Together we made great things happen at Homeless Garden Project in 2014. Thank you for making success possible!

We are honored to write to you about the successes in the Homeless Garden Project’s programs and enterprises during 2014. To learn more about our 2014 accomplishments, follow the links in this publication to our annual report posts on our blog.

Darrie Ganzhorn, Executive Director

Our Mission: In the soil of our urban farm and garden, people find the tools they need to build a home in the world.

Our Vision: We envision a thriving and inclusive community, workforce, and local food system.

We value: The capacity of every individual for growth and renewal. The joy that comes from growing and sharing healthy food. The well-being created by vibrant social and natural ecosystems.

Congratulations to our 2014 graduates!
Learning—Our trainees remind us that learning, self-esteem, and self-confidence are all connected.

A key component of our educational programming is our weekly lecture series which is designed to work in conjunction with the hands-on experience trainees are getting in the field. Subjects cover horticulture, value-added production, and personal and professional development.

2014 classes included:
Dahlia Care, Compost and Soil Science, Ergonomics in the Garden, Wreath-making, Resume Writing and Interview Skills, Resource Conservation on the Farm. We’ve added to the range of skills offered in the Training Program, including opportunities to gain experience in candle-making, woodworking, and retail.

Read more about our Training Program: 2014 Annual Report
http://homelessgardenproject.org/blog/?p=746

We invest in the whole person, so that trainees can sustain their well-being beyond graduation.

“I came out of a dark place, almost giving up. Now my personal outlook on life is changing for the positive.”

“It is an amazing project that has helped me so much. I look forward to every day.”

“Well-being

“Being here has given me hope for obtaining employment in the future with healthy job skills.”
Jobs & Housing
Upon graduation, our trainees succeeded in a variety of ways. Many found sustainable employment in horticulture, landscaping, and nursery work. Others used their skills gained in the Training Program to find jobs in customer service, security, and care providing. One of our 2014 graduates recently completed the UCSC Farm and Garden Apprenticeship.

Ninety to one hundred percent of our trainees obtain housing. In 2014, our social work interns launched "Finding Flatmates," an initiative designed to leverage community connections to help our trainees secure stable housing. You can help! Find out more and get involved here: http://homelessgardenproject.org/programs/connecting.php

In 2014, we became... Thank you Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County! Helping to make us one of the first in the nation to achieve certification.

More effectively able to address community needs at almost half the median budget
More effective
+ Volunteer leveraging + Management system
+ More Sustainable
+ More Adaptable
Certified Service Enterprise
In 2014, we became...

See more about Cultivating Community, Our Volunteer and Community Education program http://homelessgardenproject.org/blog/?p=726

Our trainee Andrew with his employers Charlie and Maria Keutmann of The Garden Company.

Sustain Supper Series
Seasonal Gourmet Dinners in a Unique Setting
Next dinners—August 22 and September 19
Buy Tickets Now at www.homelessgardenproject.org

25th Anniversary Celebration Series—Sustain Farm Suppers. Celebrate with us at these very special farm dinners featuring exceptional chefs and renowned speakers.

Our Lifeblood
VOLUNTEERS
making the world a better place
2,200 volunteers
20,000 hours

In 2014, we became...
Sustainable Agriculture Quiz—Our farm practices sustainable agriculture methods. Take our quiz to find out how much you know about our sustainable practices.

1. Soil is the basis of our sustainability. We use many methods to build soil fertility and structure. Which one does NOT belong at Homeless Garden Project farm?
   a. Addition of chemical fertilizers that supply Nitrogen, Potassium and Phosphorus.
   b. Addition of organic matter which improves soil structure by breaking up clay particles and binding together the grains in sandy soil to retain moisture and fertility.
   c. Addition of organic matter which acts as a food material for bacteria, fungi and other organisms.
   d. Addition of organic matter which dissolves many insoluble soil minerals and makes them available to plants.

2. Homeless Garden Project conserves water:
   a. by using drip irrigation systems on the majority of our crops
   b. through growing dry-farmed crops, especially squash and tomatoes
   c. using mulches
   d. all of the above

3. Cover crops are used on Homeless Garden Project farm to:
   a. prevent erosion
   b. increase organic matter in the soil
   c. fix nitrogen in the soil
   d. all of the above

4. Sustainable producers actively work to create and sustain cultivated landscapes that are complex, diverse and balanced biological systems as compared to monocrops. In 2014 how many types of vegetables did we grow at our farm (such as beets, carrots, lettuce):
   a. 17
   b. 27
   c. 37

5. How many varieties of vegetables did we grow (such as bulls blood beets, red gem beets)?
   a. 50
   b. 75
   c. 125

6. Our most important crop at Homeless Garden Project is:
   a. Strawberries
   b. Lavender
   c. Kale
   d. Soil
   e. People who have the tools to build a home in the world.

