

# GROW<sup>NYC</sup>

## 2024 IMPACT REPORT



# We are GrowNYC

**We empower all New Yorkers  
with equitable access to  
fresh, locally grown food,  
neighborhood green spaces,  
opportunities to reduce waste,  
and care for the environment.**



Dear GrowNYC Friends and Supporters,

This past year at GrowNYC has filled me with immense gratitude for the unwavering dedication of our staff, farmers, gardeners, community partners, and supporters.

Together, we have expanded green spaces, increased access to fresh, locally grown produce, and provided hands-on education that fosters sustainability and climate action. While we were deeply saddened to see our community composting program end, that work laid the foundation for the largest citywide curbside composting program in the country. In the following pages, you'll read more about these efforts and the impact they've had across New York City.

Our city and world are facing significant challenges: accelerating climate change, the dismantling of vital environmental and food security programs, and the scaling back of critical government services. The pace of these changes feels overwhelming.

Yet, moments like these remind me of the resilience and optimism that have defined GrowNYC since its founding. Decades ago, when New York City faced seemingly insurmountable challenges, our founders didn't turn away. They believed that through innovation, creativity, and collective action, real change was possible. That same spirit continues to guide us today.

A special thank you to our government agency partners, elected officials, and, most of all, our donors and supporters—your commitment makes our work possible. I hope our work strengthens your confidence in us and inspires you to join us in facing the challenges ahead.

With gratitude,



Marcel Van Ooyen  
President & CEO, GrowNYC



# Transforming Food Pathways: Uplifting Farmers, Feeding Communities



- **\$4 MILLION** in nutrition benefits have been redeemed at market sites: funds that go directly into the pockets of regional farmers who grow delicious, nutrient dense food
- Generated **\$3.2 MILLION** in income for our regional producers via GrowNYC's Food Hub
- **44,434 ACRES** of farmland stewarded and cultivated by our farmers and producers
- **246 PRODUCERS** participated in our food access programs
- **66 GREENMARKETS** and Farmstands sites made local food available to all New Yorkers
- **50% OF SALES** at our Farmstand sites were made using SNAP and other nutrition incentives
- **77% OF FRESH FOOD** sourced from the Wholesale Food Hub was distributed to zip codes in At-Risk and/or Distressed communities
- **50+ PRODUCERS** received free marketing, legal, business, access to land and capital, and financial planning assistance
- **30% OF HUB'S PRODUCER NETWORK** consists of historically disadvantaged producers

**This summer season, two Greenmarkets saw single-day record-breaking SNAP sales** — the 175th Street Greenmarket with 572 transactions and the Poe Park Greenmarket with 642 transactions — reflecting GrowNYC's commitment to providing affordable, nutritious food options to diverse NYC communities.

**This year, we piloted monthly Community Fun Days** at the Crown Heights Farmstand. These events offered free games, food sampling, and activities promoting nutritious local eating, community building, and physical activity.



**GrowNYC conducted extensive research**, including customer and farmer surveys and focus groups, to develop a comprehensive business strategy for our largest Greenmarkets. We also implemented an outreach campaign to strengthen and improve efficiency and farmer sales. These efforts resulted in improved operations, expanded market reach, and increased support for Greenmarket farmers, ensuring long-term resilience.

**V&V Farm started selling at five GrowNYC Greenmarkets** this season, including our flagship Union Square Greenmarket. Paty and Sidney are graduates of GrowNYC's Farmer Assistance 2022 La Nueva Siembra Cohort, our Spanish language farm business fundamentals program. This year, they'll join our Wholesale Readiness Cohort so they can learn how to scale up their growing capacity for wholesale production and sell to GrowNYC's Food Hub.



**Construction at GrowNYC's New York State Regional Food Hub is nearly complete**, and our team continues to be busy delivering fresh produce to NYC communities and customers throughout the city. We are also distributing free, farm-fresh produce to 20 community-based organizations, all of which is sourced directly from BIPOC, women-owned, and immigrant-owned farms.

**Collectively this work bolsters Northeast farms** and connects underserved New Yorkers to local food, strengthening and supporting a more resilient and sustainable regional food system.

