

### Our First Year

On June 24th, 2011, our first crew of youth employees graduated from the pilot year of the Grow Dat program. Eleven youth completed the 19-week program and received their Completion Certificates at a graduation attended by their families, staff and Grow Dat partners.



### Grew Dat!

Working with Hollygrove Market and Farm Mentor Farmer, Macon Fry, youth grew and harvested a total of 1,057 pounds of food during the pilot year. 747 pounds were sold at market, generating \$8,860 in income-- enough to cover the cost of seeds, seedlings and soil amendments on our City Park site for the next four years!

Youth distributed 375 pounds of donated food (called our Shared Harvest), 310 pounds of which were grown on our Shared Harvest plot at Hollygrove. Free food was distributed to 24 sites including the Crescent City Café (a local free restaurant), with families and neighbors of youth, and to 75 attendees at our final Graduation ceremony.

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### Summer Program

The summer program included many adventures! Youth worked with local market gardeners at six urban garden sites in New Orleans providing many types of assistance from weeding to building bioswales to retain rain water. They travelled to Mississippi to the Pearl River Blues Farm where they harvested 65 pounds of blueberries that they donated to their families and New Orleanians without fresh food access. They worked at the Crescent City Cafe, an organization that serves fresh, free breakfast once a month at Rayne Memorial Church.



Last but not least, Grow Dat took a road trip to Austin where youth had a chance to work with and learn from other young farmers at Urban Roots!



# GROWDAT UPDATE

SECOND QUARTER 2011



## How Youth Grew... Leadership Development

At Grow Dat, our mission is to nurture a diverse group of young leaders through the meaningful work of growing food. We are very excited about the leadership skills that students reported at the close of the program! We believe that youth with emotional and ecological intelligence are better prepared to lead their communities through future environmental and social challenges. We know that good leaders have many qualities and skills, including the ability to analyze one's own strengths and weaknesses, set goals and communicate effectively with others (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998).

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- 83% of youth reported an increase in their ability to maintain focus on projects, and two thirds reported that they are less distracted from their projects since they joined Grow Dat.
- Seven Real Talk sessions were administered through out the program, providing over 300 total hours of direct feedback time to youth & staff.

During the last week of the program, youth crew members were asked to reflect upon the individual goals they set in February. All of youth responded that they had accomplished their goal over the course of the program. More impressive, however, was that 1/3 of youth also said they intend to continue to strive to reach their goal after the program ends, demonstrating significant insight and maturity in the reflection process and strong evidence of their commitment to personal growth.

"I have achieved my goal to develop a better understanding of what traditional farming is. I have so much excitement about what I have learned..."



"I'll ask for the job again and will also garden with my grandfather."

Goal: To improve my communication skills.  
Reached? "Yes! Because I am able to go up to people with very little hesitation."

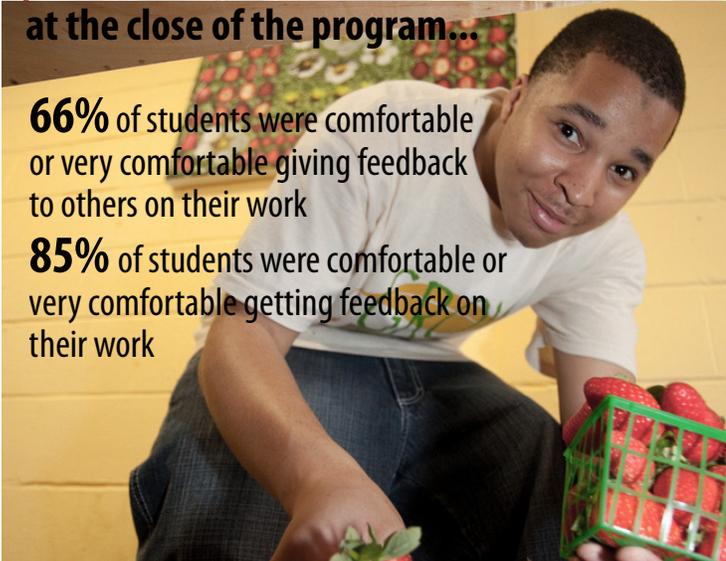
Goal: To give back to the community.  
Reached? "I believe I have accomplished my goal but not how I wanted to. I feel that I should keep giving back. I have a better understanding of other lives, both personally attached to me and not. I will get my mom to start organic planting and give away food as much as possible."

