



# THE GROW DAT YOUTH FARM

## QUARTERLY UPDATE: SPRING 2014

### LEADERSHIP PROGRAM 2014

#### NOW IN FULL SWING!

We are now over halfway through our 5-month Leadership Program. Until the end of the school year, 40 youth (a 30% increase from last year!) work at the farm one day a week after school and all day on Saturdays. For the month of June, youth work 4 days a week until graduation on Saturday, June 28. The rigorous Leadership Program challenges young people to grow personally and professionally through exposure to diverse elements of the food system. The average Saturday looks something like this: first youth volunteer at Crescent City Cafe, a free restaurant located Uptown on St. Charles Ave. Youth serve guests a delicious and healthy meal, and have an intensive debrief afterwards about their experience. Hands on service such as this helps youth make connections between our food system, hunger, and inequity. (While one Crew is at Crescent City Cafe, another crew is split between our Farm Stand and the Crescent City Farmer's Market.)

Back on the farm in the late morning, youth work in the fields, learning a variety of agricultural tasks from compost-building to bed-making to weeding. After, they join our partner Cooking Matters for a cooking and nutrition class in our teaching kitchen. Each recipe features fresh produce from our farm, and at the end of the day, youth are given packages of all the ingredients they'll need to try making the same recipe again at home. This week's cooking class will visit a local grocery store to undertake a smart-shopping scavenger hunt.

After cooking class, youth have a 30 minute lunch break. We help youth think through easy, healthy and affordable sack lunches to bring to work, and we also have a sandwich station where youth can make a PB&J or tuna sandwich for a 50 cent contribution. It's a simple lunch, but an important source of nutrition for many youth who work with us.

In the afternoon, youth participate in a variety of workshops on diversity, public speaking, and team building. Real Talk sessions are run every other week in the afternoon. Real Talk is our feedback and communication tool. In Real Talk, Crew Members receive positives and deltas from adult staff and youth Assistant Crew Leaders. Positives are specific examples of 'work done well' at Grow Dat in the previous two weeks. Deltas (imagine a triangle) are the symbol for 'change' and



*Market Assistant Cody poses in front field with a variety of flowers for sale at our weekly Farm Stand*

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### LEADERSHIP PROGRAM CREWS

- Greenesis (like "Genesis" only greener)  
Crew Leader: Jabari  
Assistant Crew Leader: Taylor
  - Organic Growers (OGs)  
Crew Leader: Yasmin  
Assistant Crew Leader: Brittany
  - Dream Chasers  
Crew Leader: Jeanne  
Assistant Crew Leader: Sylvester
-

are areas for personal growth. Several weeks ago, youth participated in an Intensive Real Talk session. Intensive Real Talk in when youth are invited to give positives and deltas to their Crew Leader and ACL as well as one another. In the words of a young person from last year's Leadership Program:

*"I like Real Talk because it makes people feel good about themselves. Knowing that I am improving on something or that I am special in some way, that I have a skill that can be used to contribute is important. Most of it is just that people appreciate you and that they see what you are doing and that it is valuable. People might not get that at home or get that love from some place. It's important for them to hear 'you are a hard worker', so that they feel good about themselves. That makes you want to do better and try harder."*

## COMMUNITY LUNCHESES

Save the dates for our 2014 Community Lunch series! Fridays, June 6, 13, 20 from 12-1:30. A diverse group of invitees come to the farm for a beautiful lunch and join in a conversation with our youth employees about our theme of the week. The luncheons will feature a farm-fresh meal



*First beet harvest of the season.*



*Youth prepare cloth napkins and silverware for guests during service at Crescent City Cafe (an Uptown free restaurant)*

prepared by youth and a guest chef, and take place in our Eco-Campus. Our Eco Campus was designed and built by the Tulane City Center and has gotten a lot of attention for the beauty, sustainability and function of the design.

Please email Jeanne at [jeanne@growdatyouthfarm.org](mailto:jeanne@growdatyouthfarm.org) if you are interested in joining us for a Community Lunch this June.

## GROW DAT/URBAN ROOTS PARTNERSHIP

As we mentioned in our last Quarterly Report, we have received funding this year to build a collaboration with our partner organization in Austin, Urban Roots. Grow Dat based much of its model on Urban Roots, which was founded in Austin a few years before we launched Grow Dat. We now have the chance to deepen our collaboration through a year of shared learning and exchange. In the fall, four Urban Roots youth and two staff came to Grow Dat for a three day exchange that culminated in a "cook off" at the farm. In late May, four Grow Dat youth and two



*Crew Member Cleshay building compost in our new pile.*

staff will travel to Austin to work on their farm, learn more about the agricultural and culinary history of their community, and conduct another community educational event at the Wheatsville Coop. Through this exchange, we hope to learn more about the ways we can engage graduates from each of our programs into new roles as educators, teaching others about food, farming and health. Learn more about this partnership through a recent Edible Austin article: <http://www.edibleaustin.com/index.php/people2/youth/1482-grow-dat>

## GROW DAT'S FIRST FARM SHARES

The launch of our first CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Farm Share program was a huge success, selling out well before the sign-up deadline. The sale of Farm Shares has been a significant cash infusion to our farm and youth program for late spring and early summer, our period of heftiest

expenses. Every Saturday morning for 15 weeks starting in March, over 30 Farm Share Members swing by the weekly Farm Stand to pick up boxes overflowing with glistening fresh produce. Cody, youth Market Assistant, greets members as they arrive and chats with them about their week and what they intend to cook with their heaps of veggies. Cody and Unique (youth Ag Assistant) offer tours of the farm and help direct a rotating crew of new youth in their market jobs. As each member arrives, a youth Crew Member runs to the big walk-in cooler (in our of our seven retrofitted shipping containers on our Eco Campus) and grabs a CSA box for the member. Most of the produce in the box was picked by Crew Members (with the help of some adult volunteers) during the harvest shift afterschool the Friday night before. Farm to table in just hours!

