

2018 – 2019  
PATHWAYS TO OUTREACH & ASSISTANCE

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+ [Springfieldcommunitygardens@gmail.com](mailto:Springfieldcommunitygardens@gmail.com)

+ 417.414.7129

**We believe in a community where everyone has access to healthy local food.**

**Springfield Community Gardens (SCG) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Springfield, Missouri and founded in 2010 whose mission is to establish a network of community-led garden food hubs to empower neighborhoods to grow healthy relationships, food, and community. We are addressing food insecurity by supporting and connecting community gardens throughout the city, establishing a thriving neighborhood food corridor, a farm incubator and promoting successful food production and healthy eating through garden education using regenerative agriculture practices.**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION**

December 30, 2019

**GRANT AWARD NUMBER**

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**REPORTING PERIOD**

09/28/2018 - 09/27/2019

**ORGANIZATION**

Springfield Community Gardens

**GRANT PROJECT PERIOD**

09/28/2018 - 09/27/2019

**QUARTER/FINAL**

Final Performance Project

**PROJECT DIRECTOR**

Maile Auterson





# PATHWAYS TO OUTREACH & ASSISTANCE

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*for Socially Disadvantaged + Veteran Farmers and Ranchers  
in Rural and Urban Greene and Webster, SMO Counties*

*by Springfield Community Gardens*

## PROJECT PURPOSE

Springfield Community Gardens (SCG) and its network of project partners seek to address the needs of Veterans and socially disadvantaged farmers in urban and rural areas of Greene County, MO and rural Webster County, MO. Replicating a highly successful SCG model, funded in part by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) in 2016 and 2017, 50 Veterans and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers participated in the 12 month project funded by the USDA and obtained valuable, lucrative, and sustainable agriculture skills and experience in an area that is in need of highly skilled farmers.

## MINIMUM REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Number of Socially Disadvantaged Farmers Assisted: **45**

Number of Veterans Assisted: **17**

Total Cumulative Cohorts Assisted: **62**

Outreach Workshops: **17**

## PROJECT GOALS + ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Assisted 50 socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers in urban and rural areas of Greene and Webster Counties in owning/leasing and operating successful farms and ranches.



Improved participation among socially disadvantaged or Veteran farmers and ranchers in USDA programs by 50% among this cohort (an increase of 15% more than originally anticipated).



Assisted in building relationships between current and prospective farmers and ranchers who are either socially disadvantaged or Veterans and USDA's local, state, regional, and national offices through an SCG career case manager.



Introduced agriculture-related information through 17 training and technical assistance workshops (2 more workshops than originally noted in the grant proposal would be completed) utilizing a hands-on, peer-to-peer model, that is projected to impact another 150 farmers through these participant's networks over time.



## GOAL 01

Assist 50 socially disadvantaged or Veteran farmers and ranchers in Greene and Webster MO counties in owning/leasing and operating successful farms and ranches.

- **1.A:** Identify 50 Greene County socially disadvantaged and/or female and/or Veteran participants for Annual Project Cohort 1 in partnership with local networks. Greene County is a federally distressed area of the State of Missouri. Webster County is a rural county.
- **1.A1:** Victory Mission, MU Ext and the SCG Career Case Manager will work collectively and with local networks to identify and recruit Veterans and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers for participation. 50 participants will be selected.
- **1.A2:** Develop a social media presence with at least 1 post, newsletter, media story, etc. per week on project activities starting in Q1 and continuing throughout the grant time frame.



## GOAL 01

# FINAL RESULTS

MU Extension and SCG identified 62 socially disadvantaged urban farmers that participated in project activities and currently have 156 plots. These 62 urban farmers are primarily from the Congolese and Burmese immigrant populations in Greene County.

Social media presence has been instrumental in connecting participants with resources and education.

- Quarter 2 there was at least one social media post per week.
- At the end of Quarter 3, there were 28 social media posts, increasing the average to more than 2 posts per week, covering activities, workshops, and educational information for participants. In addition, KOLR 10 (a local TV station) did two interviews in Quarter 3 that assisted in the promotion of SCG and project activities.
- Quarter 4 social media posts consisted of sharing the work of local farmers, promoting events, sharing ongoing work that SCG is doing in Springfield, as well as disseminating valuable information pertaining to seasonal gardening and farming topics. Collectively, this has resulted in an increased interest in the SCG social media page, increasing awareness of SCG workshops, as well as helped build new connections with potential farmers and with partnering agencies that will be leveraged for future USDA grant funded projects.



## GOALS 2 & 3

Improve participation among socially disadvantaged or Veteran farmers and ranchers in USDA programs and build relationships between current and prospective farmers and ranchers who are either socially disadvantaged or Veterans and USDA's local, state, regional, and national offices (The Greene County SWCD)

- **2.A & 3.A:** Provide all cohort participants with career case management and resources within a wide network of agriculture and food systems partners, and through career case management (including “legacy farms”), the project will connect Cohort participants with additional USDA programs, services, and offices for the development or marketing of products.
- **2.A.1 & 3.A.1:** Participants will be required to meet with the career case manager once monthly beginning in Q2. The career case manager will work closely with the USDA local office.

## GOALS 2 & 3 FINAL RESULTS

- Quarter 1 was focused on developing relationships with partner organizations, critical planning decisions (including securing translation for immigrant population urban farmers), network outreach, and media outreach to connect current and prospective farmers and ranchers.
- The initiation of case management meetings in Quarter 2 resulted in 9 case management meetings and several outreach activities among the Congolese and potential project participants. For example, there was a blackberry planting and workday on March 29th where a representative from USDA NRCS came to talk to project participants about USDA programs. Earlier on the morning of the same day, SCG staff met with a USDA loan officer at their county office to become more informed about the USDA programs and process.
- In Quarter 3, case management increased exponentially, resulting in 48 individual case management meetings. Case management sessions focus on farmer goal setting, including local USDA programs and services for the development and marketing of products and are vital to individualized success of participants. It is significant to note that on May 9th, there was a USDA Meeting at the SCG office that 8 people attended, (2 considered to be 'socially disadvantaged', 3 Veterans, 2 women farmers and 1 male farmer). Each representative talked about their programs and provided materials for attendees.

