

## FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

2015-2016

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## PROJECT 1

### PROJECT TITLE

This is a final report to UDC and USDA on the “Youth Produce Ambassador Program” run by Common Good City Farm.

### PROJECT SUMMARY

**The Youth Produce Ambassador Program (YPA) is an innovative response to the inequitable and inadequate access to specialty crop products among low-income and underserved residents of the District of Columbia.** As a project of Common Good City Farm, YPA recruits teenage DC residents and enrolls them in a rigorous training program that covers farming and gardening skills, as well as nutrition education and evaluation techniques. This diverse team of teen ambassadors will **build new community gardens at social service communities housing low-income individuals and conduct hands-on education and engagement activities promoting the consumption of produce items and selection of healthier food options.** These new gardens will improve low-income individuals’ access to free, fresh produce items while serving as programmatic platforms for events and workshops that will both educate community members and position young people as advocates for specialty crop consumption and improved community nutrition. Over the two year period of performance, YPA will recruited and trained **27 teenage ambassadors**, built **3 community gardens** at selected social service communities, and demonstrably **increase the nutritional knowledge, specialty crop consumption, and demand for additional specialty crops** among the low-income DC residents served.

### PROJECT PURPOSE

The primary issue addressed by the Youth Produce Ambassador Program (YPA) is the **inequitable and inadequate access to specialty crop products—specifically, fresh produce items— among low-income and underserved residents of the District of Columbia.** Without consistent access to quality, affordable produce items, underserved populations are at increased risk of **obesity and other forms of diet-related disease.** A successful response to this issue must holistically address a number of interrelated challenges that have affected previous programs working to enhance access to healthy food. First is the element of **physical access;** produce items must be available in close physical proximity to target populations. Second is that of **affordability;** produce must be accessible to populations under severe financial stress. Third is that of **education;** target populations must understand the value of consuming specialty crops, especially when they may be more expensive and harder to find than alternative food options. Fourth is that of fostering **community ‘buy-in’;** even if the first three challenges can be addressed, local leadership, participation, and feedback is essential for food access programs to be truly ‘community-based’ rather than simply ‘community-placed.’

As a program of **Common Good City Farm (CGCF)**, YPA is uniquely positioned to address the primary issue outlined above while meeting each of the related elements upon which the project’s success is predicated. A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, CGCF is an urban farm

located in the LeDroit Park neighborhood of the District of Columbia. During the project period, CGCF's p YPA project **recruited diverse District teenagers for a unique paid internship opportunity that involved assessing local needs, gathering stakeholder feedback, building community gardens in social service communities, promoting the consumption of specialty crops through hands-on education and outreach activities serving low-income individuals, and evaluating the results of their efforts.**

## **PROJECT APPROACH**

### *Workplan*

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Recruit teenage participants to serve as Youth Produce Ambassadors	CGCF Executive Director	January – March 2014; January– March 2015	27 unique youth enrolled
Identify and conduct outreach to potential garden host sites	CGCF Executive Director; CGCF Farm Manager	April – July 2014	10 sites contacted
Select garden host sites	Youth Produce Ambassadors; CGCF Farm Manager; CGCF Executive Director	June-July 2014	3 sites selected
Providing training to YPAs (farming, gardening, nutrition, evaluation, and community outreach)	CGCF Farm Manager; CGCF YPA Coordinator; CGCF YPA Team Leaders; Guest Workshop Instructors	June-July 2014; June-July 2015	pre- and post-evaluations that indicated improvement in knowledge and presentation skills by 100% of the participants
Build and plant 6 garden beds at 3 selected sites	YPAs; CGCF Farm Manager; CGCF YPA Coordinator; CGCF YPA Team Leaders	July – August 2014	A total of 16 garden beds, equaling 240 square feet, were planted at 3 host sites
Host 5 Community Lunches per year for YPAs and member from partner organizations	YPAs; CGCF YPA Coordinator; CGCF YPA Team Leaders	July – August 2014; July – August 2015	A total of 10 Community Lunches were hosted
Conduct educational workshops for host site residents (3 per site)	YPAs; CGCF YPA Coordinator; Farm Manager	August – October 2014; April – October 2015	A total of 38 educations workshops were hosted at 3 partner sites

Create training program and manual for use by organizations and housing facilities that are adding a vegetable garden to their site	YPAs; Farm Manager; Executive Director	September – December 2015	Manual was created and delivered to 3 host sites
Conduct final evaluations	YPAs; CGCF Farm Manager	October – November 2014; October – November 2015	Improvements have been tracked in host site participants' increase in knowledge, with a 95% increase.

### *Activities Performed*

#### **Recruit teenage participants to serve as Youth Program Ambassadors**

January through March of 2014 and January through March of 2015, Common Good City Farm (CGCF) staff partnered with the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES) to recruit high school students to serve as Youth Produce Ambassadors. In 2015, Common Good City Farm also partnered with the District of Columbia Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs and recruited high school students independently for participation in the Youth Produce Ambassadors program.

In 2014, twelve first-time Youth Produce Ambassadors (YPAs) were hired for the 6-week summer session, in 2015, nine first-time Youth Produce Ambassadors (YPAs) were hired for the 6-week summer session. In addition to the 6-week summer sessions, CGCF also recruited and enrolled former and current YPAs in 6-to-8-week Spring and Fall sessions. In 2014, there were 4 Spring and 6 Fall YPAs; in 2015, there were 5 Spring and 7 Fall YPAs.

*During the Spring, Summer, and Fall sessions, in 2014 and 2015 a total of 27 unique teenagers participated in the Youth Produce Ambassador Program.*

#### **Identify and conduct outreach to potential garden sites**

April through July of 2014, Common Good City Farm staff contacted 10 potential garden host sites. Sites contacted included child care centers, senior citizen housing facilities, women's shelters, and homeless youth housing facilities.

In the original grant agreement, CGCF would build additional garden sites in 2015; however, after completing the 2014 project year, a scope amendment was approved to continue management and mentorship of the 2014 partner site gardens instead of establishing new gardens at additional partner sites.

#### **Select garden host sites**

Through the outreach to 10 sites, one site, M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC a non-profit youth-focused non-profit organization, committed to being a host site in June of 2014. In July of 2014, Common Good City Farm was approached by the District of Columbia Department of Aging (DCOA) to build gardens at two of their Senior Wellness Centers: Model Cities Senior Wellness Center and Washington Seniors Wellness Center. CGCF and DCOA committed to the partnership in August of 2014.

