

# YOUTH GARDEN GRANT WINNERS Evaluation Summary – 2007



The National Gardening Association surveys Youth Garden Grant recipients to capture quantitative and qualitative data on the grants' impact. The following is a summary of results from winners of the 2007 grant cycle.

**Grant package:** \$250 gift card to The Home Depot  
Curricula and books from NGA

**Number of applicants:** 645

**Number of recipients:** 200

**Number of evaluation respondents:** 163\*

Following is a summary of the highlights from those responses.

### Number of participants in Youth Garden Grant-winning programs:

Age 2-5 (preschool-K).....	4,988
Ages 6-8 (grades 1-3).....	11,020
Ages 9-11 (grades 4-6).....	8,071
Ages 12-13 (grades 7-8).....	2,866
Ages 14-18 (grades 9-12).....	2,042
Ages 18+ (adults).....	2,113
<b>Total participants</b> .....	<b>31,100</b>

### Demographic information:

Anglo American .....	59%
Latino .....	17%
African American .....	14%
Other .....	4%
Asian.....	4%
Male.....	52%
Female.....	48%

Eligible for free or reduced lunch program .....39%

### Months of the year respondents conducted gardening programs:

Average.....8 months/year  
Range.....1 to 12 months/year

### Hours per week a participating child/youth was involved in gardening activities:

Average.....3 1/2 hours/week  
Range .....1 to 30 hours/week

### Program continuation:

Respondents indicating they plan to continue their program next year .....98%

### Type of audiences participating in these programs:

In-school .....	59%
After-school.....	48%
Special Needs .....	40%
Summer program/camp .....	35%
Community gardeners .....	30%
Intergenerational .....	21%
Preschool/Head Start.....	19%
Gifted & Talented.....	17%
Youth Club .....	16%
Home school.....	10%
Other .....	7%
Church/Youth Group .....	6%

### Program leaders noted student improvements in these characteristics:

Environmental attitude.....	94%
Self confidence .....	91%
Social skills .....	85%
Community spirit.....	85%
Volunteerism .....	83%
Leadership skills.....	79%
Attitude towards school.....	77%
Nutritional attitude.....	75%
Motor skills .....	64%
Scholastic achievement.....	61%

*“Children always ask, “Can we go into the garden?” They love to see the seasonal changes and watch birds and insects. They touch rosemary, smell their hands, and smile! They stroke lambs’ ears, smell blooming flowers, and watch pumpkins and gourds grow. Thank you for this award. It is an honor to be recognized by you and we are grateful for your support in making this dream a reality for our school community.*

— Jeannie Tourscher,  
Sabold Elementary School, PA



\*Winners failing to submit an evaluation are ineligible to apply for future grants.

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**Location of winners responding:**

Suburban .....	40%
Urban .....	35%
Rural .....	25%

**Reported evidence documenting the effectiveness of these programs:**

Positive feedback from participants .....	95%
Positive feedback from family members .....	81%
Positive community feedback .....	76%
Positive feedback from administrators.....	73%
Funding and donations .....	59%
Decreased disciplinary actions.....	30%
Positive survey results .....	30%
Awards and recognition .....	27%
Improved attendance rates .....	20%
Improved test scores.....	9%

**Subjects taught through these programs:**

Science .....	93%
Health and nutrition .....	80%
Community service .....	63%
Math.....	58%
Arts.....	43%
Cultural studies/issues.....	37%
Social studies .....	37%
Intra/interpersonal relationships .....	32%
Physical education .....	31%
Interdisciplinary .....	29%
English .....	29%
History .....	24%
Other .....	14%

**Compliance with State and National Education Standards:**

Programs connected to State and National Education Standards.....	62%
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**Importance of linking program to the standards:**

Mandatory .....	10%
Very important.....	23%
Important.....	24%
Somewhat important.....	10%
Not important.....	19%
N/A .....	14%

**Percentage of time spent on instructional techniques (note: this is the average of all the responses for each technique):**

Adult-led investigation/hands-on activities .....	32%
Student-led investigation/hands-on activities.....	24%
Collaborative project work .....	24%
Independent Learning.....	12%
Lecture .....	12%

**Source of curriculum used by gardening programs:**

Combined materials from numerous sources .....	63%
Original material.....	49%
Nonprofit organization (such as NGA or Life Lab) .....	35%
Cooperative Extension (such as 4-H or JMG).....	26%
State education department.....	22%
School district .....	11%
Other .....	4%
For-profit corporation.....	2%

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*When we started, only 3 of more than 70 kids knew how to use a shovel! Now, they all do!*

—Gail Whitney,  
Boys and Girls Clubs of  
Southern Maryland, MD



*All of our students are special needs and we help them learn to be self-sufficient. They gained valuable skills from a trip to Home Depot to purchase plants and other items. They tilled the topsoil we bought into the garden.*

*They harvested vegetables, helped to can the produce, and took the final product home to their families.*

