Sunflower Hill Gardens

AT HAGEMANN RANCH

2017 Summary Report

February 8, 2018

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Director of Sunflower Hill Gardens

OVERVIEW

This report details the various activities and accomplishments of SFH Gardens in 2017, as well as the accomplishments against the 3-year plan shared with the City of Livermore at the start of the contract.

Sunflower Hill Gardens at Hagemann Ranch is a program of Sunflower Hill (SFH), a 501c3 nonprofit organization based in Pleasanton, CA. SFH Gardens is a one-acre farm designed to provide educational/ vocational horticulture opportunities to special needs individuals in the Tri-Valley. SFH proposed a three-year plan to the City of Livermore at the start of the contract, and broke ground on the garden in April 2015, turning a field of weeds into a beautiful, thriving garden for special needs educational and vocational programs. 2017 was the third very successful year of operating the garden and programs for special needs, with an increased number of special needs individuals, improved and increased production, along with significant infrastructure improvements to the garden.

The Garden is the primary vocational program for Sunflower Hill. A dedicated garden team staff consisting of three volunteer Sunflower Hill Board members, Lynn Monica (Director of the SFH Gardens), Chris Bogert (Special Needs Program Director), and Tanya Ludden (Volunteer/Events Coordinator), work alongside Lina Valenzuela (part time paid Farmer), and a part time teacher, as well as several neuro-typical volunteers who assist with the programs.

In 2017, SFH continued the development of the special needs internship program, attracting several more interns and providing vocational training opportunities. SFH hired its first employee with special needs – a young woman who had been a volunteer intern for more than one year. The organization also helped another garden intern to find paid employment at a local nursery.

Statistics for 2017 indicate that more than ~202 special needs individuals and numerous family/community members were served through weekly special needs programs and bi-monthly family workdays. Sunflower Hill continued to expand to new groups with developmental disabilities and individuals of varying levels of functionality. In total, seven local school groups and one adult program from the Tri-Valley area, including groups from Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin, Danville, and San Ramon were served.

In addition, Sunflower Hill initiated a new Adaptive Horticulture program with Las Positas College for individuals with special needs adults. This program, more than 2.5 years in development also allowed SFH to give guidance with regards to the course curriculum and train the College's lead horticulture

educators on how to work with special needs individuals.

Sunflower Hill's harvest is abundant. In 2017 the garden produced more than 13K lbs of fruits, vegetables and herbs. Approximately 78% or 10K lbs was donated to low-income individuals, via agencies such as Open Heart Kitchen and Tri Valley Haven, among others. In 2017, the garden planted and harvested 72 varieties of produce. It's important to note that since April 2015, more than 30K lbs, of produce has been harvested at the Garden – of which 22.2K lbs was donated to low-income individuals and key partner/community agencies.

In 2017, the SFH farmer implemented new and improved harvesting processes which resulted in higher quality produce. SFH Gardens was also recertified as an Alameda County Community Food Producer, which allows for the distribution of produce to local food banks as well as the ability to sell produce from the garden to the local community and restaurants.

In addition to the produce donated to key partner agencies, produce was donated to the disabled ranchers and groups involved in the garden programs. The remainder of the produce was given to the volunteers or sold to the local community at the garden at the new harvest stand or through our weekly/biweekly CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program, as well as directly to a few local farm-to-table restaurants.

A FOCUS ON INFRASTRUCTURE

Several infrastructure improvements were made in the garden including the addition of a new greenhouse, a wheel chair accessible area, an improved compost system, pergola and arbor. Several garden design, operational, and process changes also improved the quality and efficiency of the garden, to make the garden more self-sustainable.

