SCHOOLYARD
ROOTS
Growing gardens. Growing minds.

annual
report
2017

In 2017, your support helped us rebrand our organization as Schoolyard Roots. This new identity enables us to expand our educational programming beyond Tuscaloosa and bring teaching gardens to students across the great state of Alabama and beyond. While the Druid City will always be home, we are grateful to our donors for the opportunity to spread our message and share our innovative and results-focused school curriculum.

Dear Community,

Schoolyard Roots' teaching gardens have been a great addition to our schools.

They bring learning to life in Tuscaloosa schools through teaching gardens. They provide our schools with a garden, materials, curriculum, and professional development for teachers. Students practice reading, science, and math through hands-on standards-based instruction. They participate in cooking lessons that encourage them to be more involved in meal planning and preparation, and run farm stands stocked with vegetables they have grown themselves.

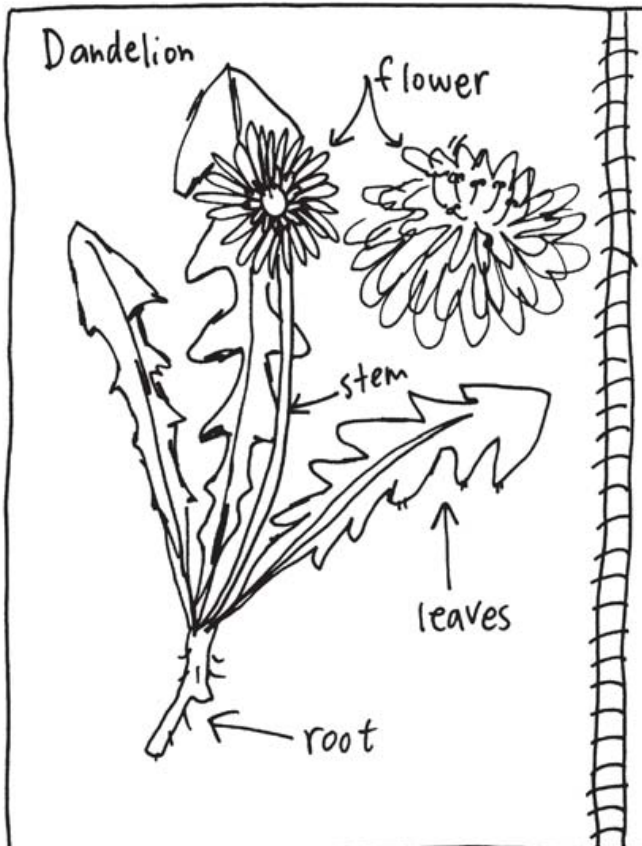
Parents love that their children are learning about where their food comes from. Teachers speak highly of their value to the classroom experience.

An analysis of the program by The University of Alabama shows the program increases healthy choices and academic performance, and gets students excited about school. These positive outcomes inspire and support the challenge and commitment we educators have for quality education in Tuscaloosa schools. I would recommend the Schoolyard Roots curriculum to any school system in Alabama.

TCS™ TUSCALOOSA CITY SCHOOLS

Sincerely,

Mike Daria, Ed. D., TCS Superintendent



Dandelion Observations

Color: bright yellow flower, green leaves

texture: flower is soft, leaves are pokey

Smell: kind of sweet and like grass and dirt

The leaves are pointy.

The stem is fuzzy.

The root is damp.

“This program (Schoolyard Roots) is a vital component of Alabama’s Farm to School Program. Agriculture is Alabama’s number one industry, and it is vital that all children learn where their food comes from.”

– John McMillan, Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries

VERNER'S
FARM STAND

Nothing “beets” our amazing community. In 2017, Tuscaloosa residents came together to provide an overwhelming **3,000 hours** of volunteer work. Volunteers help run our Budding Entrepreneurs program, maintain our gardens, build benches, and more!

Spreading Our Roots

Thanks to supporters like you, Buhl Elementary has joined the Schoolyard Roots family. Today Schoolyard Roots serves more than 4,500 children in 11 schools across Tuscaloosa County, and our impact continues to grow. Growing gardens. Growing minds. We are making Alabama a healthier, more sustainable place, one child at a time. We deeply appreciate your continued financial support.

Our Partner Schools

Alberta School of Performing Arts

Buhl Elementary

Central Elementary

Crestmont Elementary

Faucett-Vestavia Elementary

Flatwoods Elementary

Tuscaloosa Magnet Elementary

Oakdale Elementary

University Place Elementary

Verner Elementary

Woodland Forrest Elementary

“We keep our body healthy by eating the food we planted!”
– Destiny, 3rd Grade

“I feel so blessed that we have this program here at our school. You present it in such a way that it seems doable—physically and mentally.”

