



Toledo
GROWs™

2024 IMPACT REPORT
GROWING COMMUNITIES

ACCESS TO FRESH HEALTHY FOOD.



Since its grassroots formation in 1995, Toledo GROWs (Gardens Revitalize Our World) has remained committed to its mission: building community, providing healthful food, educating all ages, and connecting people with the source of their food.

For nearly 12 years, I have had the privilege of leading this impactful organization. My childhood spent on a farm, work in education, and commitment to social justice has shaped my journey, beginning as Program Manager in 2013 and becoming Executive Director when we became a stand-alone non-profit in 2017.

Our farm on Oneida Street was dedicated in 2012 as the first urban farm in downtown Toledo. It serves as a vibrant hub for the community - its 2 ½ acres features a teaching kitchen, children's garden, chicken coop, apiary, hoopouses, raingardens, and diverse garden beds. Two full-time staff members oversee farm operations, supported by over 500 volunteers each year. Our full-time educator focuses on lifelong learning, while our Community Garden Coordinator assists 105 gardens in our network. With the recent addition of a Development Manager, we are well-positioned for future growth.

Thank you to everyone who joins us in this mission to ensure access to fresh, healthful food for all in our community. We couldn't do it without you!

YVONNE DUBIELAK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MISSION STATEMENT

Toledo GROWs educates our community about the value of local nutritious food. Our active urban farm and support for community gardens promote healthy eating and create a region alive with gardens.

GARDENING IS CHEAPER THAN THERAPY AND YOU GET TOMATOES.

UNKNOWN



IN THE COMMUNITY GARDENS

- Grant funding from the John Henry Eldred Jr. Foundation assisted us to improve infrastructure at three long-standing community gardens.
- The new *Reap and Sow* program successfully connected gardeners and facilitated the sharing of materials between those in need and those with resources to offer.
- The *Mentor League* empowered garden leaders to share their expertise, helping fellow gardeners achieve greater success.

ON THE FARM

- Drip irrigation systems installed in both the hoophouse and outdoor beds enhance efficiency and reduce water consumption.
- A dedicated team from AmeriCorps NCCC and interns from the University of Toledo Honors College contributed valuable support in the gardens while gaining hands-on experience and insights into gardening careers.
- Youth from the Toledo Public Schools Job Training Program engaged in garden work, honing essential soft skills for future employment.

EDUCATION

- The 20th annual Seed Swap attracted 1,100 participants, providing free seeds and extensive gardening resources.
- Two popular workshops were introduced at the farm: Quick Pickling and Herbal Tea Tasting and Blending.
- Gardening tip sheets developed by staff provide helpful advice for gardeners of all experience levels.

DEVELOPMENT

- The addition of a full-time Development Manager to our staff has already made an impact
- A survey of major donors has helped us focus our efforts in development
- The Toledo GROWs Mission Endowment, established at Greater Toledo Community Foundation, expands our financial opportunities for the future

SHARING MY LOVE FOR GARDENING WITH CHILDREN.



LA POSADA EMERGENCY FAMILY SHELTER



For many families facing life's challenges, La Posada Emergency Family Shelter offers a safe place to stay while also providing a path to stability. Support services ranging from housing and financial assistance to the opportunity to grow their own healthy food empower families to build stable, thriving homes.

Thanks to a generous grant from the John Henry Eldred, Jr. Foundation in 2024, Toledo GROWs was able to provide additional support to La Posada for their garden. This funding assisted in the improvement of

"I want kids here to go to the garden, pick a tomato, and pop it in their mouth! Every kid deserves that opportunity!"

MICHELLE SMITH-WOJNOWSKI

garden infrastructure, as three double-height beds were built and filled with nutrient-rich soil. Volunteers, neighborhood residents, and nearby church members were moved to

join the effort, with many looking forward to assisting with spring planting.

Because many children arrive with limited exposure to healthy food, funding also allowed for materials and curriculum to support hands-on lessons about food and healthy eating for the young people. Michelle, Program Coordinator at La Posada, passionately shares her love for gardening: "I want kids here to go to the garden, pick a tomato, and pop it in their mouth! Every kid deserves that opportunity."