SFH Gardens Overall Goals as identified in the City of Livermore Contract

1. Provide education/vocational training garden programs for special needs individuals of all ages
2. Grow nutritional produce to share with local food pantries for distribution to low income families

SFH Gardens Phasing in Contract:

Phase 1 ***(Spring/Summer 2015):*** Design/Planning/Prep, Initial Vegetables/Sunflowers, Restore Historic Roses & Develop Special Needs Curriculum

- ✓ Design, Planning, and Preparation of Garden
- ✓ Initial Vegetables/Sunflowers & Restore Historic Roses
- ✓ Build Training Circle and paint/fix planter boxes
- ✓ Special Needs Workday Programs & Develop Garden Curriculum

Phase 2 ***(Fall 2015 & Early 2016):*** Initial Orchard Trees & Perennials, Chickens, Outdoor Classroom & Begin Special Needs Programs

- ✓ Plant Initial Orchard Trees & Perennials
- ~~Update Chicken Coop and add Chickens~~ <Animals not part of contract scope>
- ✓ Begin Special Needs Programs

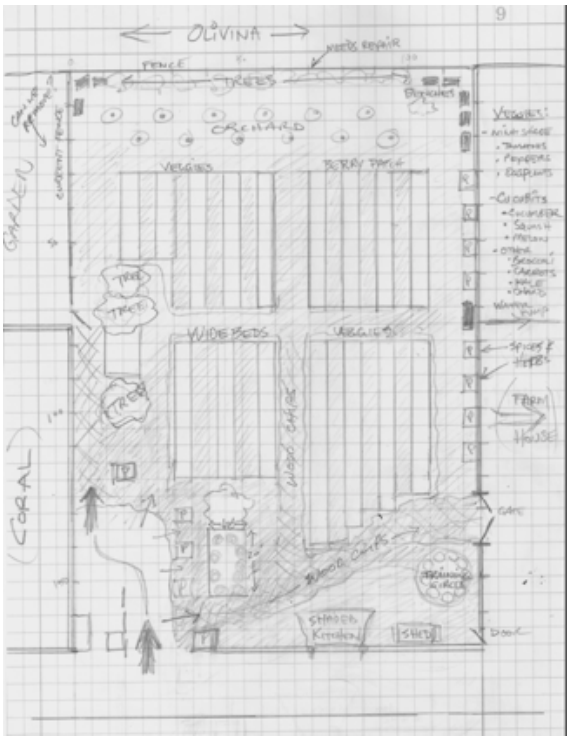
Phase 3 ***(Late 2016 & 2017):*** Expand Gardens, Grains/Corn/Vines, Green House, Expand Special Needs Programs & Develop Kitchen/Nutrition Programs

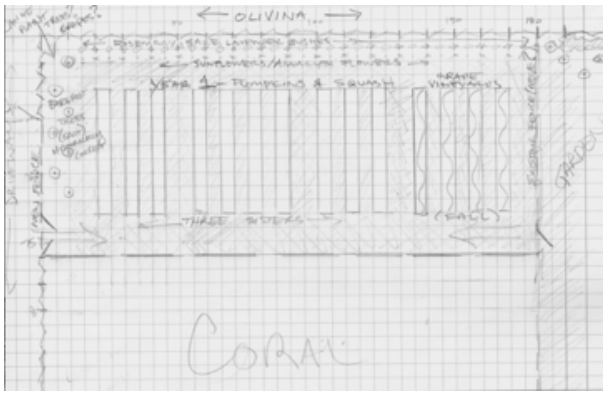
- ✓ Expand Gardens & Plant Grains, Corn, & Vines
- ✓ Green House (2017)
- *Develop Kitchen Area (Planned for 2018)*
- ✓ Expand Special Needs Programs (2017)
- ~~*Nutrition*~~ *Healthy Eating Programs (Planned for 2018)*

The Garden/Farm:

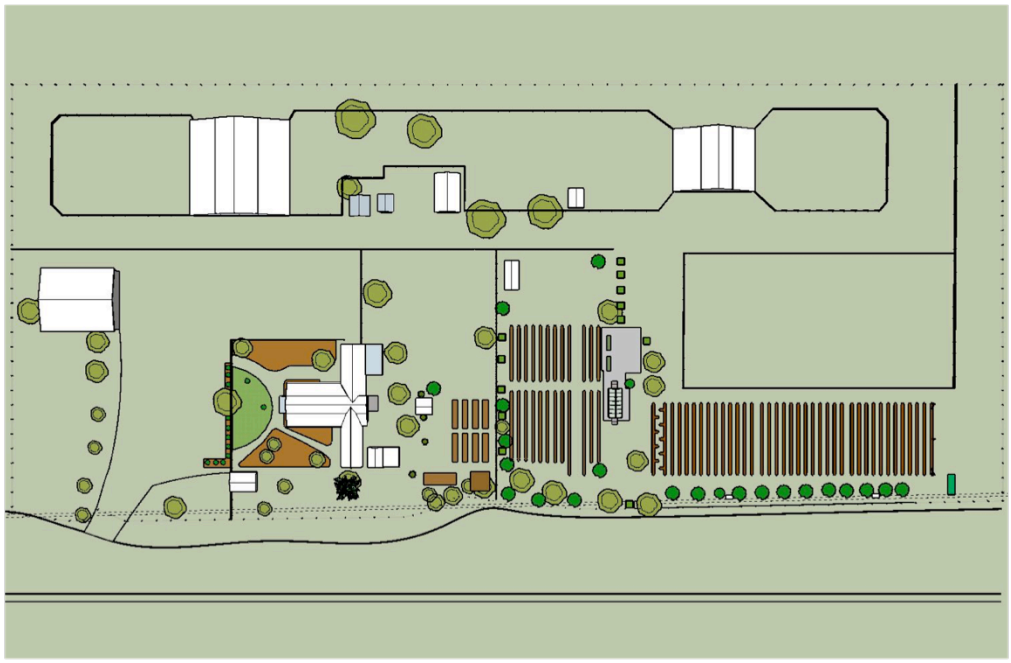
Original Proposed SFH Gardens in Contract:

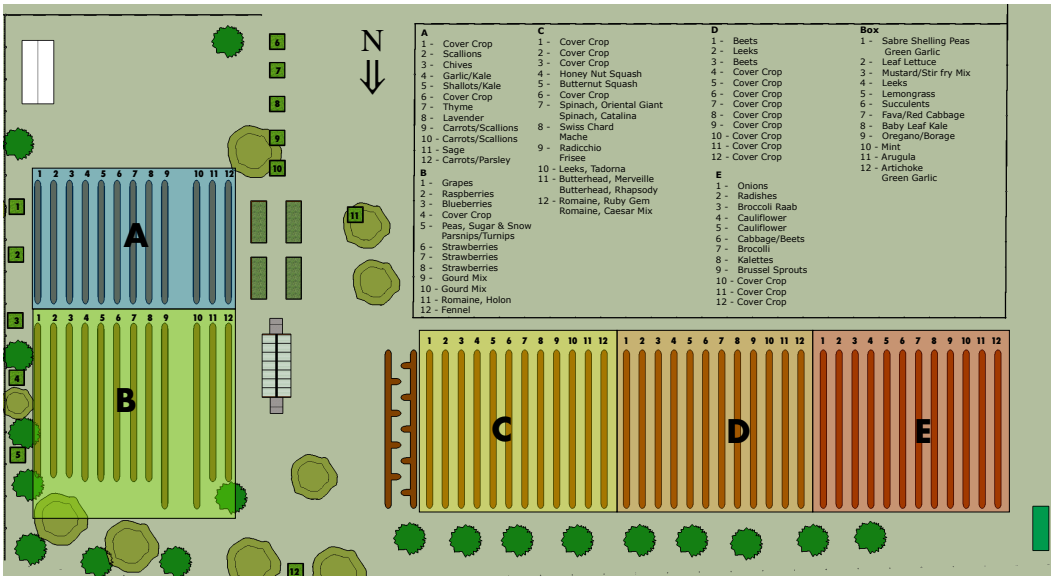
SFH Gardens Original Design





SFH Gardens Current





SFH Gardens Now:

KEY METRICS FOR 2017

- Programs provided to special needs individuals
  - 6 SN vocational internships, 1 transitioned to paid employment
  - Weekly Programs, 3 days a week, 2-3 groups per day
    - 11 Special Needs Adult In Transition Classes
    - 3 Adult Day Programs
  - 6 Weekend Special Needs Family Workdays, 1 every 2 months

- Special needs individuals working/learning in SFH Gardens programs/events
  - 202 Total Special Needs Individuals Served
    - 6 SN interns, ~3 days each per week
    - ~160 SN Individuals served in Adult programs, ~125 were new
    - ~10 SN Individuals per Family Workday events
  - Average of ~145 SN Individuals served on a monthly basis in programs/events
  - ~3640 Total Hours of service for SN individuals in all the SFH Gardens programs

- Total volunteers and participants in programs
  - 707 New Total Volunteers (includes 202 special needs individuals)
  - 9715 Total Volunteer Hours (including Volunteer Staff & repeat volunteers)

- Amount of food produced and distributed to low income families
  - ~ 13,000 lbs harvested
  - ~ 10,000 lbs donated to low-income individuals and families (78%)

- Amount of land put into productive use
  - Planted ¾ of an acre, which is ~70% of area designated for use by Sunflower Hill
  - Remaining ¼ acre is for Training Area, Shed, Greenhouse, Harvest Station, Compost Station, Soil/Amendments Storage, & future Kitchen area

SPECIAL NEEDS ADULT/HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Seven local schools transition classes now visit the garden on a weekly basis as part of their 'work program' and/or general class – providing needed 'on-the job' and vocational training in the horticulture field. High Schools that have participated include Livermore, Granada, Pleasanton Foothill, Dublin (2 classes), Amador Valley, San Ramon Dougherty High School, and San Ramon Del Amigo (3 classes). Three adult special needs day programs from Livermore, Pleasanton and Danville, also work in the garden weekly. As previously mentioned, SFH also collaborated with Las Positas College on the development and implementation of an Adaptive Horticulture Certificate Course.

In order to ensure effective curriculum and program delivery, SFH Garden staff requested feedback from teachers and program instructors who visited the Garden on a regular basis in 2017. The response indicates SFH is creating and delivering an effective program valued by both teachers and participants.

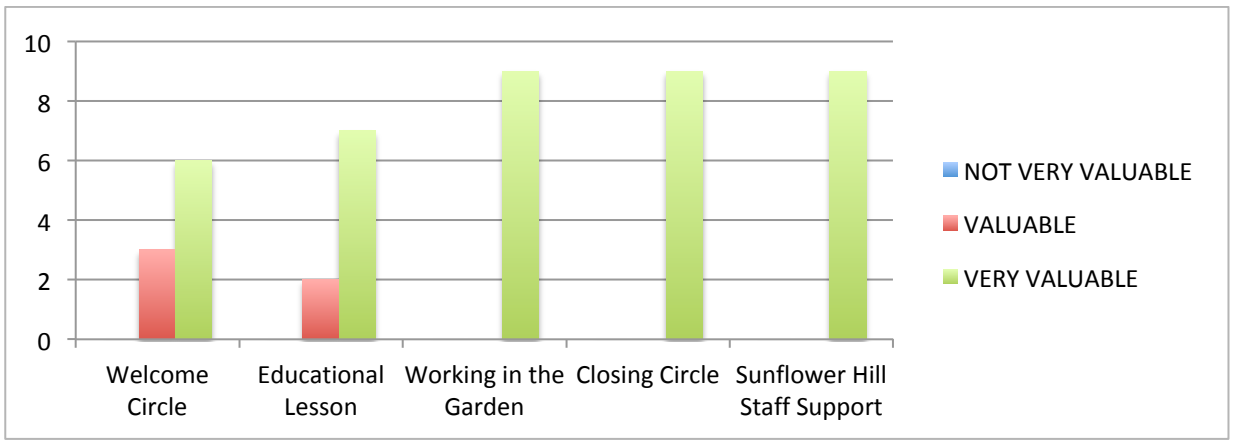
Key metrics/questions in the SFH Gardens 2017 survey are identified below:

- What's the **Overall Value of SFH Gardens** as compared to other programs/activities you participate in?

