



# DRUID CITY GARDEN PROJECT

annual  
**report**  
2014

## *Letter from the Board President*

**L**ooking back, it seems foolish that we even thought to try. It was the fall of 2009 and my wife Rashmi and I, along with our friends Emily Tipps and Adam Weinstein, were sitting down to a nice locally sourced dinner. And as we ate, we talked about the food. About the local farmers and their produce. About the crisp kale salad and the rich butternut squash soup. And then one of us said, "This city needs more access to fresh, local produce. How do we make that happen?"

If you could have snapped your finger that night and shown us where that idea would be in five years – shown the 1,700 kids we reach each week, the thousands of pounds of produce we've gotten into the hands of families that need it the most, the faces of the kids when they pull up a carrot, the back yard of elementary schools across the city transformed into vibrant spaces of food production, the chicken coop in the Juvenile Detention Center, where kids who've been discarded by society find some measure of humanity in taking care of a garden – I don't think we would have believed it possible. The story of how that initial idea has transformed into what is now the Druid City Garden Project is a remarkable one. And we're only just getting started.

From our earliest conversations about what would become DCGP, we had as our goal this simple phrase: "We build

community through food." The two main ideas there, "community" and "food," are inexorably linked. The family table is where we share our stories, and where we find community. Our food traditions tell us who we are and where we come from. At least, that's how we think it should be. So DCGP is working every day, in schools throughout the community, to reconnect people to good food. To create access to fresh produce and to educate students not just about healthy eating, but about the virtue of working with your hands and about how shared labor can create friendships and trust.

As we embark on a new year, with an unmatched staff and a bigger capacity to make change throughout the city, we want to tell you a little bit about what we've been up to and why what we do is so special and so important. The numbers and the stats that follow are indeed impressive. But don't just take our word for it. Instead, come out and visit one of our gardens. Watch as the students rush forward to find the freshest strawberry. Listen to the teachers as they talk about how the garden is an outdoor classroom. ***And see our mission in action.***



*Andrew Grace*



"With DCGP, I've tried things I've never tried before."

- George, 2nd Grade, Oakdale Elementary School



Alabama has one of the lowest funded public school systems in the U.S.



With 46% of Alabama's children eating less than 1 fruit or vegetable per day, Alabama has among the highest childhood obesity and Type 2 Diabetes rates in the country.

The average DCGP student



receives  
free or  
reduced  
lunch



lives in  
a food  
desert



and is a  
racial or  
ethnic  
minority

Access to affordable, fresh food and a quality education can be a challenge for many of our families.

***But we can turn the tide.***

By bringing the classroom outside, our programs provide hands-on learning in core subjects, as well as an engaging learning space to help connect students to their food.



*"We grew strawberries, radishes, collards, lettuce, and more. We color and draw. We hold bugs. We have fun!"*

*-JaQarius, 2nd Grade, Oakdale Elementary School*

## *Our Approach: bring the classroom outside and into the real world*



"They're able to see it. It's a lab, it's an actual lab that they're getting to run their math through, their science, their social studies."

- Dr. Cameron, former Principal at University Place Elementary School



It's not enough for us that our students learn science and math; **they need to experience it.** That's why every DCGP lesson is designed to meet Alabama Course of Study guidelines in an engaging and project-based setting.

Our students learn with their feet in the dirt. They see, feel, smell, taste, and touch science every week in their living, breathing science laboratory.

***This is how education can be.***

## *What Was Accomplished*



**1,958**

lbs produce  
harvested



**6**

garden sites



**1,781**

students in  
garden lessons



**18**

student-run  
farm stands



**3,385**

volunteer hours in  
the gardens

This year, DCGP exceeded all of our internal goals, growing more produce, reaching more students, working with more volunteers, and opening up more sites than ever before.

We believe that our students learn best when they put their knowledge into practice. We believe that they can be just as excited over vegetables as they are over candy. And, we have the evidence to prove it.

