

ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023



Dear Friends,

Last year brought unprecedented challenges, most notably the January 2023 floods that deeply affected our community. Despite obstacles, City Farm SLO demonstrated unwavering commitment to our mission by expanding our youth education programs to serve more than 1,900 SLO County kids, extending services to regional farmers through our *City Farmer Collaborative*, and modeling regenerative agriculture practices for more than 3,000 visiting community members, farmers, and aspiring farmers. A couple of last year's events and achievements stand out:

Responding to the Impact of the January 2023 Floods:

Through swift action and with the support of our generous donors and community, we channeled crucial grant funding to our tenant farmers which helped alleviate the impacts of the floods on their farm businesses. In addition to financial support, we teamed up with nonprofit and agency partners to organize two regional gatherings for small-scale farmers which provided essential disaster recovery resources, technical assistance, and a platform for farmers to share their experiences and knowledge. Future flood risk at City Farm SLO has been partially mitigated by our *Prefumo Creek Restoration and Enhancement Project* which is restoring critical habitat for native species and providing recreational and educational opportunities for community members.

Expanding Our Therapeutic Horticulture Program:

With support from Cal Poly Construction Management Students and generous donors, we completed our 'Garden for All,' a fully accessible space for students to grow. With this new space, we doubled the size and impact of our Therapeutic Horticulture Program. Now serving five groups and more than 40 students, our regularly occurring therapeutic farm sessions help students with disabilities build critical life skills through farm-based activities.

I'd like to extend heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated team, volunteers, donors, and partners. Together, we are growing the next generation of agricultural leaders!

Thank you for being an integral part of our work.



KAYLA RUTLAND
Executive Director



OUR MISSION

To empower the next generation to live healthier, more prosperous lives through sustainable agriculture and farm-based education.



YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS



City Farm SLO's **Youth Empowerment Program (YEP)** provides career and college readiness workshops and technical instruction to underserved youth in SLO County through intensive summer workshops and internships. To date, 95 teens have graduated from YEP and 6 teens have completed paid summer internships.

“

"I met new best friends here. And now that I have a resume, I feel confident that I can find my first job."

-2023 YEP Graduate



Since 2013, City Farm SLO has partnered with Pacific Beach High School to offer twice-weekly **Farm Class** including instruction in team-building, employment readiness, nutrition, and food literacy. Students learn to grow, harvest, and cook wholesome foods alongside City Farm SLO farmers and instructors. In 2022-2023, 60 high schoolers participated in more than 930 individual instruction hours during Farm Class.

City Farm SLO's **Therapeutic Horticulture Program** helps students with disabilities build critical life skills through farm-based activities. The program has doubled its reach, now including special day classes from SLO High School, Laguna Middle School, and Los Osos Middle School. Extensive research correlates therapeutic horticulture with improved mental well-being, physical health, and social self-efficacy. Feedback from our partnering instructors shows that 100% of participants have experienced a mental health benefit as a result of sessions.



City Farm SLO's **Farm Field Trips** connect students with food and where it comes from. Students experience the farm as a living classroom, investigating concepts in plant science, soils, nutrition, and food literacy. In 2022-2023, 22 classrooms and more than 600 students participated in on-farm field trips, and 1,170 students engaged in **Virtual Field Trips**.

“This experience was perfect for my first graders. It reinforced *Next Generation Science Standards* that we are learning in a fun, hands-on way. I would highly recommend this experience! ”

- Maya Lord, Teacher, Cambria Elementary

TENANT FARMING PROGRAM

It is becoming increasingly difficult for small-scale farmers in California to begin or continue farming because of barriers to accessing land, water, markets, and training.

City Farm SLO provides affordable land leases and supportive services in our tenant farming program. In 2022, we expanded services through our USDA Grant, *Scaling and Expanding San Luis Obispo County Farmer Collaborative Partnerships*, which established a farmer collaborative to provide training, technical assistance, and enhanced market opportunities.

12.75 acres are currently leased to our tenant farmers. In 2022-2023, our tenant farmers produced over 115,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables for our local food system.

- **Aviator Acres Family Farm**
- **Blosser Urban Garden**
- **Cyrus Bany**
- **MG Farms**
- **Monarch Hills Education**
- **Our Global Family Farm**



*"I farm here
because I feel like
they really care
about me."*

- Farmer Frank

Frank Martinon, owner and operator of MG Farms, has been farming at City Farm SLO since 2020. He grows 5.5 acres of organic fruits and vegetables and sells his produce to local schools, farmers' markets, and on Harvestly.org.