  Weighted Ave: 4.67 (out of 5)

- **Value** of each of these to your group (9 Responses):

- **Rating** of different parts of program (9 Responses):



Quotes From Teachers/Leads Attending Programs:

- *"Sunflower Hill provides a unique opportunity for students since it incorporates functional academics (weighing, measuring, vocabulary, social skills), vocational skills and teamwork in an outdoor setting."*
- *"The Sunflower Hill Garden program offers students the opportunity to engage in a hands-on learning environment. It teaches them life-long skills in maintaining and sustaining a garden…"*
- *"The garden is an amazing place! I am so happy that it is a large part of my program."*
- *"My students LOVE coming to the garden!"*

SPECIAL NEEDS INTERNSHIPS

Since the program inception, seven special needs volunteer interns have worked at the garden. This year, SFH took an additional step by hiring a young woman with special needs as a part-time employee. SFH also identified paid employment for another intern at a local gardening store, and two of the interns have gone on to college.

SUNFLOWER HILL GARDENS FAMILY WORKDAY EVENTS

In 2017, Sunflower Hill Gardens held six Family Workdays, with seasonal garden themes and special gardening activities for individuals with special needs and their family members. The purpose of these events is to provide an opportunity of individuals of all ages to experience the Sunflower Hill Gardens and learn various aspects about gardening and to enjoy spending time with their families in an outdoor activity.

FOOD PRODUCTION

SFH Gardens planted and harvested a wider variety of produce this past year – resulting in a total of 13K pounds, with 10K pounds (78%) donated to local food banks and low-income individuals. This is a significant increase over the total harvest and donations of previous years.

2016 – 9500 pounds harvested, ~6700 donated (~70%)

2015 – 7500 pounds harvested, ~5500 donated (~70%)

The total harvest since breaking ground is 30K pounds, of which 22.2K pounds of produce were donated to low-income individuals and families. The harvest increase in 2017 is attributable to improvements made in the irrigation, soil amendments and the processes used. Other improvements were made with regards to the processes used in the harvesting and cleaning of the produce, resulting in higher quality produce.

The 2017 produce included heirloom tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, sweet and hot peppers, eggplant, red lettuce, green lettuce, basil, zucchini, patty pan squash, butternut squash, acorn squash, melons, cantaloupe, pumpkins, corn, carrots, beets, sweet potatoes, onions, leeks, parsnip radish, celery, turnips, kale, swiss chard, spinach, stir fry, pakchoi, tatsoi, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, broccoli raab, brussel sprouts, string beans, snow peas, fava beans, artichokes, sunchokes (Jerusalem artichokes), chives, oregano, sage, thyme, micro greens, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, grapes, lemons, and more. Two olive trees were added to the orchard, which was started in 2015 and should begin producing fruit in 2018. And in addition the garden produced many gourds, loofas, and a wide variety of beautiful sunflowers throughout the garden.

PRODUCE DONATIONS TO LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS/ORGANIZATIONS

As mentioned, approximately 10K pounds of produce was donated in 2017 to the special needs individuals in the garden, community organizations and local food banks that help feed low-income and underserved families/individuals in Livermore and the Tri-Valley. These included:

- Open Heart Kitchen
- Tri-Valley Haven
- Shepherd's Gate
- Carmen Ave Apt Abode Services
- Marilyn Ave School
- Culinary Angels
- Meals on Wheel

PRODUCE SALES

While the majority of our produce was donated, the remainder of the food was sold to local restaurants and to individuals in the local community through direct sales of produce in the garden or through the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. All profits went back into the operations of the garden.