## The Research

This year, we set out with a goal: to provide real and measurable change. With Dr. Caroline Boxmeyer at the helm, a team of University of Alabama researchers has evaluated our programs and found striking results: DCGP's programs improve academic success, school engagement, and physical health.

These findings summarize differences between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students at two elementary schools who had 3 or more garden lessons versus 0-2 garden lessons.



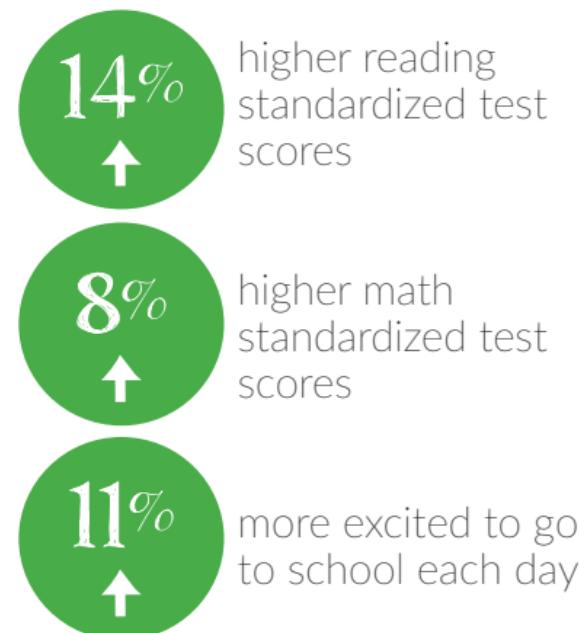
*"I was struck by the size of the effects that we observed on children's food choices and school engagement... it was great to see that DCGP's school garden lessons are having a significant impact."*  
- Dr. Caroline Boxmeyer, University of Alabama researcher.

## Health:

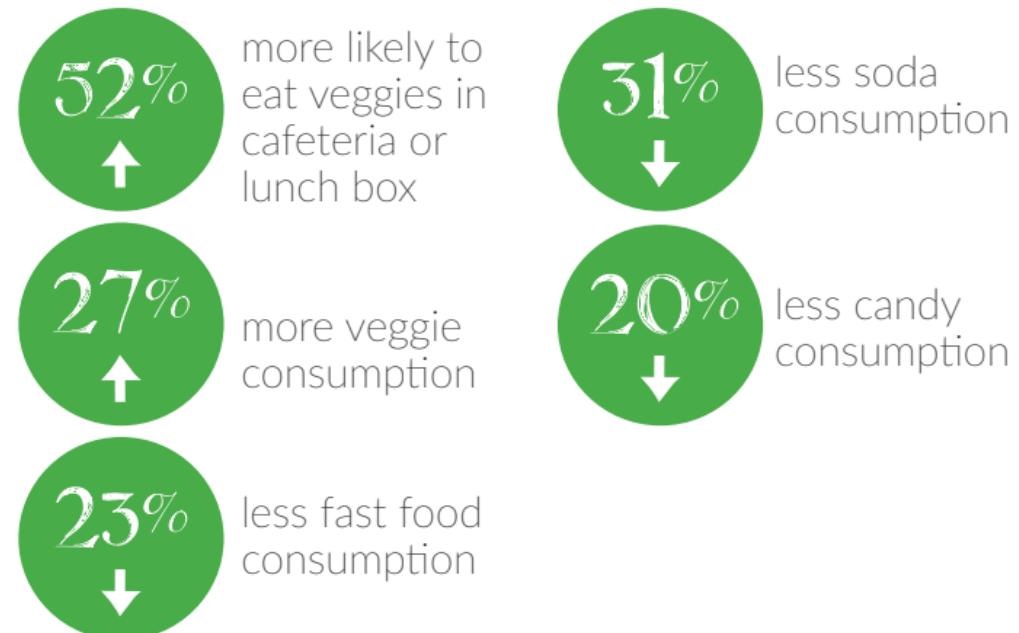
**6% lower**  
body mass index (BMI)

Body Mass Index is a tool that compares the ratio of one's height-to-weight to determine whether a person might be underweight, a normal weight, or obese. Lowering children's BMI is key in resolving issues of childhood obesity and Type 2 Diabetes rates.