In the original grant agreement, CGCF would build additional garden sites in 2015; however, after completing the 2014 project year, a scope amendment was approved to continue management and mentorship of the 2014 partner site gardens instead of establishing new gardens at additional partner sites.

*During the 2013-2015 grant period, three garden host sites were selected.*

### **Provide training to YPAs**

In late June of 2014 and 2015, the high school students that were hired as Youth Produce Ambassadors, began the 6-week program. July 2014 and 2015 was dedicated to an intensive and comprehensive training period that encompassed many aspects of sustainable community agriculture systems. Facilitated by CGCF staff and guest workshops instructors, the training focused on building skills in the following areas: hands-on farming, beginner building and construction, cooking and nutrition education, public speaking, teamwork, and community engagement.

*During the 2013-2015 grant period, 21 first-time Youth Produce Ambassadors were trained by Common Good City Farm.*

Through this training, CGCF accomplished *Goal #3* of the Expected Measureable Outcomes. Each YPA completed pre- and post- evaluations that indicated improvement in knowledge and presentation skills by 100% of the participants.

### **Build and plant 6 garden beds at 3 selected sites**

In July and August 2014, the CGCF staff and the YPAs built 5 garden beds at M.O.M.I.E.'s TLC, 4 garden beds at Model Cities Senior Wellness Center, and 6 raised garden beds at Washington Seniors Wellness Center. The first two sites could not accommodate 6 beds, therefore, the maximum number of beds possible were built. A total of 240 square feet of garden space was created. Each bed was planted with seasonally-appropriate herbs and vegetables including carrots, lettuce, beets, collard greens, thyme, oregano, basil, and broccoli.

In the original grant agreement, CGCF would build additional garden sites in 2015; however, after completing the 2014 project year, a scope amendment was approved to continue management and mentorship of the 2014 partner site gardens instead of establishing new gardens at additional partner sites. Thus, in 2015, the Youth Produce Ambassadors planted and maintained the garden beds at the 3 selected sites in the Spring, Summer, and Fall.

*During the 2013-2015 grant period, three gardens consisting of a total of 15 raised beds and 240 square feet of garden space was built, planted, and maintained through the Youth Produce Ambassador program.*

### **Host 5 Community Lunches for YPAs and members from partner organizations**

In July and August of 2014, 5 community lunches were hosted for the YPAs, members from partner organizations, and other community members. Not all of the partner organizations were able to attend a community lunch, therefore, they were invited to attend an annual event held at CGCF in October. A total of 35 individuals from the three partner organizations visited Common Good City Farm for an event.

In July and August of 2015, 5 community lunches were hosted for the YPAs, members of partner organizations, and community members. A total of 29 individuals from the three partner organizations visited Common Good City Farm for a community lunch.

*During the 2013-2015 grant period, 10 community lunches were hosted for Youth Produce Ambassadors, members of partner organizations, and community members.*

### **Conduct educational workshops for host sites (3 per site)**

August through November of 2014, a total of 12 workshops were conducted by YPAs and CGCF staff at the 3 host sites.

April through November of 2015, a total of 26 workshops were conducted by YPAs and CGCF staff at the 3 host sites.

*During the 2013-2015 grant period, a total of 38 workshops and educational sessions were conducted by Youth Produce Ambassadors and Common Good City Farm staff at the 3 host sites.*

This activity accomplished *Goal 2* of the Expect Measureable Outcomes. An increase in knowledge and awareness was indicated by 95% of workshop participants, this exceeds our goal of 75%.

### **Create training program and manual for use by organizations and housing facilities that are adding a vegetable garden to their site.**

As stated in the *Problems and Delays* section of the *2014 Annual Report*, our experience in 2014 demonstrated to CGCF that the host sites where gardens were built were unable to manage the gardens independently. CGCF fears that without further support, the gardens that were built in 2014 would not thrive in 2015. Therefore, a scope amendment was made allowing CGCF would like to continue mentoring the 2014 host sites through the 2015 growing season as well as develop a comprehensive training program and manual that would teach organizations and housing facilities how to maintain garden beds on their sites and incorporate the produce from the gardens into their programs and/or facilities to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Throughout 2015, Youth Produce Ambassadors gathered research and materials for the Host Garden Site Training Manual. In the Fall of 2015, the Youth Produce Ambassadors compiled these materials and drafted the manual, which was then edited by the CGCF Executive Director. Upon completion, the Host Garden Site Training Manual was delivered to the three host sites.

### **Conduct Final Evaluations**

In 2014 and 2015, YPAs along with Common Good City Farm conducted final evaluations from host site participants.

Improvements have been tracked in host site participants' increase in knowledge, with a 95% increase.

## **GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**

1. **Goal:** Improve access to free, fresh produce for low-income DC residents through the creation of community gardens

**Benchmark:** Determined through surveying community organizations servicing low-income individual's access to free, fresh produce.

**Performance Measure:** An increase in the number of community organizations surveyed that have access to free, fresh produce

**Target:** Increase access by building community gardens for at least 50% of community organizations surveyed.

**Result:** Community gardens built for 30% of community organizations surveyed.

2. **Goal:** Educate residents of target social service communities and YPA participants about the importance of consuming specialty crops, growing those crops, and making healthier dietary choices with serious budgetary constraints.

**Benchmark:** Benchmark will be established through pre- and post- surveys.

**Performance Measure:** An increase in knowledge and awareness as measured in pre- and post- surveys.

**Target:** 75% or more of participants will show an increase in knowledge and awareness.

**Result:** 95% or participants indicated an increase in knowledge and awareness

3. **Goal:** Give youth the tools to share their knowledge of specialty crops and healthy eating to their communities by both providing relevant education as well as training in how to disseminate this information.

**Benchmark:** Established through pre-surveys and initial evaluations

**Performance Measure:** An increase in knowledge as measure in pre- and post-surveys; an improvement in presentation of knowledge as measured in initial and final evaluations.