GARDEN EVENTS

In August 2017, Sunflower Hill hosted a SFH Gardens Long Table Dinner. This delicious farm-to-table dinner featuring produce from the garden prepared by Matt Greco, current Executive Chef of Salt Craft and the former Executive Chef of Wente Restaurant. This stewardship event was an opportunity to celebrate and appreciate the efforts of the garden team/volunteers and enjoy the fruits of their labor, in a beautiful setting in the middle of the garden.

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Sunflower Hill Gardens has had many individuals volunteering in the garden and hosted a myriad of local community and service-based organizations. The garden has become a 'go-to' opportunity for local service clubs and area corporations desiring a hands-on volunteer activity for their members or employees.

These organizations assist in the garden with specific infrastructure projects and general gardening work. In 2017, projects included the greenhouse foundation, pre-assembly, and assembly, wheel-chair accessible area, brick deck for shed, pergola, arbor, harvest stand, benches for the field, compost station extension, spreading wood chips throughout the garden, and more. Several of the volunteer organizations also helped to cover the costs associated with the projects they worked on.

In 2017, the following corporations and organizations volunteered:

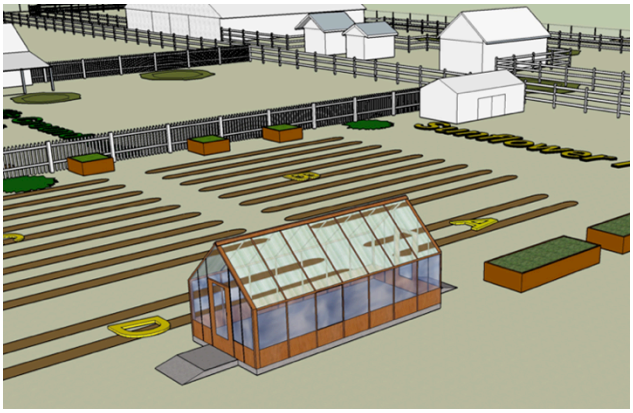
- Livermore Valley Rotary
- Sensiba San Fillippo
- Robert Half
- Sales Force
- Armanino
- Rotary Club of Danville & Sycamore
- Pleasanton North Rotary
- Pleasanton Boys Team Charity
- Pleasanton Girls National Charity League
- Livermore Girls National Charity League
- Young Men's Service League
- 2 Eagle Scout Projects
- Silver Girl Scout Project
- Local Boy Scout troops
- Sunset Community Church

SunflowerHill

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS/2017

Greenhouse

In 2017 a beautiful new redwood greenhouse was erected in the garden. Staff worked with the Heritage Guild and the Historic Preservation Commission to review plans and obtain approval – ensuring consistency with the historical Hagemann property requirements. The greenhouse has and will be an invaluable addition to the plant propagation process for the garden .



Other 2017 Improvements included:

- Compost Station Improvement
- Pergola
- Wheel Chair Accessible Area
- Arbor
- Harvest Stand
- Commercial Refrigerator
- Benches in field
- Raised Planting Tables

2017 PLANS FOR SUNFLOWER HILL GARDENS – HOW WE DID

Sunflower Hill established a phased approach for the Sunflower Hill Gardens goals.

Overall Three-Year Phasing (2015-2017)

- ✓ **Short Term Goals (Establish Garden and Programs)**
  - ✓ Provide programs for individuals in special needs Transition and Adult Day Programs,
  - ✓ Internships for high functioning individuals
  - ✓ Grants, fundraisers, donations, and sale of produce to community/restaurants
  - ✓ Donations of 51% or more of produce to low-income individuals and families
  - ✓ Build out of key infrastructure: planting areas, training circle, shed, picnic tables, …
- ✓ **Mid Term Goals (Improve Operations & Expand Programs)**
  - ✓ Horticultural curriculum development & expand to support more classes/groups
  - ✓ Further define/expand internship & work-in-training & funding
  - ✓ Increased level of Grants, Fundraisers and Donations
  - ✓ Maintain 51% or more produce donations to low-income individuals and families
  - ✓ Build out of key infrastructure: greenhouse, table beds, etc.
- ✓ **Long Term Goals (Work towards Self-Sustainability)**
  - ✓ Improvements to garden design and operations to improve self-sustainability and lower costs
  - Teacher lead expanded program and include additional/younger special needs classes/groups
  - Paid Internships & lead efforts in majority of key areas
  - Fiscal Self-Sustainability through Corporate Sponsor & Grants to reduce dependency on sales
  - ✓ Increase produce donations to low-income individuals and families
  - Build out of key infrastructure: outdoor kitchen area