Michelle explained, "Toledo GROWs spearheaded a movement of looking at healthy eating, growing healthy food, and looking at ways we can all be healthier." She hopes the garden will serve as a space for connection and nourishment, even after families leave the shelter.

At La Posada, this garden is more than just a source of food; it's a place of hope, growth, and new beginnings.

MORE GROWS IN THE GARDEN THAN THE GARDENER SOWS.

SPANISH PROVERB



LOOKING FORWARD

- Educational programming for people of all ages will be enhanced, as we increase the number of workshops offered, create more educational videos about gardening and healthy eating, and provide additional opportunities for people to utilize our farm as a place for education.
- New educational programs for youth explore topics of environmental justice, gardening, and healthy eating.
- Thanks to grants from **Bon Secours Mercy Health** and the **Sisters of St. Francis Foundation**, we will be able to provide additional materials and resources for six of our community gardens, working with the garden leaders to determine their needs.
- Equipment to assist our gardeners in growing seedlings for the community gardeners – heat mats, germination trays, and a watering system in the greenhouse – will be purchased and put into place, thanks to grant funding from the **Country Garden Club**.
- Our recently created **Toledo GROWs Mission Endowment**, established at the Greater Toledo Community Foundation, will help to establish a firm financial footing for the future.

THE GARDEN IS OUR HAPPY PLACE.





WE OUR VOLUNTEERS.

1,750 VOLUNTEER
HOURS
INDIVIDUALS

750 VOLUNTEER HOURS
GROUPS, CORPORATE,
SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY

2,500 TOTAL HOURS



105 COMMUNITY GARDENS

Details

Gardens in neighborhoods, at schools, library branches, community centers, churches, food pantries

Outcome

6,000+ individuals benefited from the gardens

800 YOUTH

Details

Participated in hands-on educational programs

Outcome

90% demonstrated knowledge gained

1,044 PARTICIPANTS

Details

Took part in educational programs about gardening and healthy eating

Outcome

Ages 1-90 have new understanding about the joy of gardening

7,785 INDIVIDUALS

Details

90% low and moderate income and 48% minority individuals participated in our many programs

Outcome

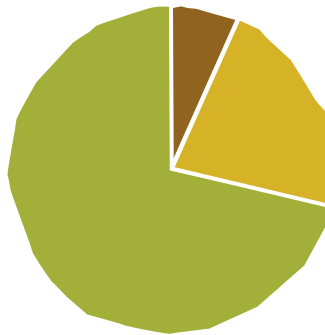
Stronger, healthier communities

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?



Revenue

● Earned	8%
● Grants	28%
● Events (Net)	20%
● Individual Donors	9%
● Corporate Sponsors	15%
● Reserves	20%



Expenses

● Management	8%
● Fundraising	20%
● Programs	72%

2024 MAJOR FUNDERS

Grants

Community Development Block Grant
 United Way of Greater Toledo
 John Henry Eldred, Jr. Foundation
 Ohio Arts Council

Sponsors

The Andersons	Kroger
Barkan and Robon	Magna
Buckeye Broadband	Medical Mutual
Dana	Meijer
Eastman and Smith, LLC	Owens Corning
Hartmann Bogan	Owens Illinois
Financial Planning	Premier Bank
KeyBank	Waterford Bank

TO PLANT A GARDEN IS TO DREAM OF TOMORROW.

AUDREY HEPBURN



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Toledo GROWs board leadership provides diverse representation from many different aspects of the community and lends expertise from their various fields.



Alysha Amison
Bank Manager



Donna Bogan
Comprehensive Financial Advisor



Lauren Clarke
Strategic Marketing Leader



Kristin Huntsman
Dietician



Chris Kiehl
Public Health



Bridgette King
Community Garden Leader



Jenny Perin
Health Coach



Chad Rutkowski
General Manager



Eiliana Schroder
Pilates Instructor



Eileen Sullivan
Attorney



Ashley Veltman
Attorney



Mel Wicks
Retired Financial Planner

GARDENS ARE NOT MADE BY SINGING, 'OH HOW BEAUTIFUL'...

RUDYARD KIPLING



STAFF



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JOIN US IN GROWING COMMUNITIES.



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