— Leslie Fogleman, Volunteer  
High School, TN

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**Approximate amount of money spent on these programs:**

Less than \$250 .....	5%
\$250 to \$500 .....	26%
\$500 to \$1,000 .....	24%
\$1,000 to \$1,500 .....	14%
\$1,500 to \$2,000 .....	4%
\$2,000 to \$2,500 .....	4%
More than \$2,500 .....	23%

**Approximate value of in-kind donations to gardening programs:**

Less than \$250 .....	9%
\$250 to \$500 .....	25%
\$500 to \$1,000 .....	22%
\$1,000 to \$1,500 .....	11%
\$1,500 to \$2,000 .....	7%
\$2,000 to \$2,500 .....	5%
More than \$2,500 .....	21%

**Percentage of funding programs received from other sources (note: this is the average of all the responses for each source):**

Grants .....	39%
Donations .....	19%
Parent or Volunteer Organizations .....	12%
School or School District Funds .....	7%
Other .....	7%
Fundraising .....	6%
Instructor's pocket .....	4%

**Publicity received by programs:**

Newsletter articles .....	330
Newspaper articles .....	205
TV features .....	29
Radio features .....	21
Web site features .....	133

**Type of organizations responding:**

Public school .....	47%
Nonprofit agency .....	28%
Private school .....	9%
Other .....	6%
Community garden .....	4%

Charter school .....	2%
Alternative school .....	2%
Civic or garden club .....	1%

**Community interaction and additional impacts noted by respondents:**

All our students have diagnosed mental health issues coupled with behavioral or attendance problems. This gardening project gave them a venue through which to “let off steam” and reap the fruits of their labors. The students worked in the garden every day and took great personal responsibility for watering, weeding, nurturing, and caring for the plants and vegetables. They referred to it as “our garden” and were very proud when they harvested an abundant crop after months of work.

— Sister Grace Surdovel,  
Lourdesmont School, PA



Our project has allowed a diverse group of students to interact in a positive manner and accomplish a common goal. We had students with disabilities working together appropriately with students in our gifted program and students in our general education math and science classes. Each student was able to contribute in his or her own way and take ownership of the project.

— Ben Vigil, Rio Rancho Mid High School, NM



Thank you for providing our students with the financial support necessary to continue our outdoor project. You are helping us shape the future.

— Dr. Louis E. Obernuefemann,  
Coulterville Unit District #1, KY

*Rod McCormick of the Maine Department of Agriculture said about our program: “Something extraordinary is happening at SAD 34.*

*This project is challenging the agricultural community to provide the necessary resources.*

*But when you see the unique way that teachers interact with students, that students extend themselves, that parents get involved with the school, and that the school has opened itself to the community, you have to conclude that this is how schools are supposed to work.”*

— Steven Tanguay,  
Troy Howard Middle School,  
ME



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The garden program has increased students' sense of stewardship and respect and provided a positive experience for adult volunteers and students who worked together. Everyone was proud of the improved appearance of our campus! The program also introduced students to a variety of vegetables they hadn't tried before, thus reinforcing our nutrition program.

— Jeanne Nixon, Horace Mann Elementary School, CA



This year we invited junior high and high school students to be mentors and program assistants, and we watched beautiful relationships blossom. The younger students are so enamored of their teenage friends it brings an emotional enthusiasm to the gardening activities. The older students develop compassion and confidence from the attention of their younger mates.

— Susan VonderHaar, Dater Montessori School, OH



Students are ALWAYS willing to try a new vegetable if given the chance to try it in the garden!

— Laura Cooke, Primrose Hill School, RI



Based on survey results, FirstGarden's success is clear. More than 90 percent of parents reported that their children eat more fruits and vegetables as a result of participation, with similar numbers reporting that their children were more likely to try new foods and initiate discussions regarding eating habits at home. These results point to our garden's

value as a learning environment. They also demonstrate the need for effective, nontraditional public health-focused collaboration and the importance of parental involvement. Our project's high visibility and success have impacted a variety of groups, including local schools.

— Melissa Watford, FirstHealth of the Carolinas, NC



Each week participating youth donated food from our project to area Food Banks, giving the youth a first-hand chance to learn about poverty and hunger in their own community. Many youth were surprised at the number of families served. Recipients of the food, including site staff and families receiving assistance, responded positively toward youth who have had legal problems and, in some cases, a negative community presence. We watched participants learn to work together, some stepped up to leadership roles, and all were motivated to work out differences and hold each other accountable.

— Carol Novak, Sinnissippi Centers, Inc., IL

*The garden is a beautiful expression of hard work, persistence and creativity.*

*Our students have poured their hearts and sweat into this land and they are reaping the fruits of their labor. We use the Seed to Soup*

*Garden to educate students from pre-K to eighth grade. Everyone enjoys being a part of this project, which is at the heart of our school.*

*Our school motto is "Nature is Our Best Teacher." The Seed to Soup Garden is Teacher of the Year.*

— Summer Solomon, Learning Gate Community School, FL