**Target:** 100% improvement in knowledge and presentation of knowledge.

**Result:** 100% improvement in knowledge and presentation of knowledge.

## **BENEFICIARIES**

CGCF's YPA project benefited both the specialty crop industry and the public by promoting specialty crop consumption among low-income individuals in Washington, DC. **The individuals that benefited were senior citizens that visit Senior Centers as well as youth ages 3-18 that attend an afterschool enrichment program and their families.**

The other key beneficiary population consists of the 27 unique DC teenagers who learned about the importance of consuming specialty crops in their own lives, learned to grow those items, and developed skills in promoting the consumption of those items among diverse populations. Youth participants played key roles in selecting garden sites, leading community-level outreach efforts, and conducting evaluation activities relating to specialty crop consumption among target groups.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

Common Good City Farm experienced two problems in year one of the two year grant period that affected project implementation.

First, the proposed timeline for securing host sites and building gardens was delayed due to difficulties securing host hosts. Many of the potential host sites that we contacted were tangentially interested in having a garden built for their site, but lacked the resources or commitment to pursue the partnership. Although the funds to build the gardens and facilitate preliminary workshops would be provided by Common Good City Farm via the Specialty Crop Block Grant, the potential host sites did not feel they could take over the maintenance of the gardens and integrate them into their programs and/or facilities. While we were able to identify one host site independently through our outreach, our other two sites came to us unexpectedly. Despite the initial challenges identifying host sites, in the end, we were able to complete all of the goals in the Work Plan and meet or surpass the Expected Measureable Outcomes.

Secondly, an unexpected obstacle that we encountered was the amount of management that was required by CGCF to keep the gardens productive. Host sites did not feel comfortable operating the gardens without additional support from CGCF. We learned that we underestimated the training and mentorship time that will be required to empower the host sites to have autonomy over the gardens that is necessary to make the gardens truly sustainable. As a result, a scope amendment was made that allowed CGCF to continue management of the host garden sites and mentorship of participants in 2015 instead of building gardens at 3 new host sites. In addition, the scope amendment allowed for the creation of a Host Garden Site Training Manual.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## PROJECT TWO

### **Neighborhood Farm Initiative - Final Performance Report 2016**

**Project Title:** Promoting Best Practices in Sustainable Gardening: Three-Season Garden Education for Continuous Harvest

#### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The Neighborhood Farm Initiative (NFI) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, conducting educational programming in the Mamie D. Lee Garden, in Northeast, Washington DC. NFI's three-season, Garden Education Program (GEP) is a project evolution of the summer program that was developed to help new gardeners get started growing their own food. The program promotes best practices for the cultivation of specialty crops in the District of Columbia, and helps participants gain knowledge and confidence to continue growing food on their own, beyond the scope of the program. Program participants plant and maintain their own small garden plot through the season. GEP provides comprehensive training in local, sustainable, extended-season growing practices for intensive urban agriculture. Participants reap the many health benefits of growing and harvesting specialty crops. They also experience the sublime satisfaction of tending a garden, which is how new gardeners become lifelong gardeners with the knowledge and confidence to grow their own specialty crops. Over the two-year period of performance, 131 gardeners were trained through GEP, and over 1000 individuals received free educational opportunities through public workshops and garden volunteer work days.

#### **PROJECT PURPOSE**

The three-season Garden Education Program (GEP) is a project of the Neighborhood Farm Initiative, developed to help new gardeners get started growing food. GEP promotes best practices for the cultivation of specialty crops by providing comprehensive training in local, sustainable, extended-season growing practices for intensive urban agriculture.

Participants overcome obstacles that prevent many would-be gardeners from getting started, and gain knowledge and confidence to continue growing on their own, beyond the scope of the program. In this way, we increase the production of specialty crops in the District of Columbia, as well as increase access to specialty crops among program participants and their families.

## **PROJECT APPROACH**

This project expands the scale and scope of the GEP program to include three-season instruction in order to offer a wider range of agricultural topics, especially with regard to best practices in season extension. In addition to GEP, and in order to further expand our reach, NFI staff present public workshops at events like RootingDC, DC State Fair, and DC Department of Parks and Recreation Earth Day events, and provide weekly volunteer opportunities. Volunteers learn about specialty crops by helping out in the garden sowing, transplanting, trellising, weeding, tending & harvesting. The project work plan is presented in Table 1,

The Full GEP program includes three sessions in each year of the program, Winter, Spring/Summer, and Fall. Session details are described below.

**Winter - January to April** *This session takes place in a classroom setting and covers topics in garden design, garden planning, season extension, cold frames and seed-starting*

**Spring/Summer - April to August** *Participants are assigned a 12' x 12' garden plot to plant and maintain through the course of the program. NFI provides all necessary supplies and materials. In-the-garden lectures and demonstrations focus on best practices for the beginning urban gardener. Topics include Soil Basics, Transplanting, Direct Sowing, Garden Maintenance, Pest Management, Irrigation, Harvesting, Composting. The garden mentor team provides trouble-shooting and consultation.*

**Fall - August through October** *Participants in the Fall GEP program had the opportunity to plant a fall garden from seed and from transplants. Garden lecture topics include Cool weather crop families, Soil management for root crops, Techniques for preserving harvest, Row covers, Seed-saving and Vermicomposting.*

**Table 1: Project Workplan**

Activity	Who	When *
Program planning Develop curricula for Extended-Season GEP Develop pre- & post- test & questionnaire Print training materials, tests and questionnaire Order program supplies and equipment Coordinate greenhouse and classroom access	Director	January 2014
Conduct outreach for GEP programs & scholarships	Director	January, March & August
Hire & train GEP Intern	Director	Jan - Feb 2014
Coordinate w/ Contracted Educational Staff	Director	Jan - October
Conduct Free Public workshops:	Director, GEP Intern	<b>2014:</b> January, April, July & September <b>2015</b> February, April, June, September
Conduct volunteer work days	GEP Intern	Weekly May-Sept
Register program applicants	Director	Feb-Aug
Print training materials, tests and questionnaire	Director	Jan, March & Aug
Administer Pre-test and Entrance Questionnaire	GEP Intern	Feb, May, Sept
Administer Post-test and Exit Questionnaire	GEP Intern	April, Aug, Nov
Conduct Winter GEP	Director	Feb-April
Analyze Results of Winter GEP Pre/Post-test and Entrance/Exit Questionnaire	Director	May
Conduct Spring/Summer GEP	Director	May-Aug