## Academic Achievement:



## Eating Behaviors:





*"I really liked making garden haikus. It was fun to come up with the perfect words that had the perfect meanings to describe the poetic feeling of our plants."*

*-John, 5th Grade, Tuscaloosa Magnet School, Elementary*

## The Research

Because of their garden, students' test scores in core subjects increase, they are physically healthier, and they are excited to go to school.

In fact, the research shows that even student's parents benefit from the garden – meaning that we're impacting not only our youngest citizens, but an entire community.

For a full research summary, visit  
[www.druidcitygardenproject.org/numbers](http://www.druidcitygardenproject.org/numbers)

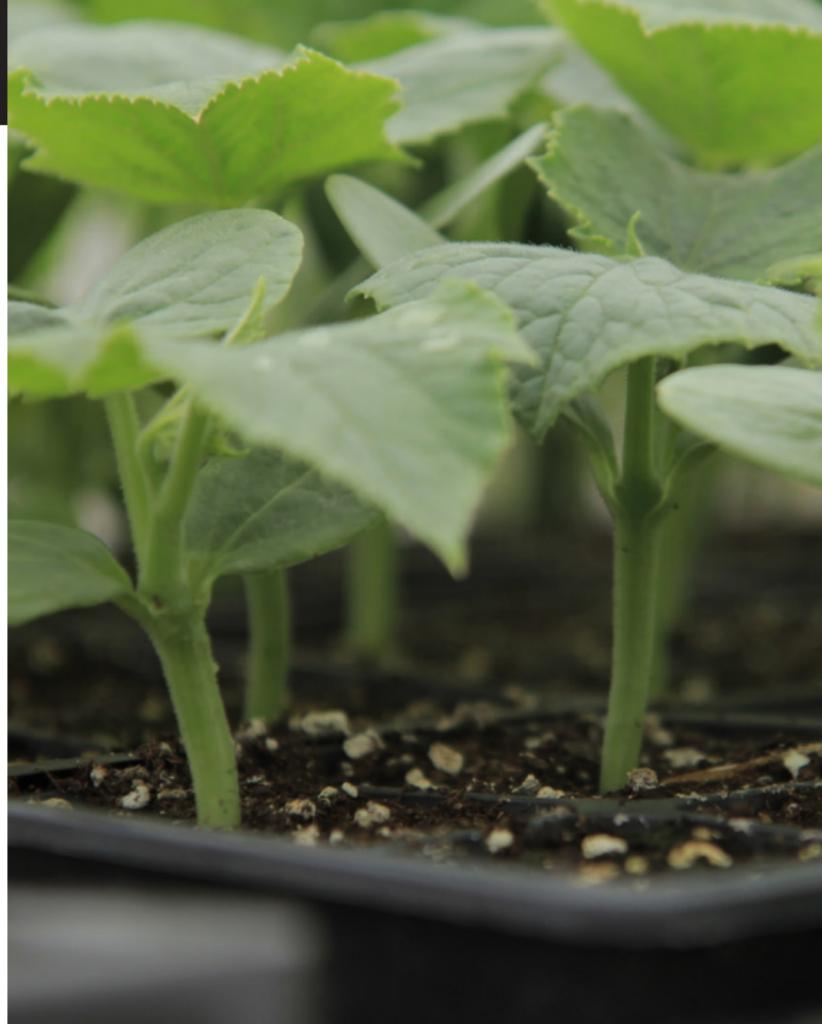
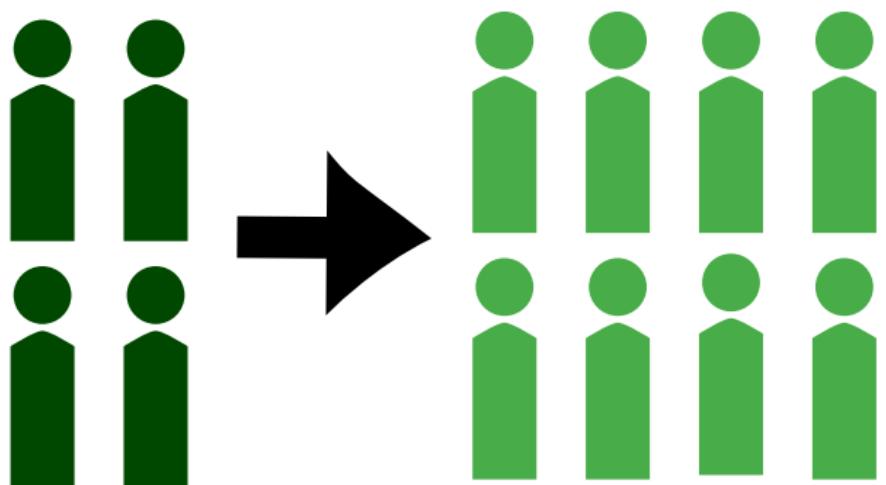