## GOALS 2 & 3

### FINAL RESULTS CONTINUED

- In Quarter 4 there were 35 documented case management meetings that occurred, where information about other USDA programs as pertaining to the individuals needs were shared.

Through the course of project activities, relationships were forged with farmers with land available for farming (or otherwise 'legacy farm' or similar opportunities). SCG grant staff made connections with veteran farmers in Quarter 2 and with farmers that have 3,000 acres of forest farming available for niche products.

In January 2019, for example, there was a farm visit with a Female Veteran Farmer who has 5 acres (access to 15 more). She grows produce, chickens, goats, ducks. SCG staff toured the farm and gave a presentation on USDA programs, and offered to go to the FSA office with her. SCG also gave another presentation on her farm to other people who were interested in helping on her farm and growing their own food, at a later date. She later went to the USDA FSA office.

It is significant to note that SCG continues to explore other means of strengthening the relationship with USDA programs and opportunities and direct linkages for participants.

## GOAL 4

Introduce agriculture-related information to socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers through hands on, peer to peer training and technical assistance techniques.

- **4.A:** Provide 15 hands on, peer to peer, training and technical assistance workshops—3-4 each quarter (topics of workshops identified in the timeline below) to Cohort participants.
- **4.A.1:** Organize at least 3-4 separate workshops on agriculture and natural resources open to the public each quarter. “Being Water Wise on Your Farm” “Soil Health and Conservation on Your Farm” , “Creating Plant Powders: Dehydration and Plant Powders for Value-Added Product” “Wild Foraging: Creating Niche Products for Market to occur in Q1.
- **4.B:** Provide hands on training in growth of natural food products, production and processing through the establishment of two new SCG market garden sites as part of work sessions at Tom Watkins and Rogers Garden in Springfield, Missouri.

- **4.B.1:** Host weekly work sessions (minimum) at demo gardens with strong educational and practical components and host at least 2 work sessions at these sites to teach how to implement sustainable agriculture methods throughout grant time frame. Training on production and processing will occur at the SCG commercial kitchen located at the organization's headquarters (the former Fairbanks Elementary School) and the newly established SCG commercial processing kitchen located at the Cox North Hospital to open in the Fall of 2017.
- **4.B.2:** Work to develop added-value product ideas for the following growing season to encourage program sustainability, job training, and small business development centered around agriculture.
- **4.B.3:** Attend C-Street Market to promote technical assistance and farmer training opportunities, as well as sell produce and added value products.

## GOAL 4 FINAL RESULTS

- Over the first quarter it was imperative to dedicate time to successfully establishing relationships with local networks. An outreach workshop event geared toward relationship building was initiated, on December 21st, a dinner with the Congolese refugee population. For the Congolese, certain culturally common food items in their diets are expensive or difficult to find locally, if available at all. This event was a learning experience for staff to gather information and input on types of food that will be grown with consideration to culture, preference, and availability and affordability of fresh produce locally.
- Language barriers were addressed successfully over the first quarter through outreach to other local affiliates. A translator was secured in order to provide relevant educational workshops to the Congolese population. Similarly, efforts were initiated in order to secure translation services for a Burmese population.
- Development of curriculum, as well as resources, concerning value-added products between September through December was a high priority, this included discussion, planning, and development about label designs, printing, and investigation of other value added processes. This resulted in scheduling the first public outreach workshop about value added products on February 23, 2019, entitled “Creating Value Added Products from Your Farm.” As noted in the Quarter 2 report, 6 workshops total were held during Quarter 2.

## GOAL 4

### FINAL RESULTS CONTINUED

- Eight workshops occurred during Quarter 3, with approximately 183 attendees. In quarter 4, a workshop was held on becoming Certified Naturally Grown in order to complete the 17 workshop series as promised. Additionally, beyond the 15 workshops, a one-day summer workshop series consisting of four separate workshops, focusing on soil and sustainable agriculture was completed.

These workshops, as well as previous workshops in the 3rd and 4th quarter, were well attended, at capacity, and well received according to feedback surveys. Springfield Community Gardens Social media interest has continued to increase, one workshop for instance garnered over 1.4k “interested” RSVPs on facebook, to some extent this is fair weather, but more so can be attributed to the increase in social media presence and consistent outreach and educational posts.



# WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

## 12/15/2018 – COMMUNITY FOOD FOREST PLANTING

*“Join us in planting our first Community Food Forest. This will be the first installment of the canopy layer for this system. Come learn about food forests, tree planting methods, permaculture design, and more! Look forward to hanging out and planting some trees! This is a small vacant urban lot that Springfield Community Gardens & OMP will be transforming into an intergenerational food forest to educate and inspire all of us to plant our future and build a resilient & regenerative food system.”*

## 02/07/2019 – BLACKBERRY PRODUCTION WORKSHOP

*“Join us as we learn from Patrick Byers from MU Extension how to prune, and manage our row of berries for high yield! The class will be at the Fairbanks in our market garden so wear your gardening shoes.”*

## 02/21/2019 – RECYCLING: BEYOND THE BASICS

*“We’ve been sorting materials for years, but what happens after we sort? Where do the materials go? What do the materials become? What causes contamination? Why does recycling even matter? Springfield Community Gardens is hosting this workshop in order to provide the opportunity for small businesses and community members to come together and learn how to be environmentally conscious, and it starts with recycling!”*

## 02/23/2019 – CREATING VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS FROM YOUR FARM

*“As farmers we’re always looking at ways to branch out and create a steady income base from our crops. In this class we’ll talk about using the flowers, roots, trees, seeds and even cover crops as marketable niche items. We will discuss talking to store owners, and finding the market for your product. There will be tea to sip and recipes to share. The class will be held inside at our Springfield Community Gardens Headquarters.”*

## 03/09/2019 – GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND FOOD SAFETY

*“GAPS and Food safety area a series of small steps that lead to an important goal-produce that is safe for us to eat. This class will discuss the farming practices that impact produce food safety-the health and hygiene of the people who work in the garden or farm, the safe use of soil amendments, managing animals to reduce risk, using water safely, and sanitation during production/harvest/handling of fruits and vegetables.”*

## 03/20/2019 – BEING WATER WISE ON YOUR FARM

*“Winter still has a firm grip on the Ozarks, but it’s time to begin planning for the upcoming growing season. This year, make it a goal to focus on two critical things that every producer needs- clean water and healthy soil. Brent Stock from the James River Basin Partnership will discuss ways that local farmers can improve and protect their soil, utilize rainwater, and maximize yields while protecting our local waterways.”*