Analyze Results of Spring/Summer GEP Pre/Post-Tests and Entrance/Exit Questionnaire	Director/ GEP Intern	September
Conduct Fall GEP	Director	Sept-Nov
Analyze Results of Fall GEP Pre/Post-tests,	Director/ GEP Intern	December
Grant Reporting	Director	Dec 2014, 2015 and 2016

*\*Except where otherwise n*

### **GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED**

*ated, specified date apply to both 2014 and 2015*

- 1) **Goal:** Increase confidence among participants to grow food on their  
**Benchmark:** Benchmark established through pre- surveys  
**Performance Measure:** self-reporting in exit survey  
**Target:** 100% of participants report a significant increase in their level of confidence.  
**Result:** In spite of the fact that only 57% of program participants completed the exit survey, all of those reporting (76 of 131 participants) indicated a significant increase in their confidence to grow specialty crops. In addition, many who did not complete the exit survey never-the-less provided qualitative evidence to program staff of their increased confidence through their happy successes in starting seedlings at home and in successes and yields realized in the garden. This qualitative and subjective evidence reinforces our conclusion that the program results in increased confidence, among all participants who completed the program, including those who did not complete exit surveys.
  
- 2) **Goal:** Increase knowledge about sustainable, year-round growing practices  
**Benchmark:** Benchmark established through pre- surveys.  
**Performance Measure:** comparison of pre- and post- surveys.  
**Target:** Post-Tests show 10-25% improvement on each question over Pre-Tests  
**Result:** In spite of the shortcomings of the assessment method (further discussed in the LESSONS LEARNED section of this report), 100% of 2014 and 2015 GEP students who participated in the exit survey (76 of 131 participants) self-reported that they had gained significant useful knowledge about growing specialty crops<sup>7</sup>.

**NOTE:** We feel it is important to note here that the sharing of knowledge through real-world social networks, is an important mechanism for knowledge propagation. Fifteen out of 67 participants responding to 2015 intake surveys, volunteered, that sharing knowledge in their community was one of their intentions in taking the class. Two

examples include a DCPS elementary school teacher is starting a school garden and an employee at a garden center. Both intend, through their work, to share the knowledge they gained from GEP.

- 3) **Goal:** Increase number of program participants  
**Benchmark:** Number of participants in 2013 program  
**Performance Measure:** Number of participants in 2014 & 2015  
**Target:** At least 50% increase in number of participants over 2013  
**Result:** Program participation rates exceeded 2013 participation rates by over 140%, in both years of the project.
  
- 4) **Goal:** Increase number of low-income participants  
**Benchmark:** Number of 2013 GEP Scholarship participants  
**Performance Measure:** Number of 2014 and 2015 Scholarship participants  
**Target:** 50% of total program participants receive scholarships  
**Result:** We realized in the first year of the project that our scholarship target was almost absurdly ambitious, given our on-going budget shortfalls and the long turnaround time for grant reimbursements. In fact, in 2015 we were only able to offer seven partial tuition scholarships to low-income applicants, a disappointing decrease from 2014, when we were able to support 4 full scholarships and 6 partial scholarships/work-study positions.  
  
**NOTE:** In 2016 we were finally able to achieve that 50% target, largely due to administrative and management burdens a being borne by volunteers.
  
- 5) **Goal:** Increase number of gardeners growing specialty crops  
**Benchmark:** Proportion of participants currently growing food  
**Performance Measure:** Follow up Survey  
**Target:** 60% of new gardeners report they are currently gardening, or planning a garden three months after graduating from the program  
**Result:** One third of all 2014 and 2015 GEP participants reported that they began the program with little or no knowledge or experience growing specialty crops, and were not growing specialty crops at the outset; these are our would-be, new gardeners. Ninety-two percent of respondents to post-program surveys, reported that they were either currently gardening or were planning a garden for the coming season. Therefore, at least 25% of new gardeners were continuing to grow. The actual number in all likelihood is three times that.
  
- 6) **Goal:** Increase consumption of specialty crops among participants' households  
**Benchmark:** Benchmark established through pre- surveys.  
**Performance Measure:** comparison of pre- and post- surveys  
**Target:** At least 20% of participants report their households consume more specialty crops after completing the program

**Result:** While virtually all students agree that they and their families are eager to eat what produce comes from their own gardens, students found it difficult to both estimate how much was consumed and to assess a change in dietary habits. Many students noted though that, since participating in the specialty crop program, they do indeed seek out different kinds of produce, choosing from a wider repertoire of varieties, and emphasizing organic and local.

7) **Goal:** Increase overall yield of NFI plots

**Benchmark:** produce harvested in 2013

**Performance Measure:** produce harvested during project period

**Target:** 25% increase in total number

**Result:** We found it completely unmanageable to keep accurate records of harvest from student plots, presenting an unwelcome burden for our new gardener. We now see that the volume of yield is not relevant to the overall program objectives and have abandoned the intention to track yields from GEP plots.

## **BENEFICIARIES**

NFI's educational programs benefited both the specialty crop industry and the public by promoting specialty crop production and consumption in the District of Columbia. The primary beneficiary population consists of the 131 DC area individuals who participated in GEP, and learned about raising specialty crops for themselves, and their families. This beneficiary population is extremely diverse, including graduate students, seniors, youth and families, eight of whom represent low-income households whose participation was facilitated by our needs-based scholarship program. Their families, an estimated additional 166 individuals, are also secondary beneficiaries of the program.

GEP participants come from all over the DC Metropolitan area. During the project period from 2014 to 2015, seventy-two percent were residents of the District of Columbia. Thirty-three percent of the total were new or beginning gardeners at the outset, with little or no knowledge or experience growing specialty crops. Twenty-four percent entered the program with some notable growing experience, some having as much as a few years of experience either in their own yard, or in community garden plots. At the outset, these more experienced growers reported having had varying degrees of success. The remaining forty-two percent of GEP participants were intermediate gardeners, having had some past gardening experience,

either working with parents or grandparents when they were young, or trying to grow herbs and tomatoes in containers; one student even had some experience in a workshare for a local CSA.

There are additional secondary, and tertiary program beneficiaries. Over 400 unique volunteers help grow food for the community in the demonstration garden, and learned about growing specialty crops.