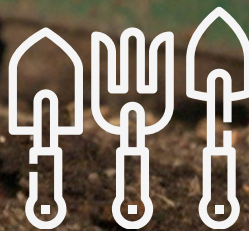
2022-2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



3,600 lbs of
produce donated
to SLO Food Bank



Over 9,245 lbs of
produce grown



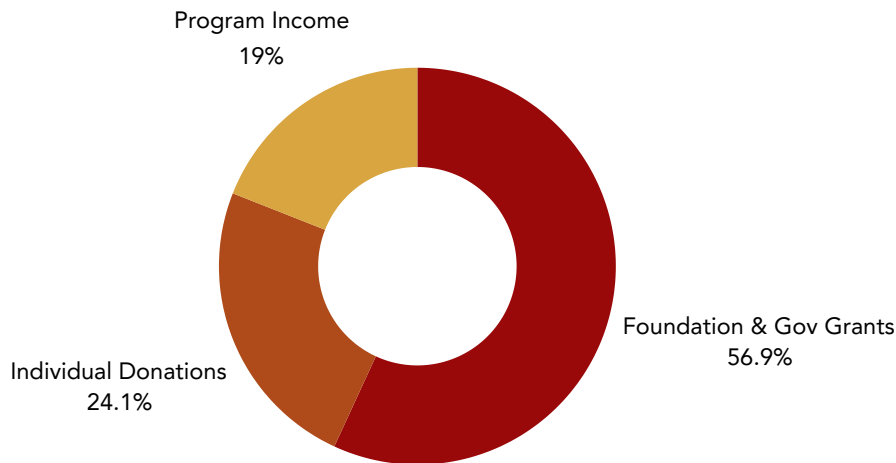
Engaged with 356
volunteers who
contributed 5,100
volunteer hours

4,196 individual hours
of instruction provided
in our youth programs

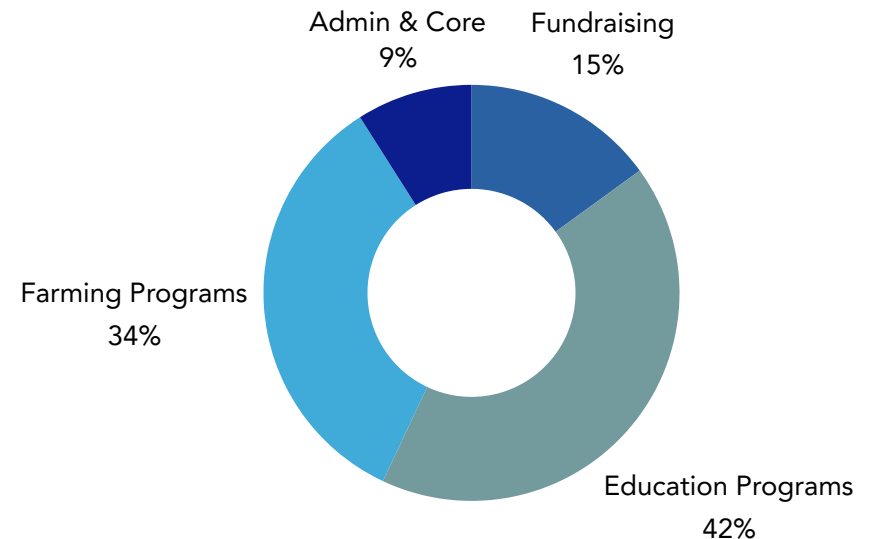


FINANCIAL GROWTH

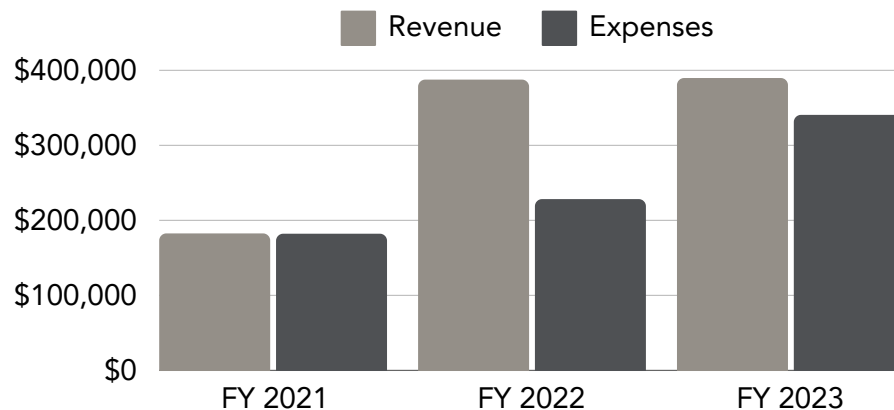
2023 Revenue: \$389,795



2023 Expenses: \$340,656



3-Year Growth



In 2023, 76% of our expenses were direct program costs.

Over the last 3 years, City Farm SLO has built and expanded sustainable programs by leveraging federal and state grant funds, garnering corporate and foundation support, and through generous donations. We are building a strong foundation for even more impactful and robust programs in the future.