Goal: To talk to more people and be able to interact with all types of diverse groups. I want to keep exploring public speaking skills and work to become better and better.  
Reached? "I do feel like I'm accomplishing my goal, but not yet accomplished. Coming to the program my public speaking skills were not the best, and as the program comes to an end, I feel as if I can communicate to anybody and talk about various things."

## at the close of the program...

**66%** of students were comfortable or very comfortable giving feedback to others on their work

**85%** of students were comfortable or very comfortable getting feedback on their work



## Healthy Habits

After their participation in Grow Dat, youth reported the following changes in knowledge or behavior:

- 100% of youth expressed that they have the desire to build a garden or have already started a garden on their own since joining Grow Dat.
- 86% of youth report that, because of what they learned at Grow Dat, they now encourage their friends and family to eat more vegetables - the same number report that their family now eats more fruits and vegetables than they had previously.
- 100% of youth surveyed report that they have added at least 2-5 new fruits and/or vegetables to their diet as a result of their participation in Grow Dat.

"I learned how being connected to the earth sort of strengthens the connection we have to other beings."



## On Farming in City Park...

In the Spring semester of 2011, 16 students at the Tulane School of Architecture enrolled in two 4th year studios. Eight students focused on developing the overall site master plan (under the direction of Professor Abigail Feldman) and the other 8 students on the specific building designs (under the direction of Professor Scott Bernhard). The images here came out of this semester long design investigation.

Core elements of the building studio include:

- Exploration of where to site the built 'campus' (in collaboration with site planning group).
- Exploration of shipping containers as the primary building-block.
- Research into built program needs to support Grow Dat Youth Farm programming.
- Development of 'campus' strategy to combine indoor, outdoor, covered, and open spaces into a single functioning unit.
- Material research through the development of a single 20 foot long shipping container used to test various shading, cladding, roofing, foundation, ventilation, access, and other requirements for modifying the basic container.
- Development of detailed campus plan identifying core program needs such as cold storage, locker rooms, bathrooms, office/meeting space, classroom, food preparation area, etc.

Construction began at our City Park site in June and will be completed in December, 2011. Farm site development will begin in late summer and our first acre will be in production by January, 2012.



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## Grow Dat Supporters

## Guest Educators

Over the course of the program, 26 guest educators contributed over 400 hours of teaching time. The contribution of their expertise dramatically enhanced the Grow Dat curriculum. Thank you so much to everyone who shared their time and knowledge with our youth this year.

## Partners

City Park

Gaea Engineering

Hollygrove Market and Farm

Louisiana Outdoor Outreach Program

New Orleans Botanic Garden

New Orleans Food and Farm Network

New Orleans Outreach

Science and Math Charter School

Whole Foods

## Funders

Blue Cross Blue Shield

Crescent Fund

New Orleans Food and Farm Network

New Orleans Outreach

Maziar Behrooz

John and Anne Mullen

Rockefeller Foundation

Anonymous Donors

## Press

### Times-Picayune

"Grow Dat Youth Farm Nurtures Young Leaders Amid Planting"

by Judy Walker

June 9, 2011

[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)

### The Gambit

"Young Farmers"

by Andy Cook

May 24, 2011

<http://www.bestofneworleans.com/gambit/young-farmers/Content?oid=1752043>

### Tulane New Wave

"Program Plants Youth on Urban Tract"

by R.M. Morris

March 3, 2011

[http://tulane.edu/news/newwave/030311\\_growdat.cfm](http://tulane.edu/news/newwave/030311_growdat.cfm)

**Please follow our progress and learn more about upcoming volunteer days on our Facebook page and on our website:**

**[www.growdatyouthfarm.org](http://www.growdatyouthfarm.org)**