An estimated 170 participants learned about specific topics in urban agriculture through NFI's free public workshop series. Tertiary beneficiaries include individuals who receive food from our volunteer demonstration garden, through donations made to Thrive DC's Daily Bread program, which serves meals and donates fresh food and emergency groceries to homeless populations and families in need.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

Some problems that we confronted in this project, specifically with regard to the validity and reasoning behind certain performance objectives, already been mentioned in the GOALS and OUTCOMES section of this report. We now believe that written tests, and the inherent effort to compartmentalize knowledge, are a poor measure of success, and in fact detract significantly from the tone and pace of the first class, squandering valuable class time. When executed by email, response rates are very low. For these reasons, we plan to discontinue written knowledge testing.

In 2015 we were able to solve a long-standing problem of providing healthy robust seedlings for our program participants. By partnering with Laurel Academy Farm (LAF), a small urban farm located just two miles from our Fort Totten garden, we were able for the first time to provide healthy, robust seedlings for our students, almost on-demand, and delivered to the garden on class days. LAF uses a very small, passive-solar greenhouse, but manages the space and conditions meticulously and efficiently, providing an enormous benefit for our students.

During the project period, we experienced the same persistent problem coordinating harvest donations to recipient food service programs that we have struggled with since the inception

of the program. We effectively solved this problem in the 2016 program by reallocating our food donations directly to the scholarship participant families. Nine households (including two seniors and two families with young children) received donations from NFIs community garden plots in 2016.

Finally, we learned that whether participants come into the program for reasons related to nutrition and health; concerns about environmental sustainability, or are motivated toward greater personal resilience and self-sufficiency, they all reap *all* of those benefits and more. But perhaps more importantly, they also experience the sublime satisfaction of tending a garden and the myriad associated health and wellness benefits, including reduced stress and an increased sense of connectedness. This is how new gardeners become lifelong gardeners, with the knowledge and confidence to grow specialty crops on their own.

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## PROJECT TITLE

This is a final report to UDC and USDA on the Washington Youth Garden's Specialty Crop Field Trip Program. Washington Youth Garden (WYG) is a program of the Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA).

## PROJECT SUMMARY

Founded in 1971, the Washington Youth Garden is a year-round program of the Friends of the National Arboretum. We focus our efforts on reaching DC's underserved youth and families, especially residents of Wards 5, 6, 7 and 8 in neighborhoods near the Arboretum. The Washington Youth Garden's Specialty Crop Program is designed to: increase child nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops; increase the development of organic and sustainable production practices; and improve food access in underserved communities by directly serving WYG participants that learn and work in our one-acre organic garden through the following program areas:

- **SPROUT (Science Program Reaching OUT)**—WYG instructors deliver this low-cost, 90- minute, hands-on field trip program to youth, ages 3-18, in the WYG garden, and occasionally off-site. We offer 5 lesson modules customized for ages, that include harvesting, preparing and tasting specialty crops.
- **Garden Science**—a comprehensive school garden development program (13 weeks of classroom curriculum and seeding projects, schoolyard gardens, school-wide events, *spring field trips to WYG*) for students and teachers at our 5 partner schools in Wards 5, 7 and 8.
- **Community Workshops** – A series of 6 community urban gardening training sessions offered free of charge to residents from the DC metropolitan region, including such topics as raised bed construction, pest identification and integrated pest management, hot composting, and cosmetic and health uses of perennial herbs. Over the two-year grant period, WYG will collaborate with a contracted evaluator, Hilary Binder- Aviles, to select and measure reasonable and appropriate indicators of student and teacher learning, attitudes, and behavioral changes surrounding the knowledge and consumption of specialty crops during the SPROUT program and Garden Science field trips, as well, as reevaluate our fee structure in order to increase access to students from Title 1 schools.

## PROJECT APPROACH *Work plan*

Project Activity	Timeline	WYG staff
<b>YEAR ONE</b>	1/15/14	
Research and design themed gardens. Place seed order. Begin seeding specialty crops in greenhouse so plants will be ready to transplant with the first SPROUT groups in end of March. Secure seed and transplant donations. Source construction materials. Plan garden.	January-Feb 2014	Garden Manager (GM)
Recruit and hire Garden Assistant (GA), SPROUT Coordinator (SC), and Communications Intern (CI)	.. February- March	Education Manager (EM), Development and Communications Manager (DCM), GM
Free Community Training - Offer first workshop about composting to a group of 5-10 CSA/Community Farm leaders and DC resident gardeners. Our Intern will use our partnership with Compost Cab to promote this training.	February	GM
Plant, maintain and harvest specialty crops with organic practices, IPM, composting, etc. Crop rotation occurs all year. Donations to hunger relief organizations	February - November	GM, GA, Volunteers, DCM

Hire evaluator, begin building assessment tools	March-April	EM, DCM
Create and print Specialty Crop Field Trip brochures	April	DCM, CI
Train SPROUT Volunteers and Interns	March - July	EM
Schedule and promote SPROUT field trips and free Community Trainings	March – Sept.	EM, SC, CI
Revise assessment tools and install pre/post surveys	April-May	Evaluator
Print and distribute field trip solicitation materials	April-May	DCM, CI
Train new volunteers who will work on Tuesdays and Saturdays to help maintain the garden. (Trainings: first Sat. of each month)	April-Aug.	GM, GA
SPROUT delivery at WYG Garden – estimated 70 field trips and 1800 youth. Pilot use of pre and post surveys as well as other data collection methods.	April – Oct.	SC, EM, GM, DCM, Volunteers
Deliver SPROUT program off-site– estimated 5 field trips; 200 total youth per year	April – Oct.	EM, DCM, Volunteers
Free Community Training - Offer second workshop	August	GM

about integrated pest management to a group of 8-10 CSA/Community Farm leaders and DC resident gardeners		
Summer garden volunteers end for season; Selected volunteers (3-4) continue during the winter to help with heavy pruning and brush removal.	Oct. 2014 – Feb. 2015	EM, Volunteers, GM
Analyze methodology and data from 2014. Refine and prepare pre/post surveys and data collection methods.	Nov. 2014 – Jan. 2015	Evaluator, EM, DCM
<b>YEAR TWO</b>		
Research and design themed gardens. Place seed order. Begin seeding specialty crops in greenhouse so plants will be ready to transplant with the first SPROUT groups in end of March. Secure seed and transplant donations. Source construction materials. Plan garden.	January-Feb 2015	GM
Recruit and hire Garden Assistant (GA), SPROUT Coordinator (SC), and Communications Intern (CI)	February- March	GM, EM, DCM
Plant, maintain and harvest specialty crops with organic	February – November	GM, GA, Volunteers,