The initial garden and programs were established in 2015. In 2016 the focus was on operation improvements and expansion of the programs to include more groups and individuals. The focus of 2017 and going forward is on self-sustainability of the garden and the special needs programs.

Sunflower Hill Gardens
AT HAGEMANN RANCH

Sunflower Hill met and/or exceeded the majority of our 2017 objectives, improving the self-sustainability of the garden and providing services to more special needs individuals and providing food for an increased number of low-income individuals/families. However a lack of full funding for educators has delayed the expansion of the program.

Key Organizational Objectives for 2017:

- ✓ Increase Garden Self-Sustainability (Met/exceeded this objective)
  - New farmer will work to optimize and improve the self-sustainability of the gardens
  - Fiscal sustainability through sponsorships, grants, and sales of produce

  Design changes were made to improve the garden self-sufficiency, reduce the need for specialized farm equipment/expertise, and reduced costs of irrigation/amendments/etc. Also received sponsorship donations and grants to ongoing enable operation of garden.

- Expand Special Needs Programs (Partially met this objective)
  - Raise funds to pay for 1-2 professional educators to lead the special needs programs and develop core program curriculum, to enable expansion of days/groups

  Grant received to partially fund 1 part-time teacher. Expanded services to support additional groups and individuals based on available volunteer staffing and days, however unable to expand to additional days/individuals until enough secure funding for 2 teachers.

- ✓ Expand and Fund Paid Internships (Met this objective)
  - Further develop/expand internship program to include additional individuals, align with core job skill requirements and career opportunities, and access funding

  Added additional special needs interns to the program and hired first special needs employee. Objective is to expand internship program further based on individuals in program and available funding.

- ✓ Infrastructure Improvements (Met/exceeded this objective)
  - ✓ New Greenhouse
  - ✓ Improved Irrigation, Bed Layout, & Watering
  - ✓ Improved Compost Station
  - ✓ Build Harvest Stand & Raised Table Beds
  - ✓ Brick deck around Shed
  - ✓ Weed Suppression in Walkways

PLANS FOR 2018

Key Objectives for 2018:

1. Continue to ensure fiscal sustainability and maintain/improve the garden for self-sustainability
2. Refine and provide educational horticulture programs for individuals through special needs Transition and Adult Day Programs, and Family Events
3. Refine vocational internship opportunities for higher functioning individuals with special needs and secure funding for paid employment
4. Continue to improve operations and Infrastructure
5. Grow wide variety of high quality organic produce
6. Distribute 51+% of produce to those in most need in the local community and sell produce to local community from garden

Key 2018 Infrastructure Improvements:

Depending upon financing, the next big infrastructure projects for 2018 could include:

- Power for Greenhouse & Shed (Solar or Direct)
- Harvest Area
- Kitchen Area
- Improved Arbor

IN CONCLUSION

Sunflower Hill Gardens and the horticulture programs for individuals with special needs has been a great addition to the city owned property of Hagemann Ranch. The program, funded completely by Sunflower Hill, via private donations, foundations and grants has demonstrated that quality programs for individuals with special needs can be created in an environment that fully supports the requirements of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Block Grant.

We appreciate this wonderful opportunity to leverage Hagemann Ranch to provide educational and vocational services to individuals with special needs, while supporting individuals in need through the garden produce donations. We look forward to a continued sustainable partnership with the City of Livermore, the Heritage Guild and the other on-site non-profits in 2018.