**03/23/2019 – CREATING NICHE PRODUCTS FOR  
EXPANDING INTO NEW MARKETS (WILD FORAGING)**

*“There are many plants species that grow year round without the need for a row cover or high tunnel. In this workshop we’ll discuss realistic way to grow crops year round without the hassle of everyday care. Many of the wild invasive species covering the forest floor in Missouri are ethnic crops that escaped into the wild. Capitalizing on these resilient plants and eating out the invasive is our goal.”*

**03/27/2019 – REGENERATIVE PRACTICE IN  
AGRICULTURE, GARDENING, AND EVERYDAY LIVING**

*“Ever wonder the difference between sustainable and regenerative practices in agriculture, gardening, and everyday living? If so, this workshop is for you. We will discuss the importance of soil health which in turn affects the nutrition of our food, along with carbon sequestration, renewing and restoring gardening techniques, and the impact one can make in their everyday life for a more regenerating lifestyle.”*

**04/07/2019 – SPRING PERMACULTURE WORKSHOP**

*“Learn about Permaculture Design, Create your own Food Forest, and gets hands experience planting some Peterson Pawpaws with us!”*

## 04/13/2019 – GROWING FRUIT FOR HOME & GARDEN

*“Fruits of all types are a particular favorite in the home garden, and offer income potential for farms. Today’s class will focus on sustainable production of tree and small fruits – apple, pear, stone fruit, grape, bramble, blueberry, strawberry, and a host of minor fruits. Choosing a good site, choosing cultivars, growing, and managing pests are the focus topics. (This particular workshop garnered interest from 1,400 individuals on social media).”*

## 04/18/2019 – HOME COMPOSTING WORKSHOP

*“Did you know it takes 25 years for a lettuce head to decompose in a landfill but only a week or so to decompose in a thermal composting pile? Composting is a way for everyone to have a positive impact on the growing food waste problem in our city and country. At this Home Composting workshop we will go over how a compost pile breaks down food and converts it into nutrient rich material for gardens, lawns, and erosion areas; along with the materials needed for a successful compost mound, how to effectively care for a composting area in your backyard, and the uses for compost. Please join us for an evening of composting 101 for your backyard or small business.”*

## 05/08/2019 – THE LINK BETWEEN HEALTHY STREAMS AND YOUR HOME OR FARM

*“What’s your yard ethic? Come learn about a new program highlighting a number of practices that will save you money, beautify your yard, reduce pollution, create habitat, and even grow healthy, local food!”*

## 05/18/2019 – HIGH TUNNELS, LOW TUNNELS, & ROW COVERS

*“Strategies for protected culture offer huge potential for farmers to manage risk. Early and late season extension, year round production, environmental modification, and alternative pest management strategies are all possible with high tunnels, low tunnels, and other protective structures.”*

## 05/24/2019 – FARMING LANGUAGE SKILLS

*“As new farmers, we are learning language and skills related to gardening and farming. We will learn farming vocabulary during hands on training in our new garden. The class will be in the garden unless it rains; otherwise, it will be indoors.”*

## 06/08/2019 – SELLING YOUR HARVEST AT MARKET

*“A farmers market is an excellent entry point for new farmers. Simply put, the market provides the venue and promotion, and the farmer provides the crop. This workshop will focus on planning for farmers market, developing an effective market presence, promotion and sales strategies, and will include a tour of the C-Street Farmers Market.”*

## 07/27/2019 – CERTIFIED NATURALLY GROWN CERTIFICATION ON YOUR FARM

*“As an alternative to certified organic production, the Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) program offers a roadmap to sustainable farming. The CNG certification focuses on farming practices – soil management, pest/weed management, protection of pollinator/beneficial habitat, conserving water and other resources – as they impact sustainability and profitability. Today’s class will describe the process, and include a mock farm inspection. Soil Health Truck from NRCS will be on site for a presentation. The trailer includes a large television monitor to show soil health videos, a testing area for infiltration and other demonstrations, a blown-up view of living soil, and lists 5 major keys to improving soil health.”*

## 08/17/2019 – LIFE IN THE SOILS SUMMER 2019 WORKSHOPS (2): THE SOIL FOOD WEB; INTRO TO VERMICOMPOSTING & THERMAL COMPOSTING; ALL ABOUT COMPOST TEA; USING THE MICROSCOPE IN THE GARDEN & ON THE FARM

*“Compost and compost teas are integral parts of life and ecological systems. The large populations of beneficial bacteria, fungi, protozoa, & nematodes found in REAL compost can jumpstart life and correct deficiencies in the soil food web, create healthy and fertile soil, and act as an immune system for our crops. The connections and benefits are endless. Life starts in the Soil. The foundation of healthy food and healthy humans begins in the Soil. Help us regenerate our planet by regenerating our soils! These workshops are for gardeners, farmers, landscape restoration professionals, and healers.”*



## FINAL WORKSHOP NOTES

In quarters 1-4 there was consistently one or more class/garden-based group work sessions that occurred per week. While these, according to feedback from participants, were valuable, SCG found that the most value comes from one on one mentorship/coaching sessions. The time invested by SCG staff (all of whom are experts in sustainable farming) in one on one coaching and mentorship work sessions allows SCG grant staff to provide additional instruction relative to the current knowledge and needs of each participant. These sessions are designed to provide farmer training opportunities to eventually prepare participants to sell produce and added value products at the C Street Market.

In quarter 3 grant staff were able to secure a buyer for scallions for the Asian market in Springfield. They agreed to purchase up to 600 pounds per week. SCG and program participants assisted in growing the first crop. The Burmese requested a market garden with the intent to start in the fall. SCG grant staff will build out the site for them to grow the scallions and assorted crops they can then take to market. In addition, SCG had 12-15 additional prospective commercial or restaurant buyers for produce (with 4 confirmed). This increased significantly in the previous quarter. These relationships provide additional revenue opportunities for program participants moving forward and provide program sustainability after the grant timeframe.