practices, IPM, composting, etc. Crop rotation occurs all year. Donations to hunger relief organizations		DCM
Train SPROUT Volunteers and Interns	March - July	EM
Free Community Training - Offer third workshop about tree pruning to an estimated group of 10 CSA/Community Farm leaders and DC resident gardeners	March	GM
Train SPROUT Volunteers and Interns	March - July	EM
Schedule and promote SPROUT field trips and free Community Trainings	March – Sept.	EM, SC, CI
Print and distribute field trip solicitation materials.	Apr - May	DCM, CI
Train new volunteers who will work on Tuesdays and Saturdays to help maintain the garden. (Trainings: first Sat. of each mo.)	Apr.-Aug.	GM, GA
SPROUT delivery at WYG Garden – estimated 70 field trips and 1800 youth. Implement regular use of pre and post surveys as well as other data collection	April – Oct.	SC, EM, GM, DCM, Volunteers

methods.		
Deliver SPROUT program off-site– estimated 5 field trips; 200 total youth per year	April – Oct.	EM, DCM, Volunteers
Free Community Training - Offer fourth workshop about cover crops and crop rotation to an estimated group of 10 CSA/Community Farm leaders and DC resident gardeners	October	GM
Summer garden volunteers end for season; Selected volunteers (3-4) continue during the winter to help with heavy pruning and brush removal.	October – Dec.	GM, Volunteers
Analyze SPROUT data; create evaluation report.	.. Nov. – Dec.	Evaluator, EM, DCM
Grant Period Ends	12/31/15	

### GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

**Goal 1:** Create in depth, hands-on, age appropriate enrichment lessons for teachers to use before or after their field trips for 2 more modules (Garden Basics and Pollination). Based on teacher interest and uptake for the Soil and Compost lessons for four sets of age ranges (developed in 2012), the completion of this project for the remaining modules is an important investment in quality.

*Due to changes in staffing this year, we have not yet developed the two enrichment modules for teachers to use before or after their Garden Basics or Pollination themed field trips. We have hired an Education Consultant to develop additional curriculum and will complete this goal over winter (Between January and March 2017), prior the start of next year's field trip season.*

**Goal 2:** Collaborate with a contracted evaluator to select and measure reasonable and appropriate indicators of student and teacher learning, attitudes, and behavioral change effected through the Specialty Crop Field Trip Program. We spent the 2014 season working with a professional evaluator to select reasonable and appropriate indicators of teacher and student learning, attitudes, and behavioral change.

*In 2015, we implemented tools based on evaluation measures determined during the 2014 field trip season. Additional tools were implemented to further qualify impact of the Specialty Crop Field Trip Program, as well as identify directions for program growth. See the “Measurable Outcome 3.”*

**Goal 3:** Refine our new fee and deposit system to decrease last-minute field trip cancellations and increase the number of participants.

*With our refined fee and deposit system, field trip cancellations continued to decrease from 2014. In tandem with an overall increased trip registration, we saw an increased number of participants in the 2015 field trip season. With fewer cancellations and refined fee system, the program yielded a significant **20% increase in participation** from the 2013 field trip season to the 2015 field trip season, and a **64% increase** in the 2016 field trip season.*

### **Measurable Outcome 1:**

Goal: Increase the number of youth in the DC Metropolitan area that have positive exposure to and increased scientific and nutritional knowledge about specialty crops.

- **Performance Measures:** Specialty crops grown, field trip sessions
- **Benchmark:** WYG will maintain a model one acre organic demonstration and educational garden on the public grounds of the US National Arboretum with at least 110 specialty crops.
- We will schedule at least 80 field trips annually, to account for cancellations due to weather and transportation.
- **Target:** Utilizing specialty crops in at least 70 field trip sessions annually - through tastings, cooking activities, and/or art and preservation activities.

*We maintain an approximately 1-acre demonstration garden on the grounds of the US National Arboretum in which we grow over 110 different types of specialty crops. In 2014, we scheduled **92 hands-on, interactive field trips** with groups of young people from the ages of 2 to 19. After cancellations, **we executed 76** of those scheduled field trips. In 2015, **102 hands-on, interactive field trips** were scheduled. After cancellations, **80 of those scheduled field trips were executed.***

### Measurable Outcome 2:

- **Goal:** We will increase the number of DC-based educators, youth group leaders, parent chaperones, and community gardeners that have basic knowledge of how to produce, utilize, or educate youth about specialty crops.
- **Performance Measures:** Number of educators, youth group leaders, parent chaperones that accompany students on field trip sessions, number of community gardeners that attend garden training sessions.
- **Benchmark:** Register at least 55 unique groups annually for SPROUT field trip program (approximately 4-5 adults accompany each group), register at least 10 participants per garden training session, work closely with at least 3 educators annually in each Garden Science partner school to develop garden-based lessons.
- **Target:** 440 DC-based educators; youth group leaders, parent chaperones, and community gardeners interactively participate in our field trip program or community garden training session.

*In 2014, we facilitated field trips for 52 of unique groups accompanied by 419 (443 including GS) adult educators, parents and other chaperones. In the 2015 field trip season, we facilitated field trips for 49 unique groups accompanied by 419 (446 including GS) adult educators, parents and other chaperones. We also contracted with: the Office of the State Superintendent of Education to offer 3 garden education training sessions to Early Childhood teachers; Bishop Walker School to provide one garden education training session for Pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade educators; FoodCorps to train and supervise an additional 3 Service Members (6 over the two-year grant period) that work in 4 of our GS partner schools; DC Greens to facilitate 1 of their Growing Garden Teachers Trainings; 3 Garden Science Partner Schools: KIPP DC- Webb Campus, Friendship Woodridge PCS, and Center City PCS-Trinidad Campus to deliver a one-day hands-on garden training to elementary and middle school educators. In 2014, 57 unique community members completed one of the four free urban specialty crops workshops; of these, eight participated in two of the four workshops. During summer 2015, we executed two additional free urban specialty crops workshops (6 total workshops over two years). 35 unique community members completed one of the two additional community workshops in 2015; of these, two participated in both of the year's workshops. Survey results and other data from these workshops can be found below in Measurable Outcome 5 and the Performance Measures Chart.*

**Measurable Outcome 3:** Work with an outside evaluator to assess, through research and survey analysis, the attitudes, descriptions, and development of alternative approaches toward affecting behavioral change for specialty crop consumption and produce a final report. · Goals: Produce effective methods to evaluate the Specialty Crop Field Trip Program. Determine nutrition,

science knowledge acquisition, and/or behavioral change outcomes of the field trip program.