*"[Students] can tell you the difference between a fibrous root and a tap root. When they come back to the classroom they want to continue."*

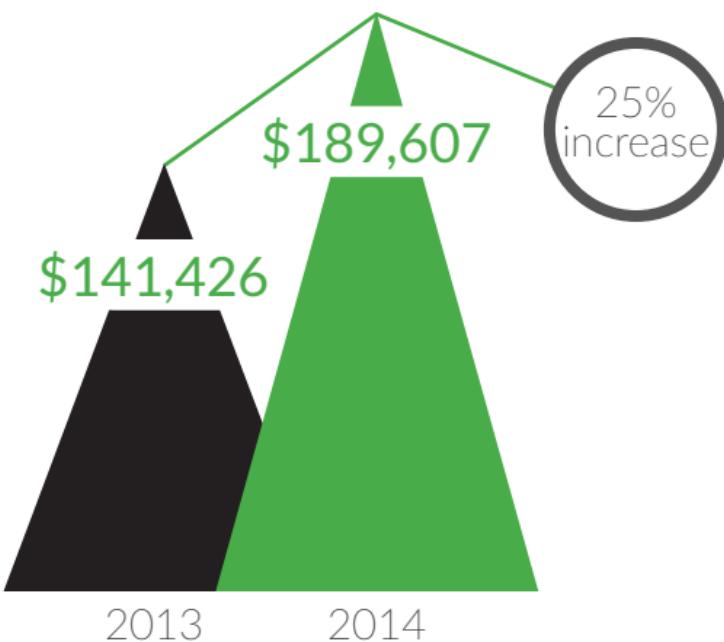
- Ms. Young, 2nd grade teacher at University Place Elementary School

## *2014 Financials*

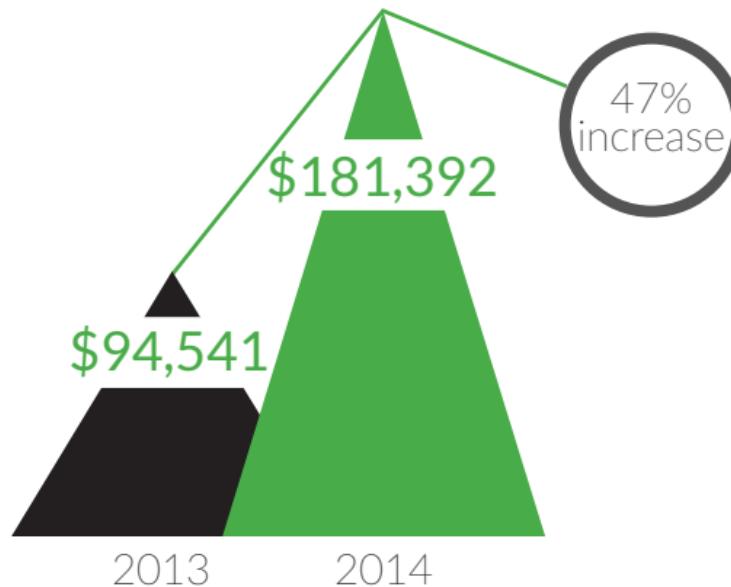
In 2014, we doubled our staff size to finish the year with 3 full-time employees, 3 part-time employees, and 2 Work Study students, with the help of the Federal Work Study program and the Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility, both at UA. As a result, our budget grew for a fourth year in a row.



