22 year, we began revitalizing these school gardens to use as outdoor classrooms for NSD students. Our dedicated school-based team works with the NSD Facilities Department to upkeep the gardens and maintains year-round crops. **This unique partnership ensures that students can access outdoor learning spaces and try new fruits and vegetables – right there in the garden!**

## Blueberries & Sweet Peas for NSD



Remember in Fall 2020 when the San Diego Green Building Council helped us to plant 300 blueberry seedlings? This year, we harvested! **In Spring 2022, we harvested blueberries throughout the weeks and had taste tests with all NSD students during their third school garden lesson focusing on nutrition.** In addition to Olivewood-grown blueberries, we were able to grow and provide sweet peas to select NSD schools. The sweet peas were so popular, we're planning to plant more for the new school year!



## Kitchenistas Community Composting Program

Thanks to a partnership with the Fleet Science Center, South Bay Sustainable Communities, Thriving Earth Exchange, and Mundo Gardens, a group of 21 Kitchenistas participated in a training to become community composting champions. Participants now bring their food scraps to Olivewood as their 'hub' for continuing education and neighborhood composting. In fact, **Kitchenistas have been inspired to start their own compost at home, and others like Virginia – a Kitchenista from the 8th Generation – decided to go bigger. She's invited her neighbors to start a neighborhood composting program!**



# Advocacy: Championing Health Equity, Food & Environmental Justice



## Kitchenistas Advocacy



With nearly **400 Kitchenistas**, this strong and vibrant community is well known and respected throughout San Diego and even internationally as health leaders and advocates. During 2021–22, Kitchenistas were involved in several advocacy and leadership efforts including:

-  Advocating for Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKOs) to become legal in San Diego County. **Passed in Spring 2022, MEHKOs improve economic mobility opportunities and culturally relevant food access.**
-  Collaborating with the UCSD Center for Community Health on the Healthy4You program. Through this program, **Kitchenistas have worked to develop strategy alongside researchers and gather data via the Streetwyze community mapping platform. This data can eventually be used to help inform policy decisions.**



## EHC SALTA Program

We expanded our partnership with the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) and collaborated on a session of their nearly 25-year old program: Salud Ambiental Líderes Tomando Acción (SALTA). In our joint cohort, **40 Kitchenistas and community leaders from National City, City Heights, and Barrio Logan participated in an 8-week program focusing on environmental racism, environmental and food justice, advocacy and public speaking, and community building.**

## Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize



After two years of collaborating on a nomination for National City – Olivewood, EHC, and the City of National City were **proud to be selected as a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize winner.** This honor is a testament to engaged resident leaders and the dedicated work of cross-sector health partners.



# Advocacy: Championing Health Equity, Food & Environmental Justice

## National City Healthy Culturas Coalition

In April 2022, Olivewood and Mundo Gardens launched the National City Healthy Culturas Coalition. This Coalition is the next iteration of several community efforts over the last decade and is focusing on food, the environment, and health. **Together with residents, local nonprofits, and government representatives, we are developing a National City food action plan and identifying policy opportunities that can improve health and access in our community.**



## Food Vision 2030 Stewardship Committee

Olivewood is a member of the San Diego Food System Alliance Food Vision 2030 Stewardship Committee. Through this Committee, **we collaborate regionwide to champion the goals, strategies, and policy solutions identified in the Food Vision 2030.** This is an important opportunity to build capacity collectively, as well as to ensure the needs of our community our represented.



## SANDAG Social Equity Working Group

Olivewood has been a member of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Social Equity Working Group for five years. We partner with local community-based organizations to provide input on the San Diego Regional Transit Plan and other regional projects. **This Working Group has helped uplift the conversation around equity within the SANDAG organization, as well as to champion key equity strategies such as the Youth Opportunity Passes.**



*"I hope the community can grow their own foods and create relationships to the land and generational knowledge."  
"No more junk food chain restaurants in our community. We need to have access to our land to plant our own food, instead of getting canned food in food distributions."*

# Community: Building Together & Celebrating Culture

## The Kitchenistas

At Olivewood, we celebrate culture and build community through food. The Kitchenistas embody these practices with monthly meetings, Kitchenista to Kitchenista classes, and more. This year we hosted 35 Kitchenista meetings and classes, in addition to nearly 40 Cooking for Salud planning and reflection sessions.