- **Performance measures:** Analysis of data collected through evaluation tools as well as expert and practical reviews of the tools themselves.
- **Benchmark:** Develop and pilot new evaluation tools in the first year of the project to be ready to collect quality data in the second year.
- **Target:** Produce a final report about the outcomes of the field trip program and a set of practical and appropriate evaluation tools that can continue to be used to measure and improve the program.

*In 2014, we worked with an outside evaluator to fine-tune the program's desired outcomes and measures for tracking. The evaluation tools developed during that season provided qualitative data that suggested a high-quality program. To further explore program outcomes and achieve higher quality results during the 2015 field trip season, we implemented a survey portion of the observation tool: a questionnaire that tracks observed engagement, interest and curiosity, level of comfort, as well as teacher satisfaction. In spring 2015, we launched our post-field trip survey procedure for educators accompanying students during the experience. The surveys further qualified program impact, identified areas for programmatic improvement, and suggested directions for programmatic growth based on the educator's demand.*

#### **Measurable Outcome 4:**

- **Goal:** Improve the educational depth and quality of the field trip program.
- **Performance Measures:** Number of fully-trained field trip volunteers, enrichment lessons published for educator use before or after the field trip session.
- **Benchmarks:** Refine the field trip training model by creating a scripted document with age-appropriate teaching techniques, tools and helpful phraseology for volunteer field trip leaders-in-training. Create rough drafts of interactive, standards-based enrichment lessons for two more of the remaining field trip subject modules and have them revised.
- **Targets:** Train at least 8 new volunteers annually using the content curriculum and teaching methodology materials. Edit and publish the completed enrichment lesson plans on the website for educator use.

*In early 2015, we posted descriptions for field trip volunteers and unpaid interns to assist with our field trip program for one or all of the spring, summer and fall sessions. We cultivated partnerships with The Washington Center and Middlebury College's FoodWorks Program, both of which seek sites for their students to volunteer 4 days a week while they provide housing and*

*associated coursework. On April 4<sup>th</sup>, June 9<sup>th</sup>, and September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, we held mandatory intern and volunteer orientations and continued field trip training and observations for at least 3 weeks before interns were permitted to co-lead small groups in the garden with an experienced educator (WYG staff or longtime volunteer). Through our increased outreach, the more streamlined and structured training established in 2014, and observation forms developed as part of our evaluation project, we were able to **train 14 volunteers and interns in 2014 and 12 volunteers and interns in 2015** and maintain the volume and quality of our field trip program while concurrently expanding our Garden Science school program.*

*Building on the success of the 2014 internship program, we implemented a more structured pre-, mid-, and post-assessment process for our interns in 2015. Again, we observed mutual growth in both our organization and our interns: they left more confident in their abilities as teachers in the outdoor education and urban agriculture realm, and more prepared for post-graduate experiences like FoodCorps or other nonprofit and agricultural work. We continue to see this evidenced in the jobs they are seeking and acquiring as well as in the professional recommendations requested of our staff.*

#### **Measurable Outcome 5:**

- **Goal:** Increase DC-area community, CSA or residential gardeners' knowledge of how to organically cultivate specialty crops and inspire them to start new gardens or continue improving and expanding current ones.
- **Performance Measures:** Number of community, CSA or residential gardeners that attend and successfully complete a free training workshop.
- **Benchmark:** Schedule and market at least 4 free workshops primarily directed by the WYG Garden Manager to the DC urban community, CSA or residential gardener community. Collaborate with at least two partners to improve outreach for and/or quality of the training programs.
- **Target:** 35 DC-area community activists and gardeners committed to establishing new or enhancing existing community, CSA, or residential gardens will attend and successfully complete one of the 4 free workshops offered by the Washington Youth Garden.

*We expanded upon the four workshops we hosted in 2014 to add two free garden workshops during the 2015 growing season, reaching an additional 35 community members, for a **total of 92 attendees** during the two year grant period The 2015 Community Workshop Series included: *How to Build a Rodent-proof Compost System and Herb Walk: Intro to Medicine Making and Plant Identification.* We collaborated with Urban Farm Plans and Little Red Bird Botanicals to ensure high quality workshops from local experts and improve outreach by drawing upon their networks.*

<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</b> (outlined in original proposal)	<b>WORK COMPLETED TO DATE (04/14-9/15)</b>	<b>STRETCH TARGET (9/30/15)</b>
2,000 youth receive direct instruction about organic practice in specialty food production in the WYG Specialty Crop Field Trip Program (soil health, poly culture, Integrated Pest Management, crop rotation).	<b>4,410</b> (2014: 2,102; 2015: 2,308); Post trip curriculum not yet developed. See Lessons Learned	3,500 youth
<i>Data Source/Collection Method:</i> number of students participating in the program; SPROUT curriculum materials.		
300-400 field trip participants in 4th grade and older sent home with pots, soil discs, and specialty crop seeds to grow at home.  <i>Data source/ Collection Method:</i> classroom records; number of students receiving kits.	<b>516</b> (2014: 268; 2015:248)	400
400 field trip participants prepare food from seasonal specialty crops harvested in the garden.  <i>Data Source/Collection Method:</i> Number of students participating in SPROUT cooking activity; number of Title 1 students participating.	<b>1,230</b> (2014:517; 2015:713); 865 (2014:442; 2015:423) from Title 1 schools (42%)	700
440 educators, chaperones and community leaders see interactive	<b>889</b> (2014:443; 2015: 446)	700