# Creating Green Space in New York City

- **9 NEW COMMUNITY GARDENS** built, totaling 47,000 SQ FEET of green space added to our city landscape
- **30 COMMUNITY GARDENS RENOVATED**
- **5 NEW RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEMS** built in community gardens, capable of saving 25,000 gallons annually
- **130,000 EDIBLE AND ORNAMENTAL PLANTS** were distributed in spring and fall to gardens at our annual plant sale
- **86% OF GARDENERS** grew food in their community gardens
- **5,000 LBS. OF PRODUCE** donated to community groups from our Teaching Garden and Container Farm on Governors Island
- **1.1 MILLION NEW YORKERS** visited 173 gardens we've helped build
- **1.3 MILLION+ GALLONS OF WATER** annually conserved via green infrastructure

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**East New York, Brooklyn** has the largest number of community gardens of any neighborhood in New York City. GrowNYC is proud to have worked alongside the community on over 20 garden builds and renovation projects over the years. This year we led four more garden builds. At each site we did a series of nutrition workshops.

This year GrowNYC supported four more garden renovations in East New York:

**At Euclid 500 Community Garden**, GrowNYC built 40 raised beds for growing food and plants, a shade structure, benches, and a rainwater harvesting tank! GrowNYC and GreenThumb partnered to host a community workshop, "Flavors of Cooking Traditions," to learn about different cultural cuisines and cooking methods.



**Urban Strategies Headstart Garden** is a backyard educational garden GrowNYC built at a daycare center. We installed eight garden beds for growing food, and a picnic table and benches so the space can be used as an outdoor classroom for children and their parents. We also hosted a fruit water workshop, and "Eat The Rainbow" workshop, encouraging healthy food habits.



At **Montauk Atkins Community Garden**, GrowNYC worked with a new group of community stewards to build 16 garden beds for vegetables, herbs, and pollinator plants. We also provided two picnic tables and six benches for community events, and installed a rainwater harvesting system. We also hosted reading food labels and five senses food discovery workshops.



**CAUSA Festival Garden** is a decades-old GreenThumb garden that was renovated alongside many original garden members! GrowNYC helped to install fifteen new garden beds to grow a variety of food and plants, fixed a 1,000-gallon rainwater harvesting system, and delivered wooden benches for seating throughout the garden.

**GrowNYC's Container Farm** on Governors Island is studying how indoor hydroponic growing can save space and water. A 320 sq. ft. shipping container grew 700 lbs. of kale this season. The public was invited to see how the farm works. The container farm is a partnership between GrowNYC, Con Edison, EPRI, and the Trust for Governors Island.



# Empowering Through Hands-On Environmental Education

- **381,354 KIDS AND ADULTS** participated in education programs
- **4,606 OLDER ADULTS** participated in education programs
- **3,000 KIDS** took field trips to our Governors Island Teaching Garden
- **1,002 SCHOOL GARDENS** in our network
- **776 SCHOOLS** participated in our zero waste programs
- **19 INTERNS** completed our 7 week summer workforce development program exploring green careers
- **508 HOURS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE,** outreach and workshops with NYCHA residents and surrounding communities



**The GrowNYC Youth Workforce Development Program** explored food, agriculture, and climate change with 19 interns. They participated in training, professional development, and gained career experience through field trips and workshops covering public speaking, green infrastructure, food justice, and more. They also worked at GrowNYC Farmstands and Greenmarkets, and Governors Island Teaching Garden.

**Students at P.S. 135 participated** in an array of sustainability programming with GrowNYC. In spring, 70 fifth-grade students participated in our Root Camp curriculum, and this fall, 110 students completed our Seed to Plate program. The school was selected to receive an outdoor garden next spring and GrowNYC is guiding them every step of the way.

**We partnered with Art Bridge** to host the Art In The Garden series in The Roxanne Reid Memorial Garden at NYCHA's Castle Hill Houses. Residents painted plant pots and spray painted the garden beds, deepening their ownership of the garden. A Bronx native artist beautified two garden sheds. At Castle Hill's Family Day, we welcomed community members into the garden for tours and harvesting.



### **Governors Island Teaching Garden**

hosted 3,000 students for immersive in-person and virtual field trips at our kid-friendly urban farm. Many classes included students with special needs or English language learners. Students participated in hands-on activities exploring fruit trees, a solar oven, a hydroponics container, raised beds and farm style rows, a flower garden and more.



# Giving New Yorkers Tools to Reduce Waste



Since 1970, GrowNYC has been at the forefront of sustainable initiatives, empowering New Yorkers to reduce their environmental impact. Our food scrap collection program started with a food scrap collection pilot at a handful of Greenmarkets. GrowNYC's successful program grew to over 75 collection points, supporting public participation in NYC's curbside organics collection and recycling of textiles and household items.