In quarter 4, a dinner took place for volunteers where they shared culturally significant dishes, there were over 20 attendees. Another event in quarter 4 there was a presentation on organic and regenerative gardening, at the Victory Mission, with the Restoration Program. At this session a dedicated volunteer and participant shared the successes as a garden volunteer with the goal of creating a sustainable gardening project and recruit more dedicated volunteers from the program, one new volunteer was successfully recruited.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Evaluators, in collaboration with SCG staff, have also been discussing the model of the program and how the model could be replicated either throughout other SCG activities, but also how the model could be further formalized for other communities and other demographic groups. Lessons learned from this project include:

- One on one mentoring versus class and workshops appears to be the most successful and helpful component of education for apprentices through the project. A lesson that has been incorporated into other USDA grant funded projects.
- Initial steps have been taken to formalize levels of SCG apprenticeship opportunities, including (with the consulting assistance of Tufts University and others), means of identifying specific skill sets that could be achieved at each level of apprenticeship. This tiered approach provides a direct pathway for community members, disadvantaged groups, and others from novice gardener to skilled farmer. This model also provides supportive services that provide both SCG and farmers with opportunities for revenue through networks already established by SCG and therefore direct inclusion in the development of the local food system. This lesson learned has also been incorporated into future USDA grant funded programming.
- Initially, the project had projected a higher number of apprentices with a shorter apprenticeship term, however it was noted early on in grant programming that fewer apprenticeships that were longer were needed to ensure the success of these individuals, and to build upon these successes. As with other lessons learned, this structure has been incorporated into other SCG and USDA grant funded programming.



# SCG MODEL REPLICABILITY REPORT

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Through its network of partners and the support of local residents, Springfield Community Gardens (SCG) is providing the community-based structural support necessary for an innovative food access system by developing urban green spaces that help alleviate food insecurity, train and support local growers, and increase economic opportunities and financial resources for low-income families using best practices in sustainable agriculture. Founded in 2010, SCG has expanded from a single site to 16 community garden, 4 urban farms, and a Commercial Community Kitchen throughout the city of Springfield thanks to its network of partners and the support of local residents. The vast majority of SCG programming is designed for the under resourced and for socially disadvantaged groups.

## 2017

In September of 2017, SCG received a 3-year USDA NIFA Community Food Project (called the Zone 1 Food Project or Z1FP) grant that builds on the highly successful hands-on, peer education model developed by SCG in 2016 and 2017 and uses a team of committed anchor organizations to build a hyperlocal farm-to-table food system in Zone 1 by providing training and apprenticeship opportunities to low income Zone 1 residents in growing, processing, and distributing locally grown food and value-added products.

## 2018

In 2018, SCG received a 1-year USDA ‘Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmer’ grant to address the needs of socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers in Greene County. 62 farmers--primarily immigrants from the Congolese and Burmese populations in Greene County, veterans, and women who own their own land but are new farmers, or those who have no land who express interest in farming--have received training or apprenticeship through the project.

## **& BEYOND**

During the grant timeframe, SCG has successfully reached local Legacy Farms and landowners for land use. SCG's sustained outreach and attempts to address barriers to involvement for immigrant and veteran populations and women during the 2501 project period has created a catchment pool for SCG among these populations that will be used to ensure the success of the grant program over time. Future 'Socially Disadvantaged' and 'Beginning Farmer Rancher' funding from the USDA (to occur over the next 3 years) will extend and build upon the successful hands-on, peer training model and partnerships developed by SCG by providing in-depth workshops, hands-on training, technical assistance and outreach to beginning farmers in socially vulnerable populations and disadvantaged communities with an emphasis on reaching rural populations, women, racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, and veterans in Greene County.

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**THESE ARE THE  
MAIN GOALS OF THE  
ORGANIZATION:**



## 01. HEALTHY PEOPLE

SCG sees community gardens changing lives. Tangible outcomes include addressing public health concerns, serving the needs of food insecure households, and distributing fresh produce for residents in need. Founded in 2010, SCG has expanded from a single site to 16 community garden, 4 urban farms, and a Commercial Community Kitchen throughout the city of Springfield thanks to its network of partners and the support of local residents. Additionally, our gardens are providing a space to create relationships as gardening experts work alongside novices. SCG Gardeners are increasing their physical activity through volunteering, encourages healthier eating habits with one another, and volunteers increasing their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Regular produce distributions through this project and others are offered for volunteers and residents in need.. Over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce are distributed weekly in addition to produce grown in the gardens.

## 02. STRONG COMMUNITITES

As neighborly relationships solidify, and the Zone 1 Food Project is taking root, we are seeing property sales go up in the houses in close proximity to the gardens. The Z1FP healthy eating programming at the preschool is strengthening the desire to have the same type of programming in other preschools and is bring attention to the Grant Beach Neighborhood where the market garden and the preschool is located.. CoxHealth has also offered larger office space at a very low rate to accommodate Z1FP and growing SCG staff placements, internships, and positions.