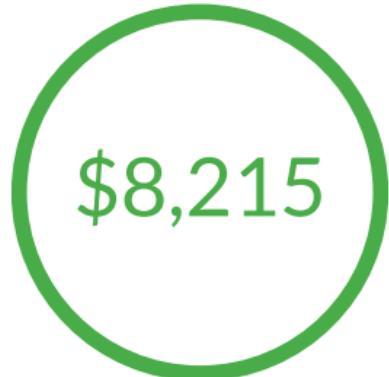
**Total Income:**



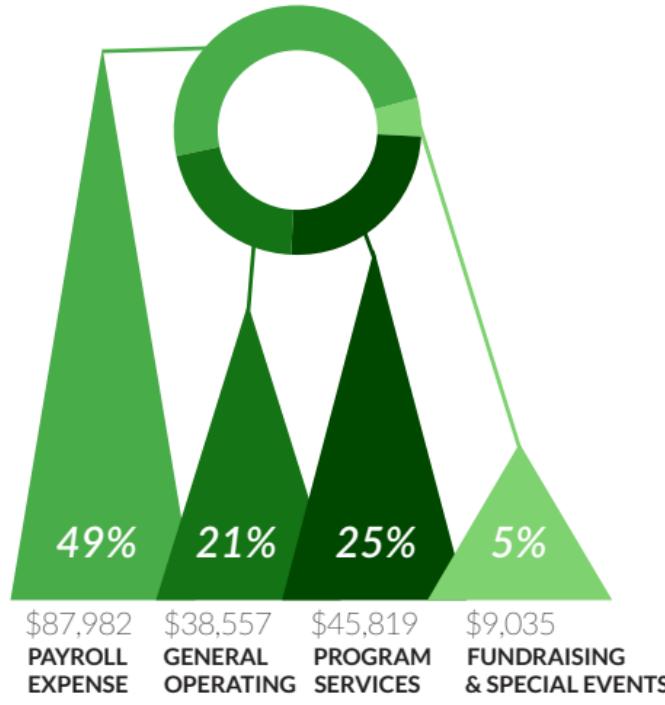
**Total Expense:**



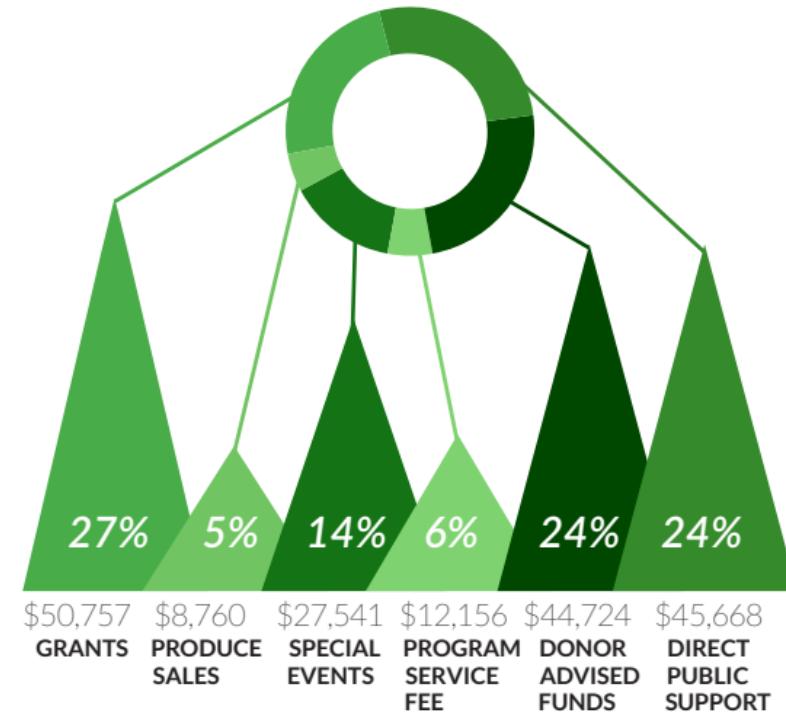
**Net Income:**



### How we spend our funds:

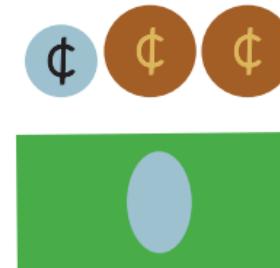


### Where our funds come from:





In three years, we have invested **over \$308,000** in Alabama's school system.



The average individual donation to DCGP was \$152.

We spent 12¢ for every dollar raised in 2014.

It is our goal to provide transparent financial records. To that end, each year an independent firm conducts a formal Review of our finances and prepares our IRS 990 return form. If you have additional questions regarding our finances, visit our page on Guidestar or contact us.

## *Principal's Perspective*

*When DCGP first approached Jeanne Burkhalter, Principal of Tuscaloosa Magnet School - Elementary (TMSE), she was skeptical, to say the least.*

I wanted to know – who are these people and what do they want with my children? I tried to understand their agenda and motives for getting access to our students.

*Mrs. B, as she is known to the school community, allowed the school's teachers to vote on allowing DCGP into the school.*

*It was unanimous. Yet, Mrs. B still had questions.*

Will every child get to participate? Will it be developmentally appropriate? More importantly – will they understand curriculum integration? Our days are very full and teachers do not have time for anything extra. I was very concerned that one child would get to work while the other twenty sat and watched. I wondered if it would be like playtime in a garden and, despite the data that DCGP provided, I still wanted to know; what will the results be?

But I was blown away. DCGP gets education and how students learn. They see the need to support educators in providing authentic opportunities for students to learn. They use a garden as a legitimate teaching tool. And, they simply want to provide child-centered learning experiences; to connect students to the earth and the curriculum in an authentic way.