Together, we've achieved remarkable results for reducing waste in New York City:

- **25 MILLION POUNDS** of food scraps collected for composting
- **1 MILLION+ POUNDS** of reusable household items from landfills from 455 Stop 'N' Swaps we hosted over the years
- **8 MILLION+ POUNDS** of textiles recycled
- **1,200 NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS REACHED** through our zero waste support

While GrowNYC-operated Food Scrap Drop Offs have ended, as a result of our Compost Project and collective efforts, NYC has implemented the nation's largest mandatory residential food scrap collection program! We are so grateful to each and every New Yorker who contributed citywide. Now with residential curbside composting, all New Yorkers have an opportunity to contribute to a cleaner and greener city.



## New Yorkers Recycle More, Waste Less

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◀ **8,000,000 pounds of usable clothing and textile items donated and reused**

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◀ **1,000,000 pounds of reusable household items diverted from a landfill and into the hands of our neighbors**

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◀ **25,000,000 pounds of food scraps collected for composting projects around the city**

## Field Notes

GrowNYC hosted our 38th Annual Spring Plant Sale in May, providing community gardens, schools, block associations, and other greening projects with affordable vegetable, herb, and ornamental plants. More than 500 groups picked up flats of plants over 5 days in Domino Park in Brooklyn and GrowNYC's Food Hub in the Bronx. Together with our fall sale, we distributed 130,000 plants!



This fall, Union Square Greenmarket hosted three festive events: Celebration of Regional Fiber, Cider Village, and Fermentation Fest. Cooking demos, tastings, and workshops brought together community members, local farmers, and food enthusiasts.



This Climate Week, GrowNYC partnered with The Trust for Governors Island, UNESCO, and the NY Climate Exchange on 'Solutions that Inspire: Climate Education for Sustainable Cities,' a panel discussion bringing together global leaders to explore strategies.



This year we hosted three Environmental Justice and Art workshops from September to November in collaboration with The Whitney Museum, connecting NYCHA residents, low income communities, and students to the connections between environmental work and art.



GrowNYC hosted *Connecting the Local Food System to Classrooms*, providing NYC educators with the tools to connect the local food system to their classroom. A behind the scenes tour and lesson at the Brooklyn Borough Hall Greenmarket empowered educators to bring their own students back to the market and lead their own tours.

We were thrilled to honor Barry Benepe, GrowNYC Greenmarket Co-Founder with the inaugural Marian Sulzberger Heiskell Award, which recognizes individual leadership and dedication to the City of New York and GrowNYC's mission. Farm Credit East received our inaugural For the Love of New York Award for corporate commitment to the City of New York and GrowNYC's mission.



# Support GrowNYC

GrowNYC is New York City's go-to nonprofit for creating a greener, healthier, and more sustainable future. With your support, we can expand our impact—reaching more schools, families, and neighborhoods that need us most. Together, we're transforming our city, one garden, one market, and one community at a time.



## Donate

Make a difference today. Your one-time donation, in-kind gift, or legacy contribution helps sustain GrowNYC's essential programs—creating lasting change for generations to come.

## Join Friends of GrowNYC

Become a monthly sustainer and fuel GrowNYC's mission year-round!

A monthly gift of \$15 or more provides steady, reliable support—allowing us to plan ahead, keep vital programs running, respond to urgent needs, and launch new initiatives without delay.

As a token of our appreciation, you'll receive an exclusive GrowNYC cotton canvas tote bag and special invitations to members-only events throughout the year.

## Volunteer

Roll up your sleeves and take action! GrowNYC offers hands-on opportunities for individuals 18 and older to directly improve New York City's environment. Whether you're planting gardens, distributing fresh food, or restoring green spaces, your time and energy make a tangible impact.

## Partner with GrowNYC

When businesses and organizations team up with GrowNYC, incredible things happen. From sponsoring programs and events to getting their hands dirty building gardens, our corporate partners play a key role in driving sustainability across the five boroughs.

We welcome corporate groups of all sizes to take part in outdoor volunteer projects—like constructing urban farms, revitalizing community gardens, and creating vibrant green spaces at schools.

Looking for an indoor or remote opportunity? We've got that, too! Corporate volunteer opportunities include:

- Garden Builds (outdoors)
- Seed Packing (indoors, at your site)
- Grant Reading (virtual)



Contact us to learn more about other ways for your organization to invest in a greener future at [corporatepartners@grownyc.org](mailto:corporatepartners@grownyc.org)

**We are good stewards of your donation:  
82 cents of every dollar goes directly to  
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we get high charity ratings!**



GrowNYC is a charitable not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization and contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law.



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