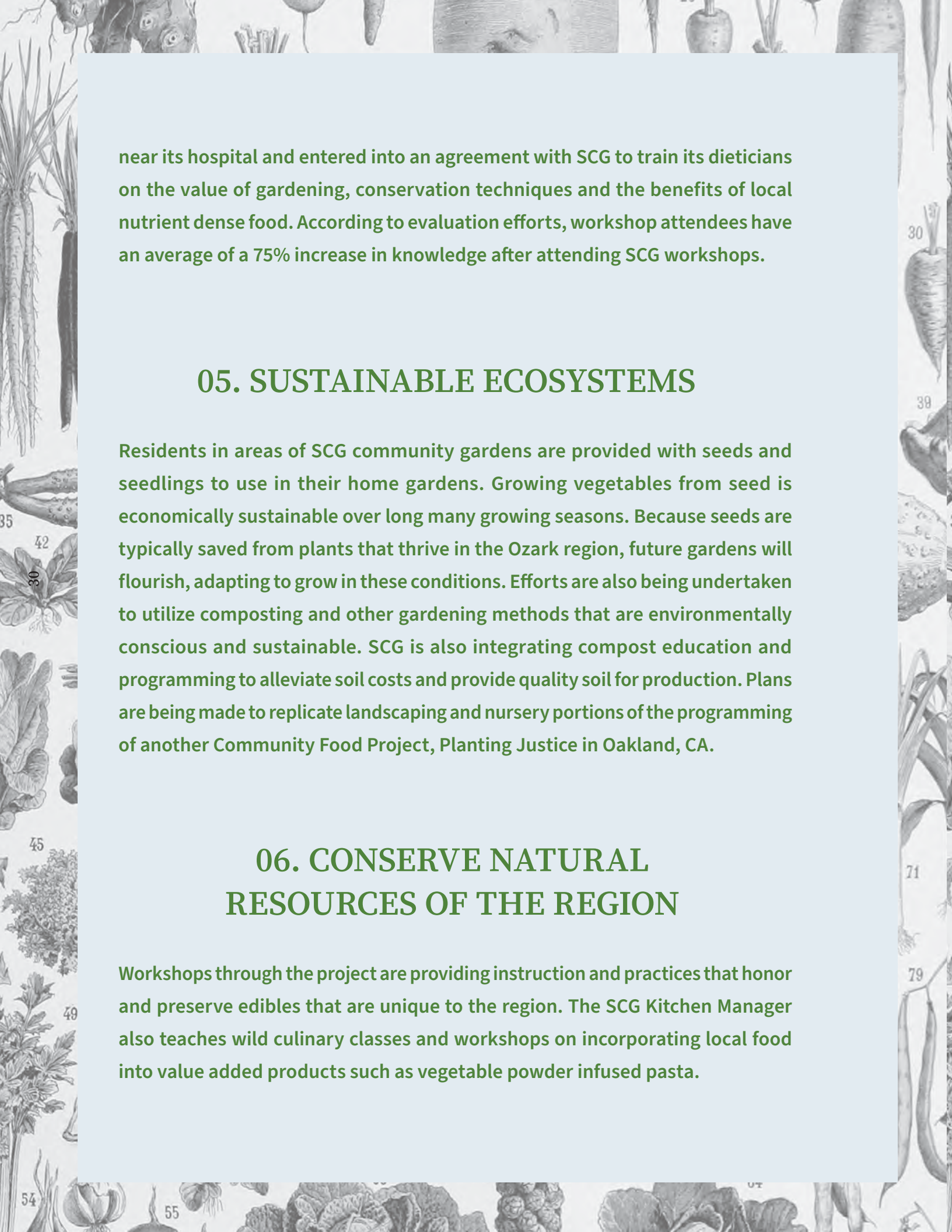


### 03. THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMIES

SCG programs address the red flag issues of poverty that impact so many Springfield residents. The programs serve as an important means of economic development, thus growth for neighborhoods, the City, and the Ozarks community at large, as well as instilling local pride around the culture of food. SCG programs have been supported by the USDA, National Association of Conservation Districts, Bank of America, and Lucky's Market. Locally, Z1PF has received support from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, the Musgrave Foundation, the Darr Family Foundation, and local businesses, and one of the largest accounting and advisory firms in the country, BKD. SCG program participants and community members are producing food for sale at markets and also preparing food for sale (quiches, pies, and some other like products) that can assist households in increasing revenue and supporting SCG programs and activities. SCG currently also has 12-15 additional prospective commercial or restaurant buyers for produce (with 4 confirmed). These relationships provide additional revenue opportunities for program participants, provide program sustainability, and assist in the creation of a local food hub.

### 04. VIBRANT FARMS

SCG also seeks to enliven the community as well as the land used to grow food. Volunteers in SCG gardens are given guidance regarding small-scale farming, which they use in the community and their home gardens. SCG apprentices are using skills and maintaining plots on SCG farms. Workshops provided by SCG have given farmers continuing education in certified naturally grown, organic, and environmentally sustainable practices. , CoxHealth has provided a larger community kitchen at low cost, an additional 25 acres of high value property



near its hospital and entered into an agreement with SCG to train its dieticians on the value of gardening, conservation techniques and the benefits of local nutrient dense food. According to evaluation efforts, workshop attendees have an average of a 75% increase in knowledge after attending SCG workshops.

## 05. SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEMS

Residents in areas of SCG community gardens are provided with seeds and seedlings to use in their home gardens. Growing vegetables from seed is economically sustainable over long many growing seasons. Because seeds are typically saved from plants that thrive in the Ozark region, future gardens will flourish, adapting to grow in these conditions. Efforts are also being undertaken to utilize composting and other gardening methods that are environmentally conscious and sustainable. SCG is also integrating compost education and programming to alleviate soil costs and provide quality soil for production. Plans are being made to replicate landscaping and nursery portions of the programming of another Community Food Project, Planting Justice in Oakland, CA.

## 06. CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE REGION

Workshops through the project are providing instruction and practices that honor and preserve edibles that are unique to the region. The SCG Kitchen Manager also teaches wild culinary classes and workshops on incorporating local food into value added products such as vegetable powder infused pasta.