 Kitchenistas led **three virtual nutrition presentations and cooking demos for NSD parents.**

 Kitchenistas participated in several panels and presentations in collaboration with 'The Kitchenistas' documentary film and filmmakers including: the Integrated Medicine for the Underserved – Decolonizing Medicine Conference, Coastal Roots Farm Film & Music Series, Child Obesity Initiative Healthcare Domain, UCSD Latinx Heritage Month, San Ysidro Public Library, and more!

## Volunteer & Internship Program

Olivewood's Volunteers and Interns provide critical hands-on support for the maintenance of our gardens, facilitation of programs, preparation for events, and more. Our team works to ensure that Volunteers and Interns also get to learn and try new things while at the gardens. Our College Internship Program is a critical piece to our program development and execution. This year, **18 students participated in internships including a Dietetics Internship, Outdoor Education Internship, and Sustainable Urban Agriculture Internship.**

*"I would like to contribute and serve as much as possible for the community; especially towards having equality of nutrition education access..." especially for underserved/minority populations. "When it comes to information, it's out there, but it's not accessible to these populations because the information sometimes doesn't consider different cultural practices or incomes." – Dietetic Intern*



# Community: Building Together & Celebrating Culture

## Holiday Bazaar



We hosted our **second annual, and first in-person, Holiday Bazaar, celebrating and featuring 13 Kitchenista entrepreneurs and 5 additional small businesses.** Vendors showcased artisanal foods, culturally vibrant handmade goods, wellness products, and more. In addition to supporting local, the event gathered community members from throughout the County to enjoy the season together.



## Seedling Soirée

After two years of virtual Seedling Soirée events, we returned in-person with a fully re-imagined event. Our committee **focused on creating an accessible, community-oriented, and positive experience for all participants – including guests and volunteers.** With a sliding scale pay structure, inclusion of hands-on and mission-connected activities, and with the perspectives of a diverse and thoughtful committee, the event was about building our community of supporters – from all backgrounds and ways of giving. **220 guests** participated in this fun and unique event.



*To be an Olivewood volunteer, you need Courage, Compassion, Sensitivity, Vision, and Confidence...Because the highest point of love is compassion, it is important to be a sensitive and compassionate person. If the plants themselves can be stimulated by our presence and by treating them with love (the energy or vibration of our attitude), how much more so are the people: the children, the youth and the families that we want to benefit from our work. It is very important to be a visionary in order to see in the short and long term the fruit of our time and work as volunteers; that is a great source of energy and motivation. Olivewood is a great place to recognize, develop, and strengthen the extraordinary in oneself. – Kitchenista Antolin*



# Supporters, Resource Generation, & Finance

## Building a Community of Supporters

Olivewood is a community. You – our community members, donors, volunteers, partners, supporters of so many various ways – share your time, your gifts, your love, joy, struggles; your journey, your culture, your passion with us. We are stronger for this diverse, culturally rich, beautifully dedicated tapestry of community. As we continue our work centering community and those most impacted by the inequities we seek to remedy, it's critical that we use this lens in our resource generating activities, as well.

## Resource Generation & Finance

**Total Revenue:** \$1,368,362

**Total Expenses + Depreciation:** \$1,162,336

Exceeded revenue generating goals, allowing us to plan for team growth in fiscal year 2023, as well as working to improve cost-of-living salary adjustments

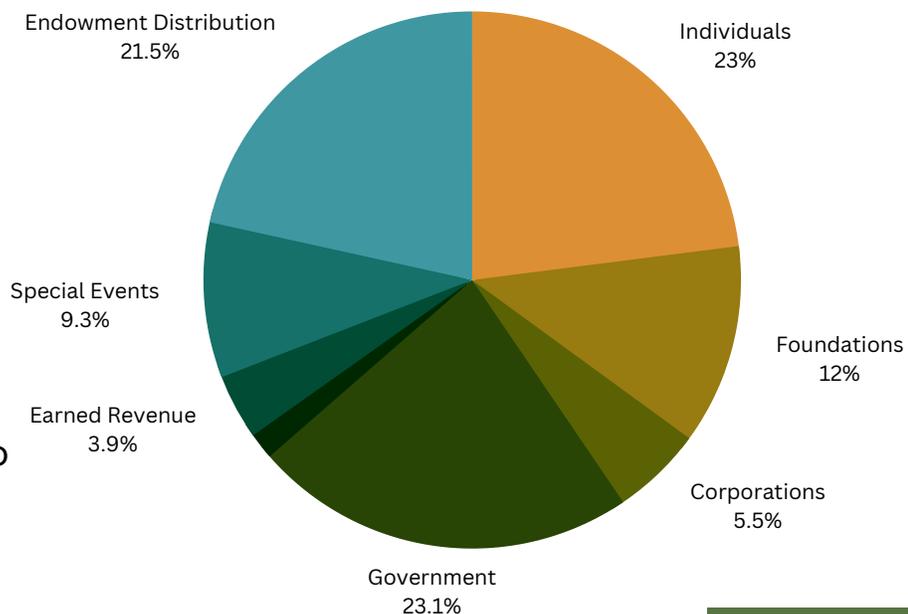
Increased government grants by 164% from previous year