Not only did every child get to participate, but the garden curriculum has enhanced every core subject: writing, reading, math, science, even art! Students prepare charts, graphs, diagrams, haikus....It is simply amazing!

If I was still skeptical, it all disappeared when one day I overheard a First Grader say, 'Mom you have to go to the garden and buy white beauty radishes. I like the way the first bite is a little spicy and the rest of the bites are kind of like a mushroom.'

**TMSE has been involved in many innovative programs. DCGP's garden has been the best.**

I believe that every child should have this opportunity. Every child!

## *Donors*

As a community-based organization, we could not have done a fraction of what is listed in this report without the generous support from a wide range of donors. Thank you to our 2014 donors for helping to build community through food.

### **Supporting Individuals**

#### **\$1,000 and above**

Claire Friday  
Susan Richards Tucker  
Matthew D Therrell & Margaret A Warner

#### **\$500-\$999**

Robert & Latika Becker  
Adelaide Drennen  
Fred & Lisa Harris  
Bill St. John

#### **\$101-\$499**

Catherine Bridgers  
Glenna Brown  
Michael & Shannon Corbell  
Steve & Sharman Gray *in honor of Josalyn & Scotty Randall*  
Emily Leigh  
Fernanda & Grant Luiken  
Leslie & Gordon Miller  
Alvin Niuh  
Margie Randall  
James Randall  
Kristen Roberts

Cheryl Rolf  
Joshua & Rebecca Rothman  
Eddie and Gladys Simmons *in honor of Scott Randall*  
Ryan Stallings  
Shannon Wright

**Up to \$100**

Clayton S Allen *in honor of Scott Randall*  
David & Gina Allgood  
Catenya McHenry Ashford  
Lydia Atkins *in honor of the youth of Alabama*  
Katherine Baird *in honor of Lindsay Turner*  
John F Beeler  
Paul & Milla Boschung  
Kathryn Brandon  
Linda Burger