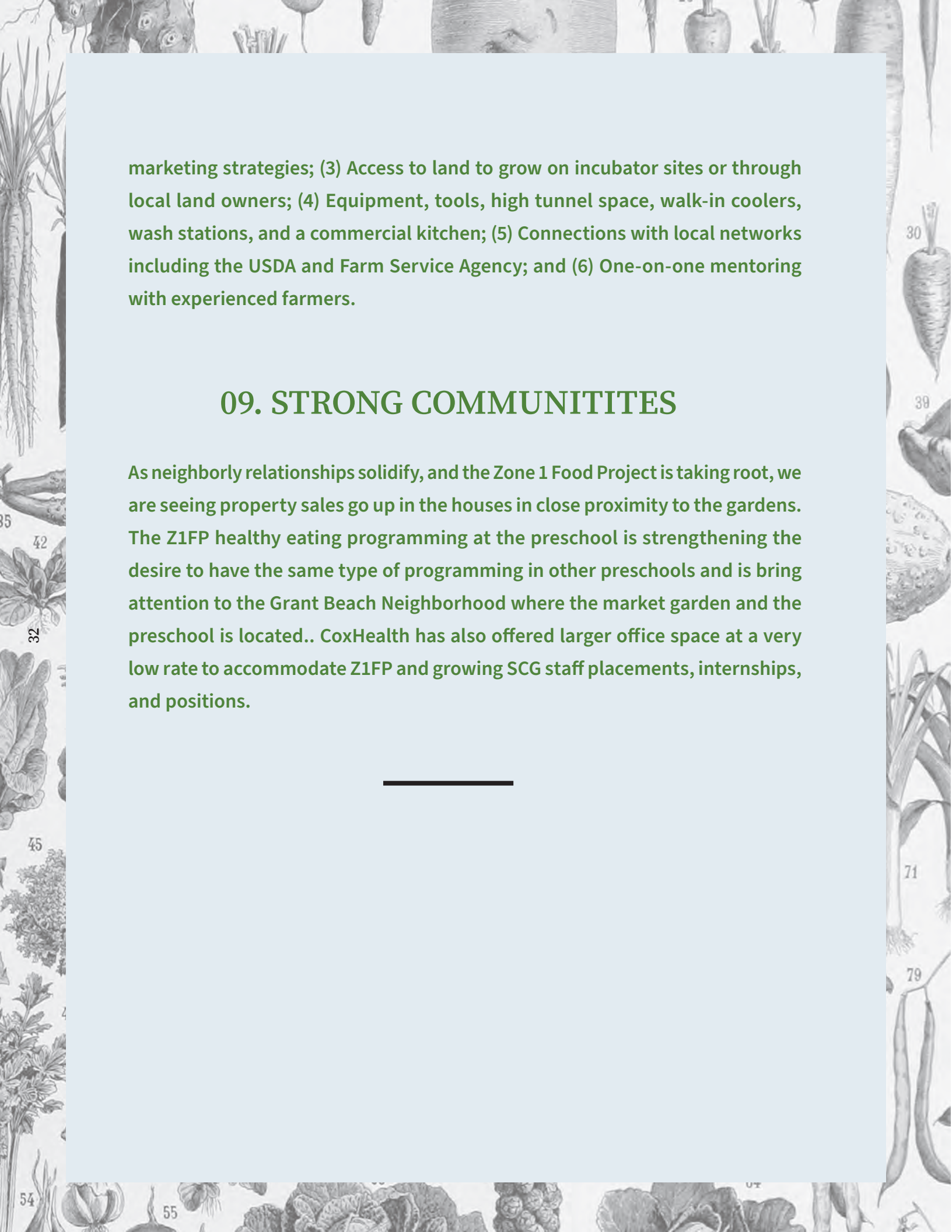


## 07. JUSTICE & FAIRNESS

SCG provides participants the tools and knowledge to grow food for their family's consumption, while also receiving support if they wish to sell produce at the C-Street Farmers Market or to SCG at fair market value. Urban spaces, once abandoned, are being renewed to provide those most often marginalized to gain access to healthy food. SCG has collected stories from residents who are feeling empowered with local food serving as an equalizer in a highly economically bifurcated town where healthy food has previously been gentrified due to price point.

## 08. THE FARM INCUBATOR PROJECT

Incubator Farms are a fairly new model of training and is somewhat variable in meaning. An Incubator Farm is typically a place where people are given temporary, exclusive, and affordable access to small parcels of land and infrastructure, and often training, for the purpose of honing skills and launching farm businesses. These programs address barriers to beginning farmers, including access to land, capital, and credit, and opportunities to learn and develop skills in farm business planning. By providing opportunities for new farmers to access land, develop the skill set and experience essential to run a successful farm, and help developing a business plan, these farmers have a better chance of securing capital, accessing their own land, and ultimately being successful in achieving their farm business goals. SCG has received 4 federal USDA grants through December, 2019 that have assisted in building different facets of the SCG farm incubator model. SCG provides hands on education, mentorship and training in the following fields: (1) Basic crop farming practices including regenerative agriculture practices and soil management; (2) Business development including planning, finance, and



marketing strategies; (3) Access to land to grow on incubator sites or through local land owners; (4) Equipment, tools, high tunnel space, walk-in coolers, wash stations, and a commercial kitchen; (5) Connections with local networks including the USDA and Farm Service Agency; and (6) One-on-one mentoring with experienced farmers.

## 09. STRONG COMMUNITITES

As neighborly relationships solidify, and the Zone 1 Food Project is taking root, we are seeing property sales go up in the houses in close proximity to the gardens. The Z1FP healthy eating programming at the preschool is strengthening the desire to have the same type of programming in other preschools and is bring attention to the Grant Beach Neighborhood where the market garden and the preschool is located.. CoxHealth has also offered larger office space at a very low rate to accommodate Z1FP and growing SCG staff placements, internships, and positions.

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## 10. THE SCG WORKSHOP MODEL

The SCG workshop model includes small classes with training and education in various areas related to growing, environmental sustainability, and production. These workshops are led by experts in these topics, including faculty from the University of Missouri.

Over the past 12 months, SCG has provided the following workshops through the USDA Zone 1 Food Project and Socially Disadvantaged and Veteran Farmer grant programs



<b>WORKSHOPS</b>	
<i>Blackberry Production</i>	<i>Getting Started in Organics</i>
<i>Natural Farming Practices</i>	<i>High Tunnels, Low Tunnels, and Row Covers</i>
<i>Recycling Beyond the Basics</i>	<i>Farmer Language and Skills</i>
<i>Creating Value Added Products from your Farm</i>	<i>Sell Your Harvest at Farmers Markets</i>
<i>Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) &amp; Food Safety</i>	<i>Native Bees and Pollinators</i>
<i>Being Water Wise on your Farm</i>	<i>Certified Naturally Grown Certificates</i>
<i>Expanding into New Markets (Wild Foraging)</i>	<i>Life in the Soils Summer Workshop</i>
<i>Regenerative Practices</i>	<i>Mushroom Cultivation</i>
<i>Spring Permaculture</i>	<i>Life in the Soil</i>
<i>Growing Fruit for the Home or Farm</i>	<i>Zero Waste Cooking</i>
<i>Home Composting</i>	<i>Life in the Soil</i>
<i>International Permaculture Day Planting &amp; Demos</i>	<i>Native Fruit Crops</i>
<i>The Link Between Healthy Streams and You</i>	<i>Shiitake Log Inoculation Workshop</i>
<i>Getting Started in Organics</i>	<i>Intro to Permaculture</i>
<i>High Tunnels, Low Tunnels, and Row Covers</i>	<i>Certified Naturally Grown</i>
<i>Farmer Language and Skills</i>	<i>Native Fruit Crops</i>
<i>Scale Appropriate Equipment</i>	-

*A sample workshop curriculum outline is attached. This curriculum is customizable for local community needs and for a multitude of demographic groups.*

## THE SCG APPRENTICESHIP MODEL

By far, one of the most successful elements of the SCG farm incubator project grant evaluations have shown is the one on one mentoring component of the program. This not only provides customized education and guidance, but also provides opportunities for friendship and community. For example, Sandy, a socially disadvantaged farmer, and her partner contacted Springfield Community Gardens when they moved from Texas in order

**“I think other shelters could benefit from this program, my heart wants to help other shelters. I hope one day I can teach the classes and spill into others and share information.”**

**-LEAD MENTOR AT  
VICTORY MISSIONS HOMELESS  
MEN’S CENTER**

The garden at the school is planted and cared for by students in the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) program. They have made plans for Rachel to come out in the fall to teach a class at Disney Elementary and make any recommendations for their garden.