- Geri Cauthen, 5th Grade Math Teacher

Recipe Kale Salad

For the Salad

2 bunches dinosaur kale

2-3 T sunflower seeds
(other options: pepitas, walnuts)

1/4 c. dried fruit
(cherries, cranberries, raisins, or currents)

1/3 c. parmesan cheese

For the dressing

juice of 2 lemons

2 T olive oil

2 T honey

1/8 t salt

• Remove the kale stems and ribs from leaves. Slice into thin strips and place in a large bowl. • Juice lemons and combine with olive oil, honey, and salt in a jar. Shake to combine. • Toss kale with the dressing and use your fingers to gently massage the kale. • Massage the kale for 3-5 minutes, until the kale leaves begin to wilt, soften, and get darker in color. You should be able to see some kale juices coming out in the bowl. • Add sunflower seeds, dried fruit, and cheese. • Toss to coat. • ENJoy! •

The University of Alabama: Community

Not Just for Our Youngest Learners

There's something special about a group of college students dedicated to making a difference in their community.

Our partnership with The University of Alabama is central to our programming. Since our founding in 2010, UA students and faculty have been steadfast in their support and given thousands of hours to the community through Schoolyard Roots.

This exercise in experiential learning helps college students connect their education to real-world experiences, build character, and learn valuable skills.

The University of Alabama: Departments

While many areas of the University are involved with Schoolyard Roots, special recognition should be given to these departments:

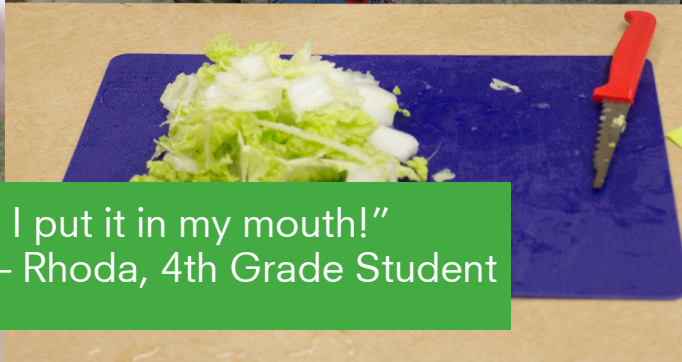
New College
The Honors College
The Department of Art & Art History
The College of Engineering
The College of Education
The Culverhouse College of Commerce
The Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility
The College of Community Health Sciences

"You can accomplish a lot with just a few people when you all work as a team."

- 4th Grade Student

Budding Entrepreneurs

In 2017, we partnered with the UA Honors College to teach the Let's Grow class. The class features Budding Entrepreneurs, a hands-on program which introduces 4th and 5th-grade students to entrepreneurship through planning and executing their very own farm stands. Through this partnership, 14 UA students provided over 50 hours of instruction across 5 of our partner elementary schools.



"The food tastes like magic when I put it in my mouth!"
– Rhoda, 4th Grade Student

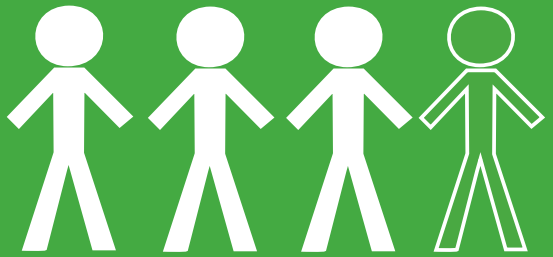
A Partner Teacher Says:

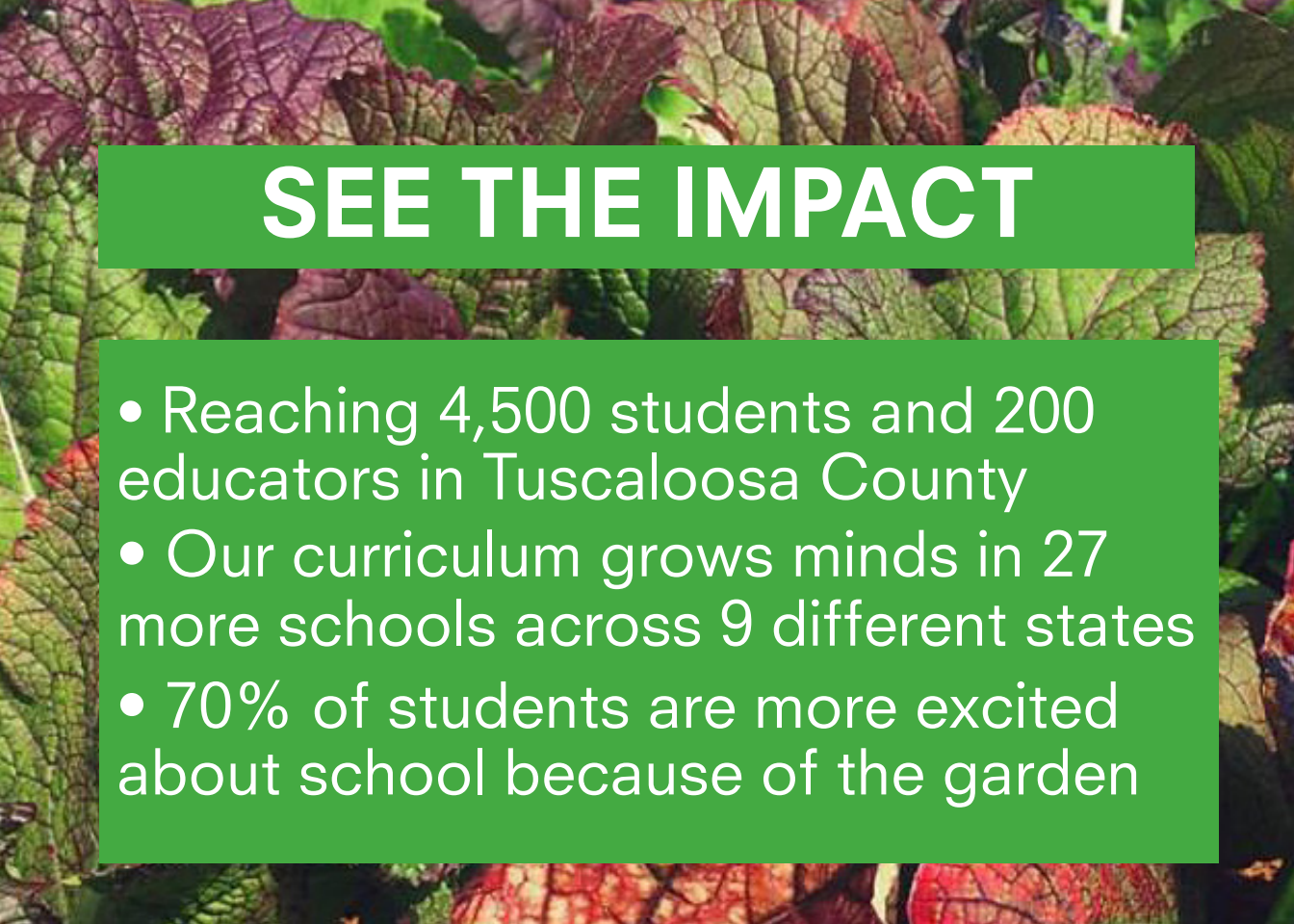
“Some of my most challenging students behaviorally calmed down and did academic work in the garden setting they would refuse to do in the classroom.”

Who Your Gifts Serve

58% Black
32% White
7% Hispanic
1% Asian
2% Other

76% receive free or reduced lunch





SEE THE IMPACT

- Reaching 4,500 students and 200 educators in Tuscaloosa County
- Our curriculum grows minds in 27 more schools across 9 different states
- 70% of students are more excited about school because of the garden

"I've seen upset students become calm, uninterested students become engaged, and scared students become brave."