Virginia Cade  
Charles & Peggy Collins  
Alan & Mary Beth Dennis  
Nikki Evans *in honor of Ben Evans*  
Randolph & Heather Fowler and White  
Joseph & Frances Fritz  
Gary & Sarah Grace  
Lucy Grace  
Kim Harle  
George Harris  
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Harris *in honor of Scott Randall*  
Amy Henderson *in honor of Tuscaloosa Magnet School Elementary - Mrs. Speight's Class*  
Madeleine & William Hill and Winternitz  
Kelley Hudlow  
David & Kim Hudson

## *Donors*

Norman & Anna Jacobs Singer

Laurie & Michael Johns

Margie Kamburis *in honor of Emily Leigh*

Grace Lee

Jack & Emily Leigh *in honor of Scott Randall*

Michael & Therisa Martone and Pappas

Catanya McHenry Ashford

Virginia McPhearson

Jennie & David Miller *in honor of Scott Randall*

Valery & Jeff Minges and Patterson

Pamela and Edwin Parker *in honor of Scott Randall*

Sylvia Parker

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Stephen & KelleeReinhart *in honor of Emily Leigh*

Judith Rives

Camille Samples *in memory of Algernon Cooper III*

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Marly Dukes Thomas

Anna Thomas

Bradley Trammell *in honor of Lindsay Turner*

Ernestine Tucker, District 2, Tuscaloosa City School Board

Simon & Nancy Turner

John & AnnetteWatters

Phillip & Mary JeanWeaver *in honor of Emily Leigh*

Dr. Susan E Williams

Welcome to UPS  
Garden oooo



## *Donors*

### **Grants, Foundations, and Awards**

#### **\$10,000 and above**

City of Tuscaloosa, Mayor's Office  
The Caring Foundation of Blue Cross Blue Shield  
Wells Fargo  
Tom's of Maine

*Robert T. Leigh, Sr., given by Emily and Jack Leigh  
Community Foundation of West Alabama  
Scotts Miracle Grow  
Growing Arts United Appeals Fund*

#### **Up to \$9,999**

Legacy, Inc.  
Clif Bar Family Foundation  
Tuscaloosa Morning Rotary Foundation  
Ambassadorship of Distinction Grant *in honor of*

## **Supporting Businesses**

### **\$10,000 and above**

Amason & Associates, Inc.

### **\$501-\$999**

First United Methodist Church of Tuscaloosa

### **Up to \$500**

Northriver Primary Care Associates  
Tuscaloosa Master Gardeners  
ASTRA

Emergi-Care Clinic  
Fitts Agency  
Left Hand Soap Company  
Pritchett-Moore  
Ross-Merrell Associates  
Trexylin, Inc.  
University Women's Club

## In Partnership With

The University of Alabama's  
Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility  
New College  
Honors College  
College of Communication and Information Sciences  
College of Arts and Sciences  
College of Human Environmental Sciences  
Student Engineers in Action  
McLellan Architecture  
Bonnie Plants  
Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply  
The numerous donors who supported us anonymously  
And the hundreds of volunteers who live, breathe, and sweat DCGP with us.

Name Grace

Date 12/12/14

## Garden Reflection

## Garden Rocks!



My favorite thing to do in garden was be a garden detective, I like that best because, I get to observe plants and I can do Smilies! My favorite veggie was Kohrabi! But I do not like roasted Kohrabi!!

**GARDEN IS FUN!**

*"I will tell people that planting things with the DCGP program will be fun, exciting, and adventurous because you would step out of your comfort zone and try new things."*

*-Jocelyn, 5th Grade, Magnet*

For more testimonials, visit  
[www.druidcitygardenproject.org/  
testimonials](http://www.druidcitygardenproject.org/testimonials)



*"DCGP has changed the way that we eat. My children will make better choices because they have been part of this program."*

*- Catenya McHenry, parent*

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<http://www.druidcitygardenproject.org/numbers/>