Partnered with other nonprofits to leverage grant funding including the Environmental Health Coalition, Mundo Gardens, and Healthy Day Partners

*Thank you for being on this journey with us. Let's continue the momentum!*

We value our community's different ways of contributing to this work – we are building collective impact and we seek to show our appreciation with authenticity and equity.

- 324 Donors, a 17% increase from the previous year
- Increased donor retention rates across all giving levels
- 195 Volunteers, including 51 Kitchenistas
- 6200+ Hours Volunteered



# Looking Ahead

## Master Property Plan: Phases I & II

Since our first Children's Field Trip in 2010, we have grown exponentially – from serving a handful of National School District classrooms to now providing a suite of wraparound education, access, and advocacy programs to support our community. **Since 2017, our team has grown from 10 to 20.** In 2022, our participants served doubled as we began our school-based program, expanded our growing efforts, and exceeded 400 Kitchenista alumni. **The desire for more Olivewood programming and partnerships has never been greater,** and it's time for our facility to evolve to meet the growing need! We'll share more about Phases I & II of this exciting plan for growth in early 2023!

## Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion & Strategic Planning

Olivewood will continue the development and implementation of a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Roadmap, facilitated by diverse staff Working Group. The Working Group will collaborate to **develop institutionalized policies, procedures, and systems based in equity and justice that are informed by and center our community.** Key identified areas of growth and opportunity include:

- Building community capacity for advocacy and systems change
- Addressing inequitable educational resources
- Developing a pipeline/clear path for job growth for staff and volunteers/interns
- Improving outreach and services for racial-ethnic communities not as well-represented in our services

Alongside this work, we will begin a strategic plan refresh process that will incorporate community listening and input, deep introspection and dialogue, and exciting impact envisioning and planning.

## Strengthening Key Partnerships

The more we grow and the deeper our roots reach, **the greater the need and importance of solid partnerships.** Together, we leverage resources and create exponential impact. As we move into the new year, we will be focusing on assessing and improving our new school-based program, ensuring we are listening to students, teachers, administration, and school staff to advance the program's continued success. In addition to this partnership, we will continue to build our collaborations with local high schools like Sweetwater High in National City, food and environmental justice nonprofits like Environmental Health Coalition and Mundo Gardens, research institutions like the UCSD Center for Community Health, and food access organizations like BrightSide Produce and Healthy Day Partners.

***Thank you for your support and for being a part of our Olivewood community!***



## Stay Connected

 [instagram.com/olivewoodgardens](https://www.instagram.com/olivewoodgardens)

 [facebook.com/olivewoodgardens](https://www.facebook.com/olivewoodgardens)

 [linkedin.com/company/olivewood-gardens-learning-center](https://www.linkedin.com/company/olivewood-gardens-learning-center)

## Build Community with Us

**Cultivate:** Stay up-to-date on all things Olivewood through social media and our e-newsletter!

**Grow:** Share with others about Olivewood and invite them to visit with you!

**Harvest:** Join us for a program or event!

**Nurture:** Share your time, talent, and/or treasure!

**Upcoming Events:**  
[olivewoodgardens.org/  
upcoming-events](https://www.olivewoodgardens.org/upcoming-events)



**Schedule A Visit:**  
[info@olivewoodgardens.org](mailto:info@olivewoodgardens.org)

**Make a Gift:**  
[olivewoodgardens.org/  
donate](https://www.olivewoodgardens.org/donate)