Interested in supporting our work by becoming a Farm Share member? Stay tuned for sign-up information in the late fall-early winter for 2014 membership information!

## GROW DAT'S FARM STAND

Want to see Grow Dat in action and stock your fridge with sustainably-grown veggies? Head out to the farm from 9-12 on a Saturday between now and the end of June to buy produce grown and sold by youth. The last Saturday of every month features a guest food truck and often live music.



**FARM STAND**  
Saturdays through June 22  
9-noon  
150 Zachary Taylor Drive, City Park

## GROW DAT'S SECOND ANNUAL HOOTENANNY!

Grow Dat's Hootenanny 2014 was a foot stomping good time. Despite a constant drizzle, dancers and diners gathered at the elegant Arbor Room at City Park's Popp Fountain to escape the rain and dance the night away. Nathan Harrison and the Small Batch String Band kicked off the night with a square dance then Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes brought down the house with a zydeco set that had everyone moving. Congratulations to winners of the best-dressed and dance contests! We were very inspired by your moves and sartorial splendor.

Attendees enjoyed small plates and treats from an impressive community of New Orleans culinary heavy weights including Good Eggs, Slow Food, Dante's Kitchen, Pagoda Café, Mondo, Café NOMA, St. James Cheese Company, Nola Pie Guy, and Bittersweet Confections. We appreciate everyone who supported Grow Dat by buying tickets, volunteering, and donating to the Hootenanny, especially Energy, IBERIABANK, NOLA Aikido, New Orleans Slow Food, Twelve Mile Limit, Coca Cola, Atelier Vie, Pearl Wine Co., The Barman's Fund, Massey's, The Louisiana Children's Museum, Home Depot, Good Eggs, Dismas Security, Pistol & Stamen Flower Company, The New Orleans Advocate, The Gambit, YELP, and City Park for use of their beautiful Arbor Room.



The funds raised will help us further our mission this spring and summer, employing 40 youth to grow 10,000 pounds of food for their community. Thank you to all our generous donors and supporters!

## SHOUT OUTS AND FUNDING SUCCESSES

We are very proud to announce support for Grow Dat's work from several family foundations this spring, including the Fox Family Foundation, the Jones Family Foundation and the Leah and Edgar "Dooky" Chase Family Foundation. The Chase Family Foundation provided support for one of our upcoming Community Luncheons, while the Fox and Jones Family Foundations provided general operating support.

We are grateful for a recent series of generous in-kind donations:

- Citrus and other fruit trees from Jimbo Roland. Margaret Orr facilitated the donation and Connie Uddo from Hike for KaTREEena provided the beautiful trees.
- A "Super Sack" of finished compost from John Wear of Trident Environmental Services and Consultants.
- A trailer from the (constantly generous) Barman's Fund, which will be used to transport produce to market.
- A "Big Ass Fan" (yes indeed, that's the company's name!) for our Outdoor Classroom in our Eco Campus. Already we are enjoying the cool breeze from the fan's massive blades as the days start to heat up.



## IN THE NATIONAL PRESS

Grow Dat recently received national press coverage, from Grist and Aljazeera America, in the media flurry that ensued after a NYTimes article that spawned what many referred to as "Kalegate". In response to the pieces written about us, we decided to write our own piece in the Huffington Post. We encourage you to read these pieces and join us as we work to unify youth and adults in our community across difference in order to create a more just food system.

Our HuffPost Response: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johanna-gilligan/our-look-at-kalegate-a-ch\\_b\\_5106567.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johanna-gilligan/our-look-at-kalegate-a-ch_b_5106567.html)

Grist: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johanna-gilligan/our-look-at-kalegate-a-ch\\_b\\_5106567.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johanna-gilligan/our-look-at-kalegate-a-ch_b_5106567.html)

Aljazeera America: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/3/20/kale-causes-controversyinneworleans.html>

## MORE IN THE NEWS

Judy Walker, Food Writer with the Times-Picayune, caught up with Founder Johanna Gilligan three years after the initial launch of the farm.

"Grow Dat Youth Farm at City Park teaches leadership through growing", Times-Picayune, Judy Walker, April 7 2014: [http://www.nola.com/food/index.ssf/2014/04/grow\\_dat\\_youth\\_farm\\_at\\_city\\_pa.html](http://www.nola.com/food/index.ssf/2014/04/grow_dat_youth_farm_at_city_pa.html)

Read Walker's first story on our early days here: [http://www.nola.com/food/index.ssf/2011/06/grow\\_dat\\_youth\\_farm\\_nurtures\\_y.html](http://www.nola.com/food/index.ssf/2011/06/grow_dat_youth_farm_nurtures_y.html)

"Grow Dat" in Edible Austin, Spring 2014, by Max Elliot <http://www.edibleaustin.com/index.php/people2/youth/1482-grow-dat>

## SUPPORT OUR WORK

Donate now! We accept donations through our website at [www.growdatyouthfarm.org](http://www.growdatyouthfarm.org)  
We appreciate your instant or ongoing contribution.

