



## COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM: South Salt Lake Year-End Report 2023

### OVERALL PROGRAM STATUS – How is the program performing relative to goals, COVID impacts, READI (Race, Equity, Access, Diversity, Inclusion), big picture thoughts, etc.

#### Community Engagement:

1. *Wednesday Walkthrough.* In collaboration with the Education Program, an informal workshop was held at the Fitts Park Garden. This was an opportunity for current or interested gardeners and neighbors to attend an in-person walkthrough with Wasatch Community Gardens' (WCG's) Education Team. Gardeners were able to speak about their successes and experience in the garden and learn in real time from WCG staff members and experts in the field. Handmade appetizers from fresh garden produce were provided. The Community Garden Program (CGP) hopes to continue these types of informal workshops in Community Gardens moving forward.
2. *Expanding Our Reach.* WCG hopes that by opening up more plots to low-to-moderate income individuals in the area in conjunction with intentional engagement of historically marginalized communities, local service agencies and community partners, that the program will be able to track the increase in local social, economic and overall wellness benefits of Fitts Park Garden over the next two years in South Salt Lake.

#### Garden Management:

1. *New Program Manager and Partnership Coordinator:* In February WCG hired a new, full time Parks for Produce Manager (Madalyn Covey) and a full time Partnership Coordinator (Tia Mitskinos) to build the team's capacity and support in the development of new partnerships with community partners representing historically under-resourced communities.
2. *Fall Meetings.* Team CGP has seen a need for a collective decision making process to involve community gardeners in planning for the future of the garden. This year Fall Meetings were trialed with great success. Sixteen gardeners came to the optional meeting to discuss challenges from the previous year, propose projects for the coming year, and vote on how to prioritize their collective time and resources.
3. *Gatherings and Work Parties.* The gardeners gathered together six times in the 2023 season to work together and enjoy each other's company. The community and friendships that come from working together are highly valued by gardeners; they voted to have regular, set monthly meetings in 2024.
4. *Development Details.* WCG, the City, and gardeners worked together to put the finishing touches on garden development. Together they installed fencing and instructional signage to mitigate theft, constructed and filled a 4th raised bed as a community buffer plot, assembled bins and signage for the composting system, put up a shade sail over the picnic table for relief from the summer sun, and built shelving and hanging infrastructure in the shed to better care for and organize community tools. Gardeners voted to continue developing the garden in 2024 by planting trees and creating a shared perennial bed in the underutilized area against the east fenceline.

#### Challenges:

1. *Theft.* The most common concern reported by community gardeners was produce theft. Because levels of theft are relatively low compared to other WCG managed gardens, gardeners voted not to lock the gates so that neighbors can continue to freely enjoy the space. Instead, more holistic mitigation efforts will be made as the surrounding community continues to learn the purpose of the garden. This will likely be something gardeners continue to revisit.

### NUMBERS – How many people have you served in 2022? Successes, challenges, etc. in terms of numbers? Please include participant demographics if you collected this information and any other quantitative data that is important or interesting.



**Community Garden Demographics:**

- 32 gardeners total, 79 individuals in all households provided with access to fresh produce through the Fitts Park Community Garden.
- 59% Low-to-Moderate Income gardeners.

**Race:** \*Note: Programmatic demographic reporting will change in 2024 to reflect the [U.S. Census Bureau's Demographic Categories](#).

- American Indian & white: 2.13%
- American Indian/Alaskan native: 2.13%
- Asian (includes Indian subcontinent): 2.13%
- Asian & white: 4.26%
- New Roots Participants: 8.51%
- Black /African American: 2.13%
- Black & white: 2.13%
- Prefer not to say: 8.51%
- White (origins in Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa): 68.09%

**Ethnicity:**

- Not Hispanic or Latino: 81.25%
- Prefer not to say / Prefiero no decir: 18.75%

**City Community Garden Information:**

- 8,300 sq ft of land providing access for growing fresh produce
- 38 plots available through the Fitts Park Garden.

**Produce Grown in City Gardens:**

- Number of Plants: 1,700
- Retail Value: \$8,700
- Pounds of Produce Grown: 3,200

**Volunteer Hours:**

- 170 hours @ \$21.00/hr = \$3,570 value for volunteer hours.

**Seedling Donations:** Seedling donations were provided to gardeners in community gardens, community partners, and other partner organizations, including Fitts Park Community Garden.

- Shares donated: 39
- Seedlings: 32 x 195 = 6,240 seedlings
- Retail Value: 6,240 x \$3 = \$18,720
- Bags of Fertilizer: 4 x 39 = 156
- Retail Value: 156 x \$15 = \$2,340
- Bags of potatoes donated: 2 x 39 = 78
- Retail Value of Potatoes: 78 x \$5 = \$390
- Retail Value Donated: 18,720 + 2,340 + 390 = \$21,450

CG is collaborating with WCG's Education Program to create future opportunities for on-location micro workshops and other open, specific gardening resources (i.e. beneficial pollinators, trap crops, companion planting, etc), dependent on capacity and after review of existing resources.

**QUOTES/STORIES – Share any great stories, quotes, or testimonials from participants.**

Candice Cronin, who gardens with her aging mother and young children in one of our raised beds, wrote the following about the Fitts Park Community Garden:

"In the heart of South Salt Lake, nestled between cozy homes and bustling streets, lies a hidden gem known as the "Fitted Park Community Garden." As you step through its arched iron gate, a symphony of colors and scents envelops your senses, guiding you along meandering pathways lined with vibrant blooms and verdant foliage. Sun-kissed marigolds dance harmoniously with delicate zinnias, while playful sunflowers nod their heads to the rhythm of a gentle breeze. Wooden paths offer peaceful havens for contemplation amidst this living artwork. Residents, young and old, come together in this sanctuary, each tending to their cherished plots with loving care.



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Tomato vines climb toward the sky, laden with plump fruit, and herb gardens release their aromatic secrets as they brush against curious fingertips. Laughter and shared stories mingle in the air, as the garden becomes a canvas for both nature's beauty and the connections between kindred souls. The Fitts Park Community Garden is more than just a patch of land—it's a haven of shared dreams, a sanctuary for growth, and a testament to the enduring power of nature to nurture both the earth and the human spirit.”





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