<p>science and nutrition education modeled utilizing specialty crops as a powerful teaching tool.</p> <p><i>Data Source/Collection Method:</i> Email surveys to educators (Efforts to collect data from chaperones and other teachers in in progress.)</p>		
<p>35-40 community gardeners participate in 4 free trainings to share best practices about the organic cultivation of specialty crops, such as tree pruning, composting, integrated pest management, intercropping, crop rotation, and building a perennial herb garden.</p> <p><i>Data Source/Collection Method:</i> Attendance records and survey.</p>	<p><b>92</b> attendees (2014: 57, 2015: 35)</p> <p>Surveys were not administered during the 2015 season, but anecdotal evidence suggests overall satisfaction.</p>	<p>87</p>
<p>Hire an evaluator to refine our assessment tools and work with them to gather and analyze data for our SPROUT Specialty Crop Field Trip Program. Evaluator will produce a final report that we will disseminate and use to guide program improvements and refinements. We will also distribute the guide through our local and national contacts to other garden-based programs seeking to improve specialty crop consumption in their beneficiaries.</p> <p><i>Data Source/Collection Method:</i></p>	<p>Established a post-experience teacher survey procedure, consistently implemented evaluation tools during field trips (observation forms for volunteers and interns; index card questions for students), established additional quantitative measures</p>	<p>Refined evaluation tools; Final Report on determined outcomes</p>

<p>Specific collection methods will be determined after we start working with the evaluator. Our recent experience working with an evaluator for our Garden Science program will greatly help WYG staff as we begin this assessment project.</p>		
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**BENEFICIARIES**

The primary beneficiaries of the proposed project will be: 1) 4,000 youth in the Washington, DC area (primarily African American and Latino). A growing body of research shows that hands-on gardening programs similar to the proposed project improved people’s attitudes towards, and increased consumption of, fruits and vegetables. Moreover, some evidence seems to show that children introduced to the growing practices of specialty crops as part of a school experience are also more likely to extend this practice to other community gardens and at home.[1] Youth beneficiaries will be impacted by increasing their knowledge and consumption of specialty crops. See Measurable Outcomes below. 2) 440 DC-based educators, youth group leaders, parent chaperones, community gardeners, and gardening advocates. During WYG field trips, they will gain experience seeing effective teaching of interactive science curriculum and have access to online teaching tools to enhance student learning. At community trainings, they will gain skills in specialty crop cultivation and other skills to establish and enhance their residential or community gardens. The potential economic impact of this project can be measured with the increased number of urban gardens producing fresh produce to supplement tight household budgets, as well as the long-term effects from increasing the specialty crop consumption of a generation of District children—from increased academic performance to lowered healthcare costs.

[1] Integrated Food Security Program: Wanasinghe, A.D., From School Garden To Home Garden, 2003

**LESSONS LEARNED**

While we anticipated developing the enrichment modules during the winter of 2015, in time for our 2015 specialty crop field trip season, our timeline was derailed by the sequential losses of a Program Director and Education Programs Manager. These losses had little to no impact on program quality and program reach, demonstrated by increased numbers of the 2015 season. However, we lacked the infrastructure to develop new curriculum materials while simultaneously seeking to fill those roles. With the assistance of an Education Consultant, we plan to deliver the

enrichment modules for the Pollination and Garden Basics curriculum by March 2017.

50 out of the 74 participants who registered online attended the workshops. We had 7 walk-in participants who did not register online, totaling 57 total participants in 2014. The challenge remains to reduce the number of no-shows, while keeping the workshops free. Some participants reported having trouble finding the Washington Youth Garden site in the National Arboretum.

While 54% of educators accompanying students during the specialty crop field trip program identified “information related to what [they] are learning in the classroom” as a factor that contributed to making the experience engaging, 100% identified “opportunities to taste, touch, smell, and listen” (i.e. interact with specialty crops in the garden) as a factor contributing to student engagement. With the help of an Education Consultant in early 2016 we hope to align our field trip activities more with grade level Unit Plans (and/or DCPS’ Corner Stone Projects) while keeping the integrity of our program as a way to expose youth to different fruits, vegetables and herbs. Through a concerted effort in creating pre and post enhancement lessons (in the form of worksheets, activities, videos), we could increase engagement and sustain the program’s impact beyond the singular experience.

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## PROJECT FOUR

This report is the Final Report for a project submitted by the University of the District of Columbia, College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences (UDC CAUSE).

### **PROJECT TITLE**

Emerging Urban Farmer Business Development Training

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The University of the District of Columbia (UDC), College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability, and Environmental Sciences planned to launch the District's first Beginning Farmer Incubator – offering the critical resources, mentorship, technical support and business acumen – to foster sustainable economic business opportunities for UDC and District of Columbia (D.C.) entrepreneurs. This pilot program would have immersed 5-dedicated students through a multifaceted program of instruction and hands-on activities with faculty, staff, and subject matter experts, to run a real-world operation focused on Specialty Crops production. The incubator planned to minimize common barriers to success by providing the funding, resources, infrastructure, and talent, so entrepreneurs can focus on the core business first. Ultimately, this pilot program would have established a roadmap for emerging urban farmers in the D.C. area who seek the social, environmental, and economic profits of business ownership for and within their communities.

### **PROJECT APPROACH:**

As of this moment, there have been no activities performed on this grant and none of the grant funds were expended.

### **BENEFICIARIES:**

No beneficiaries were part of this project.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

In December 2014, the Project Specialist in Green Business Entrepreneurship, who was part time with CAUSES and the UDC Business School, took over this project. There was significant movement on recruitment and development of curriculum for implementation of the Farmer Business Training program. Unfortunately, in March 2015, the specialist terminated his employment with UDC CAUSES. The position of “Green Business Training Specialist” was filled in March, 2016, but the associated staff member left UDC in less than a month. Additionally, the PI of the overall grant was unable to conduct this project, as she went on maternity leave soon after the staff member left.

The small size of this grant and the multiple members it was passed onto led to its failure to be completed. No staff hours or funding was directed to this project, leaving it vulnerable to being put on the back burner. In the future, all UDC run grants will include some form of staffing,

either funds to exclude professors or specialists from teaching (which would aid in freeing up time for the project) or graduate and undergraduate paid interns. The lack of planning for staff member time was the most important thing that led to the failure of this project.

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