-Kate Brundrett, Schoolyard Roots Instructor

Our Generous Sponsors

MedCenter North and South
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The Tuscaloosa News
Crimson2Go
Pearson Law Firm
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The Radiology Clinic
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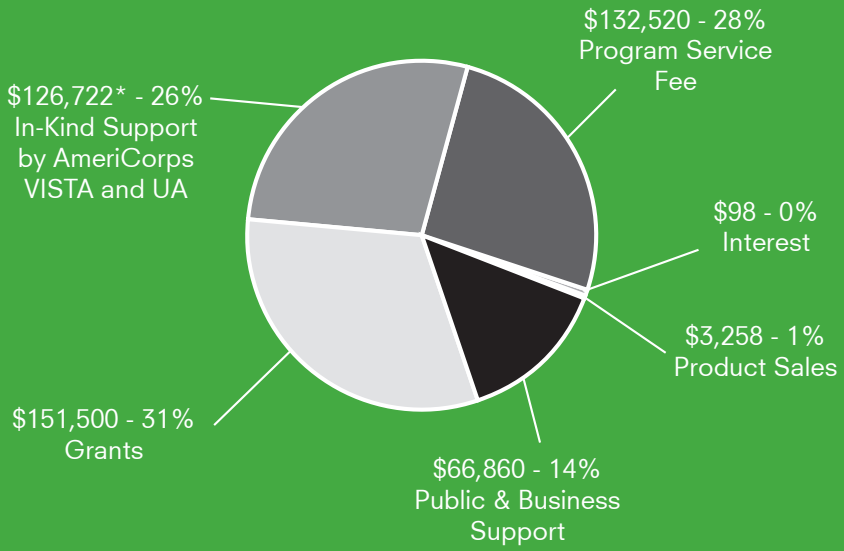
Keller Williams
Amason & Associates
Tuscaloosa General Dentistry
BankFirst
Morgan Stanley WHMZ Group
Cadence Bank
United Way of West Alabama
Innisfree Pub & Restaurant
Delview Properties
Capstone Bank
Progressive Properties
JamisonMoneyFarmer PC

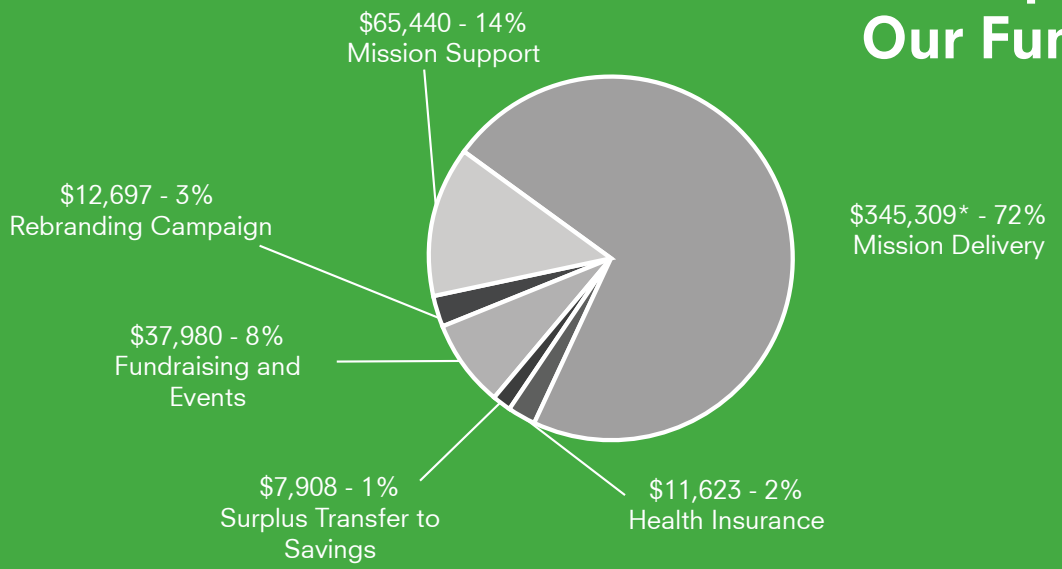
The Financials
$473k
Total Expenses
$481k
Total Income

Where Our Funds Came From



*The University of Alabama and AmeriCorps VISTA provide in-kind support of full-time paid Fellowship positions, part-time Work Study students, and compensation for SYR instructors teaching courses in UA departments.

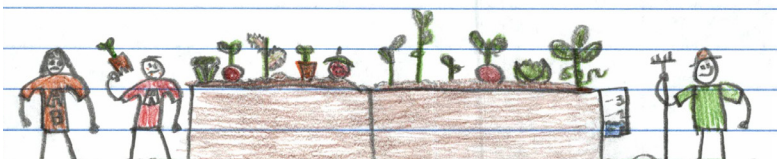
How We Spent Our Funds



*Reflects expenses incurred by The University of Alabama and AmeriCorps VISTA on SYR's behalf of full-time paid Fellowship positions, part-time Work Study students, and compensation for SYR instructors teaching courses in UA departments.

Dear Garden superhero,
Thank you for all the suplise we needed to plant the plants and thank you for the rake, shovel, water, and plant food, and plant seeds. And for the clean wet soil, and the boxes to put the soil in. I'm ready to plant.

Love,
Thomas V.



SCHOOLYARD ROOTS

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