She discussed the benefit of having an intermediary contact when looking for a resource, how Springfield Community Gardens has connected her to additional resources and people, and how the project is building networks, resources, and a sense of community.

to identify native edible plants on their property. They began attending some of the workshops provided by SCG. She was given a copy of a powerpoint that was used to teach a class on foraging, so that she could use that as a resource. Currently they are growing shiitake mushrooms and elderberries on their property and have sold to SCG.

After this positive experience she requested assistance about a garden they have at the Disney Elementary School in Springfield, someone personally couldn’t come out, but they were able to discuss with her about which plants to put in the garden and give recommendations.

She discussed the community aspect of having a group of supportive, helpful people as a resource who will answer any question and the benefit of having an expert be able to come out and guide her while she is in the process of planting and growing her farm to answer questions. Another factor that she mentioned is that she liked that SCG had a meeting place that was an actual house that they could meet and network. Her intention is to begin making a profit from the shiitake mushroom and elderberry sales, and she said SCG gave her the pathway to do that.

While SCG provides this type of mentorship and one on one guidance, but also opportunities for formal apprenticeships. The apprenticeship model consists of an entry level tier where participants are given knowledge and education; obtain additional classes, education, mentorship and connections with local resources; through tiers where trained apprentices are given plots of land on SCG garden and farm sites with the opportunity to use SCG business networks to sell produce grown on these sites. SCG is currently working with experts, including Tufts University, to formalize these tiers with opportunities for different certifications at each stage.

## REPLICATING THE SCG MODEL

Support for new farmers is more complex than training up a new group of people. The average age of farmers is 57 and rising (USDA, 2007), and reasons for farmer and farmland loss are multifaceted. Farming continually grows more financially challenging, in part due to diminishing supplies of affordable inputs and competition with global exports (Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, 2010). Constraints vary, and reasons families do not stay in farming are often based around very personal, complex situations (Branan, 2011). There is also increasing interest from many non-farmers, in exploring farming as a new career or life path. According to the most recent USDA Agricultural Census, approximately 12% of all farms are operated by women and 2.5% of operators identify as having non-Caucasian heritage in Greene County. It is vital to connect under represented, under resourced, and underserved groups in efforts towards long term urban and rural renewable and sustainable agriculture as such efforts provide opportunities for both individual and collective economic advancement.

The people of the Ozarks have a long tradition of self-reliance and involvement in independent food production. In this region, many individuals continue to engage in growing their own personal gardens to feed their families and to take part in traditional food preservation methods such as canning and dehydration. The growth and distribution of produce that SCG encourages is a direct reflection of food traditions of this region. The rationale behind supporting and encouraging these types of programs is that members of our community have a sense of pride when it comes to our heritage, culture and traditions. By offering food preservation classes (for example) SCG is tapping into that sense of pride and tradition. By encouraging an understanding that growth and distribution of healthy foods and produce is an integral part of Ozarks culture, we uphold cultural traditions that have sustained our community members for generations. Developing this understanding will greatly contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of the entire community. In addition, such an effort also provides an opportunity to create employment opportunities, subsidize household income, and attract agri-business development in the region. Profiles of various communities demonstrate that in certain regions of the country, community-focused agriculture has had a measurable effect on economic growth and can build family and individual revenue as supplemental income or as an employment opportunity.

Multi-year census data, the Springfield and Greene County Community Focus Report, and the Impacting Poverty Commission Report demonstrate that poverty is a significant social issue in our community. In the last 16 years the poverty rate has grown from 9.9% to 26.4% (2000 census; 2010-2014 ACS estimates). This dramatic increase combined with low-levels of per capita income has led the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to label Springfield “severely fiscally distressed.” Springfield is the only metropolitan community in Missouri to have been given this status by HUD. Both Kansas City and St. Louis are ranked more prosperous than Springfield.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (Bureau), Springfield’s hourly wage is 20% below the national average. When reviewing the top 22 most common occupational groups, the Bureau found that all occupations in Springfield paid less than the national average. Without the ability to make a living wage, individuals and households are unable to afford basic needs, such as food. According to the SPS 2013-2014 annual report,

60% of children in elementary schools and 57% of middle school students participate in the federal free or reduced lunch program. A 2010 study, “Hunger in America,” conducted by Feeding America, concluded that at least 43,000 people in the community do not know where their next meal is coming from; 16% of the population in Southwest Missouri is food-insecure; and 67% of households in the Ozarks must choose between buying food or paying their utilities. Areas of Zone 1, have unemployment rates as high as 22.6% (2009-2013, American Fact Finder), as compared to the city’s 5% unemployment rate.

SCG’s theory of change is supported by several national success stories. For example, the Evergreen Cooperative in Cleveland, Ohio has been a game changer for many low-income individuals and businesses who want to support a local economy. The current model of large scale agriculture relies heavily on low-cost labor and transportation.

Knowledge and training in local food production and agribusiness are vital components of sustainable economic growth. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s agencies of Rural Development and the Agricultural Marketing Service published a compilation of research on economic growth opportunities, particularly for low- and moderate-income (LMI) households and communities, through regional food systems. Consumer demand for locally grown food has increased dramatically over the last two decades (according to U.S. Census of Agriculture statistics, direct sales of edible farm products for human consumption rose from \$404 million annually in 1992 to \$1.3 billion by 2012, far outpacing the average rate of sales growth in the U.S. agricultural sector). The emergence of demand for local food comes at a critical time for America’s economy and small, limited income farmers. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis report found that “with appropriately targeted policies and support, the attendant opportunities can advance the economic and financial security of LMI households and communities. What is especially interesting about this work is that the approaches that support the development of regional food systems not only contribute direct economic benefits to the community, but can also open the door for improved access to healthy food and other positive outcomes that could result in improved community health and a more productive workforce.”