Answers: 1a, 2d, 3b, 4c, 5e. You decide! We think the answer is e.

Business Donor Profile:

Kris Kibak was born and raised in Santa Cruz, a community he still returns to whenever he can. When he launched The Control Group with his business partner, he knew that he wanted to share his success with the community that had nurtured him in his youth. As CEO, Kris oversees the San Diego-based dynamic tech company and spearheaded the corporation’s major gift to the Homeless Garden Project. Thanks Kris and thanks to everyone at The Control Group for investing in the well-being of our participants and our planet!

Thank you to our 2014 Businesses Partners
- Bookshop Santa Cruz
- Burrell School Vineyards & Winery
- The Control Group
- Discretion Brewing
- IBM Employee Services Center
- Lam Research
- New Leaf Community Markets
- Nonprofits Insurance Alliance of California
- North Coast Vision
- Rodriguez Properties
- Plantronics, Inc.
- Rotary Club of Santa Cruz
- SunOpta/Tradin Organics
- The Garden Company
- United Natural Foods, Inc.
- Universal Audio

A hearty Thank You to all our Generous Donors.
You make our garden grow!
Please see the complete listing of our 2014 donors here:
http://homelessgardenproject.org/blog/?p=802

Read about our Social Enterprises
http://homelessgardenproject.org/blog/?p=753
It is important to appreciate the value of numbers. In the non-profit context, numbers, statistics, and measurable outcomes inspire confidence in our community and donors, help set our future path, and let us know when we are on the right track. Because of what they tell us, it is tempting to favor numbers over the stories of those who have passed through the project. Personal histories are messy, nuanced, unclear, and harder to categorize as a whole. Yet, at the Homeless Garden Project, we are in the business of messiness. In a country where over 600,000[1] people are currently homeless, it is increasingly important to reflect on the part our organization has played in changing lives. And equally important that we pay homage to the experience of the individual, and how their personal stories encompass all that we are working so hard to accomplish.

Let me introduce you to Jasmine.

Jasmine’s relationship with the Homeless Garden Project started earlier than most. Her mom and stepdad came through the program when Jasmine was a child. “The farm was much tinier then” she remembers. Jasmine spent much of her childhood in and out of homelessness, often sleeping in the family van. Escaping from an abusive situation, her mom piled Jasmine’s older siblings into the back of a barely running car and drove to California with only fifty cents in her pocket. Jasmine notes that growing up poor and in unstable housing was definitely hard, but it made her a stronger person.

When she found herself homeless as an adult and a mother of two young children, she says, “It felt like history was repeating itself.” Determined not to subject her children to the same experiences she had had, after learning she was losing her housing Jasmine immediately put her family on the wait list for Rebele family shelter. She says, “Kids adapt. My kids still wish we lived at the shelter. It was fun for them, like a dorm. We had it good there.” It was through the shelter that Jasmine got back involved with HGP. Without a high school diploma and work experience, Jasmine couldn’t find a job. She felt hopeless and stagnant, desperate to move forward but with no idea how. That is when she met Krista, another trainee who encouraged her to apply for a job.

Now, with less than a month to go before she transitions out of the program, Jasmine says she has learned a lot about basic gardening and farming, but also about herself. For her, “Working at HGP is about feeling like you fit in somewhere - you’re part of a community.” Some aspects of the training program have been more challenging for her than others, namely becoming comfortable with the structure involved in holding a job. Even so, she says, “Being able to show up everyday, knowing that the staff will meet you where you are and work to support and further your progress, has been a blessing.”

With her training year almost behind her, a new resume developed, and interview skills practiced, Jasmine is only at the farm two days a week to make room for her new job. She even has plans to get her GED and enroll at Cabrillo College. Jasmine says she looks forward to coming back and spending some quality time volunteering with her children after she graduates the program. “There is no garden space at my house, but I want to teach my kids planting and weeding.” She says, “They love the strawberries.”

Written by Rosalie Evans based on a conversation with Jasmine. Rosalie has been a volunteer and social work intern with HGP since 2013, and thinks there is no better place in the world.


Special thanks to Neil Simmons and all the photographers who contributed to this report.
The Homeless Garden Project
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See our Web Site: www.homelessgardenproject.org
or call us at: (831) 426-3609

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☑ $1,000. Friend of the Garden ☑ $500. Cultivator of the Garden
☑ $250. Sower of the Garden ☑ $100. Supporter of the Garden
☑ Other ____________________________

☑ I’d like to make a monthly donation $_____________________

☑ Please contact us about planned giving, gifts of stock, and corporate matching gifts.

☑ Yes! I’d like to receive email updates from HGP.

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