MEET OUR TEAM



Kayla Rutland, *Executive Director*



Caroline Smith, *Farmer*



Alyssa Murray, *Volunteer Coordinator*



Lauren Picone, *Programs Manager*



Shane Lovell, *Farm Manager*



Olivia Hansel, *Education Coordinator*



Isaac Lopez, *YEP Facilitator*



And all of our farm critters!

Our Board of Directors:

Steven Marx, Co-Chair, **Gina Ruedebusch**, Co-Chair
Anne Marie Bergen, Secretary, **Leo Ontiveros**, Member
Claire Tuohey-Mote, Member, **Ryan Rich**, Member

A special **THANK YOU** to our
dedicated volunteers. We could
not do this work without you!



Our 2022-2023 College Corps Fellows:

Angela Banda, Rairaja Cohen, Jude Diaz Weakley, Claire DuFrane, Sandra Gutierrez-Carmona, Miriam Hurtado-Guerrero, Dean Kim, Alissa Macloon, Tommy Melillo, Evelyn Netro, Mary Norman, Maria Palafox, Gabriel Trevino, Anya Weinstein, Savannah Winkenhofer

2023-2024 GOALS

- Expand our youth education programs to provide more than **8,000** hours of instruction to **2,370** SLO County Youth.
- Deliver more than **7,500** pounds of produce to the SLO Food Bank and distribute more than **15,000** pounds of produce to the local community through schools and Harvestly.org, impacting **1,000+** food insecure SLO County households.

“

WOW! I never knew kale tasted so GOOD!

-2nd Grader on a Farm Field Trip



- Demonstrate regenerative agriculture practices to farmers, students, and community members during more than **5,000 educational experiences**.
- Continue to implement City Farm's **Carbon Farm Plan**, combating climate change with our farming practices.



- Provide market access and technical assistance to farmers through the **City Farmer Collaborative**.
- Complete our **Prefumo Creek Restoration and Enhancement Project**, rehabilitating critical Steelhead habitat and creating recreation and education opportunities.

“

I volunteer because I am interested in regenerative farming and its impacts on climate change. I love that City Farm educates youth about where our food comes from, generating an interest in fresh produce.

- City Farm Volunteer



CITY FARM PARTNERSHIPS

Our programs are centered on partnerships, leveraging existing efforts to bring the most benefit to the community.

- **AmeriCorps Californians For All College Fellowship Program:** 20 Cal Poly Fellows serve in our farming and education programs.
- **San Luis Coastal Unified School District:** students participate in our Therapeutic Horticulture Programming, Farm Class, and Field Trips.
- **Farm to School Central Coast:** facilitates produce distribution to local school districts.
- **Harvestly.org:** distributes our produce throughout SLO County and empowers our farmers with sales opportunities.
- **Public Health Department's Community Wellness Team:** leads nutrition workshops during Farm Class and YEP.
- **Transitions Mental Health Association:** facilitates mental health workshops during Farm Class and YEP.
- **SLO Food Bank:** distributes City Farm produce to community members in need.
- **Creek Lands Conservation and the City of SLO:** are partners on our *Prefumo Creek Restoration & Enhancement Project*.



GRATITUDE TO OUR DONORS

\$100 - \$499

Anne Marie Bergen
Anne Robinson
Candice Wong
Carlyn Christiansen
Carol Chenot
Carola Bundy
Chad Worth
Frank Basich
Jacquelin Crab
Jaime Lewis
Janis Spire
Jerry Mahoney
John Philips
Jonathan Reich
Marta Peluso
Mary Renard
Matt Clevenger
Michele Shorseman
Richard Mortenson
Ron Diamon
Sandra Adams
Thomas Harris
Wendy Brown

\$500- \$999

Erika Maurer
Kent Drever
Lee Townsend
Margaret Perry
Rachel Kovesdi

\$1,000+

Linda Halisky
Rosemary Wilvert
Marx Family
Anonymous Donors

Friends of the Farm

(Monthly gift of \$25+)

Anne Marie Bergen
Anne Marie Simpson
Dena Dowsett
Gina Ruedebusch
Johnathan Amireh
Julia Gomez
Keith Rutland
Linda Halisky
Mary Harring
Mary Renard
Ron Diamond
Susan Conor Steeb

Additional Support

City of SLO
County of SLO
SLO Community Foundation
MUST! Charities
PG&E Foundation
US Dept. of Agriculture
CA Dept. of Food & Agriculture
CA Dept. of Conservation

Corporate Donors

West Coast Financial
Megan's Organic Market
CB Automotive Group
Central Coast Community Energy
Clarity Family Chiropractic





Please consider supporting our work!

**Volunteer
with Us!**

Every 2nd and
4th Saturday of
each month...
and more!

**Join our
Events!**

Our 3rd Annual
Sheep Shearing
Shindig is May 25,
2024

**Donate
Today!**

Send a check in
the mail or visit
our website

**Buy our
Produce!**

Visit
[Harvestly.org](https://www.harvestly.org)



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