## REPLICATING THE MODEL IN OTHER COMMUNITIES & GROUPS

While the programs and services of SCG have been customized to meet the needs of the Springfield and Ozarks region, the social issues that this region faces is not unlike other areas either in urban or rural settings. Poverty, food insecurity, the need for farmers are issues that are being experienced across the United States. For example, SCG has customized some growing curriculum for preschoolers and created the 4H Grow to Ride

**“When Rachael comes to the preschool, she presents facts about the importance of that specific food, what its function is and then encourages the kids to eat the vegetables by making a fun game of it. I see a positive difference in their eating habits.”**

**-LIFE 360 PRESCHOOL KITCHEN MANAGER**

Program based off of the SCG model and Farm Incubator project modified for children and youth.

The Grow to Ride program brings youth from local Springfield, Missouri neighborhoods together with caring adults to help children and youth enhance literacy, develop personal responsibility through horsemanship, and learn the importance of food sustainability while providing a service to their communities. 4-H empowers young people to lead for a lifetime. Programs in science, healthy living and civic engagement are backed by a network of 100 public universities and a robust community of 4-H volunteers and professionals. Through hands-on learning, kids build not only confidence, creativity and curiosity, but also life skills such as leadership and resiliency to help them thrive today and tomorrow.

## REPLICATION IDEA LIST FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- What are the local growing needs or growing education needs of your community?
- Are there language or cultural considerations that should be considered in replication?
- Who are others in the community, either nonprofits or industries, that might be willing to partner in creating a local hub or farm incubator program?
- What are the products that are local or regional to your area that might create a niche market?
- Who can provide the classes and level of education needed for your community?
- What are the barriers that prevent low income or various demographic groups from participating in farming if they desire to? How can you address these?
- How might it be best to structure apprenticeships taking into consideration the unique needs of your population or community? What are the training or education expectations needed to pass through phases towards skilled apprentice?
- What are the opportunities for apprentices upon completion of such a program?
- Are there opportunities to connect farmers in your area with USDA resources or other local resources that can assist in empowering farmers and ensuring success?





## CONTACT US



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
[Springfieldcommunitygardens.org](http://Springfieldcommunitygardens.org)

**EMAIL:**  
[Springfieldcommunitygardens@gmail.com](mailto:Springfieldcommunitygardens@gmail.com)

## ***2501 Programming in 2019: SAMPLE CURRICULUM***

- 2.6.19      **Natural Gardening**  
What is natural gardening?  
Soil health  
Production practices  
Natural pest management  
Hands on: investigations of soil health  
Hands on: identification of pests  
Hands on: walking tour of Market Garden
  
- 3.9.16      **GAPS Food Safety**  
Why Should We be Concerned?  
The Contaminants  
Site Selection  
Hygiene and Health  
Water and Irrigation  
Soil, Manure, and Compost  
Animals in the Garden  
Harvest/Post-Harvest
  
- 4.13.19     **Fruit Production**  
Why Grow Fruits?  
Planning for Production  
Fruit Crops for Missouri  
Hands on: tour of fruit plantings at Market Garden  
Allowed, restricted and prohibited inputs  
Inspection process  
Hands on: inspection of SCG Midtown Garden

- 5.11.19      Organic gardening practices display at C-Street Market  
                  Natural gardening practices  
                  Identifying and managing pests the organic way  
                  Managing soil health
  
- 5.18.19      High Tunnels and Low Tunnels  
                  Introduction to high tunnels and vegetables  
                  Site selection and construction methods  
                  Warm season vegetable production  
                  Winter vegetable production  
                  Other possibilities  
                  Hands on: tour of protective structures at Market Garden
  
- 6.8.19        Selling at Farmers Market  
                  What is a farmers market?  
                  Advantages and disadvantages of farmers markets  
                  Setting up for farmers markets  
                  Successful marketing at farmers markets  
                  Hands on: evaluation of marketing practices at C-Street Market
  
- 7.27.19      Certified Naturally Grown  
                  Types of certifications  
                  Produce standards  
                  Annual requirements  
                  Allowed, restricted and prohibited inputs  
                  Inspection process  
                  Hands on: inspection of SCG Midtown Garden

## Workshop Evaluation Form

Your feedback is critical for SCG to ensure that we are meeting your educational needs. We would appreciate if you could take a few minutes to share your opinions with us so we can better serve you.

**Please return this form to the instructor or organizer at the end of the workshop. Thank you.**

Workshop: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>				<b>Strongly agree</b>
1. Did you learn new ideas or concepts?	1	2	3	4	5
2. The instructor was a good communicator	1	2	3	4	5
3. The material was presented in an organized manner	1	2	3	4	5
4. The instructor was knowledgeable on the topic	1	2	3	4	5
5. I would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop on this same subject	1	2	3	4	5

7. Please rate the following:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The program overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the course? Any suggestions for improvement?

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**Overall, after completing this workshop, to what level has your knowledge increased:**

- Not at all
- I have learned information I did not know
- I am confident I can implement practices introduced in this workshop
- I have gained a mastery of topics covered
- I now feel I could teach this to someone else

**OVER, Please →→→**

<b>What will you do differently as a result of this program?</b>			
Do you plan to implement things you learned today at our workshop?	Yes	Don't plan to	Need more training
I will follow-up on available resources.	Yes	Don't plan to	Need more training
I will attend additional trainings on soil health.	Yes	Don't plan to	
I will keep in touch with a person I met at the program.	Yes	Don't plan to	
Comments below .....			

**Future Needs**

9. Please describe the top two topics you would like to learn more about in the next 12 months:

Topic  
1: \_\_\_\_\_

- Preferred level:       a. Introductory    b. Intermediate    c. Advanced
- Preferred format:     a. Seminar/workshop  
 b. Self-study materials  
 c. Web Based Instruction  
 d.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic  
2: \_\_\_\_\_

- Preferred level:       a. Introductory    b. Intermediate    c. Advanced
- Preferred format     a. Seminar/workshop  
 b. Self-study materials  
 c. Web Based Instruction  
 d.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



Thank you for  
supporting your  
community.



Springfield Community Gardens