



SCHOOLYARD
ROOTS

Growing gardens. Growing minds.

annual
report

— 2019 —

testimonial



"The school garden program creates a different opportunity of learning for my students that they would not experience due to a number of reasons. It increases their awareness of healthy choices, opportunities to try new things and share those things with their families. It also creates a real-world connection for several of my students with what they purchase and eat daily. **The school garden program is truly amazing in the learning opportunities that it provides ALL students."**

- Mrs. Mullins, Principal
University Place Elementary



what we do

Schoolyard Roots partners with Tuscaloosa-area elementary schools to bring learning to life through teaching gardens. By increasing access to locally-grown produce, we empower our community to make healthy and sustainable food choices.

our vision

Schoolyard Roots cultivates curiosity and connections through hands-on learning gardens. We engage communities with food and nature to inspire, delight, and bring classroom concepts to life.

We currently partner with 11
Tuscaloosa-area schools in both
City and County school districts:

Buhl Elementary

Central Elementary

Crestmont Elementary

Faucett-Vestavia Elementary

Flatwoods Elementary

Oakdale Elementary

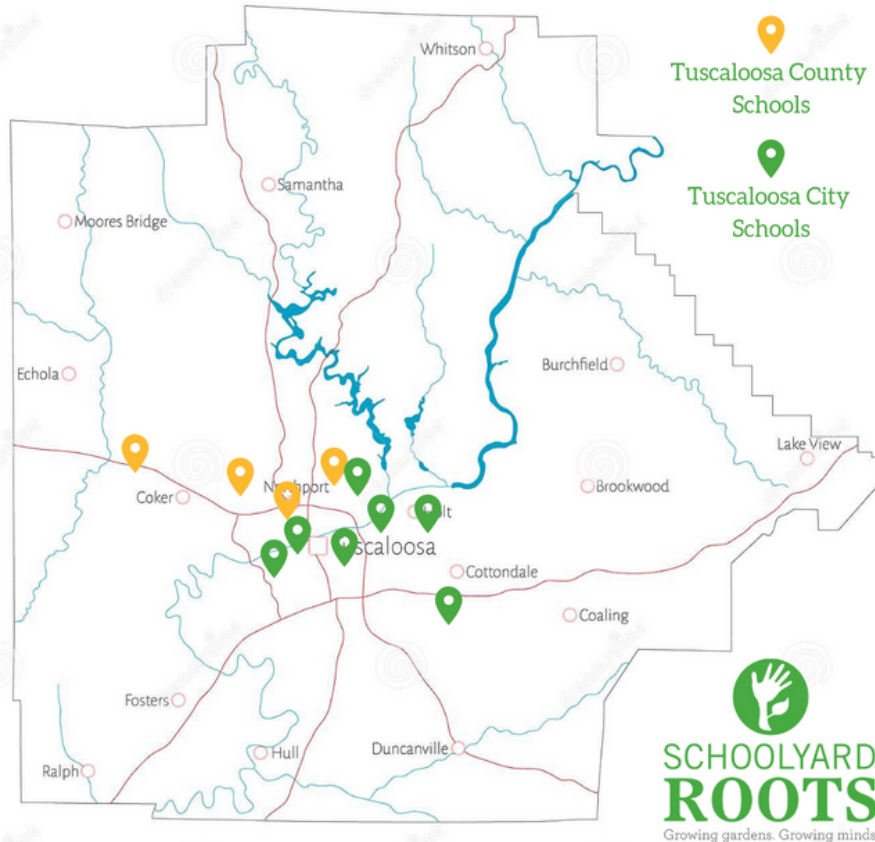
Tuscaloosa Magnet Schools-Elementary

Woodland Forrest Elementary

University Place Elementary

The Alberta School of Performing Arts

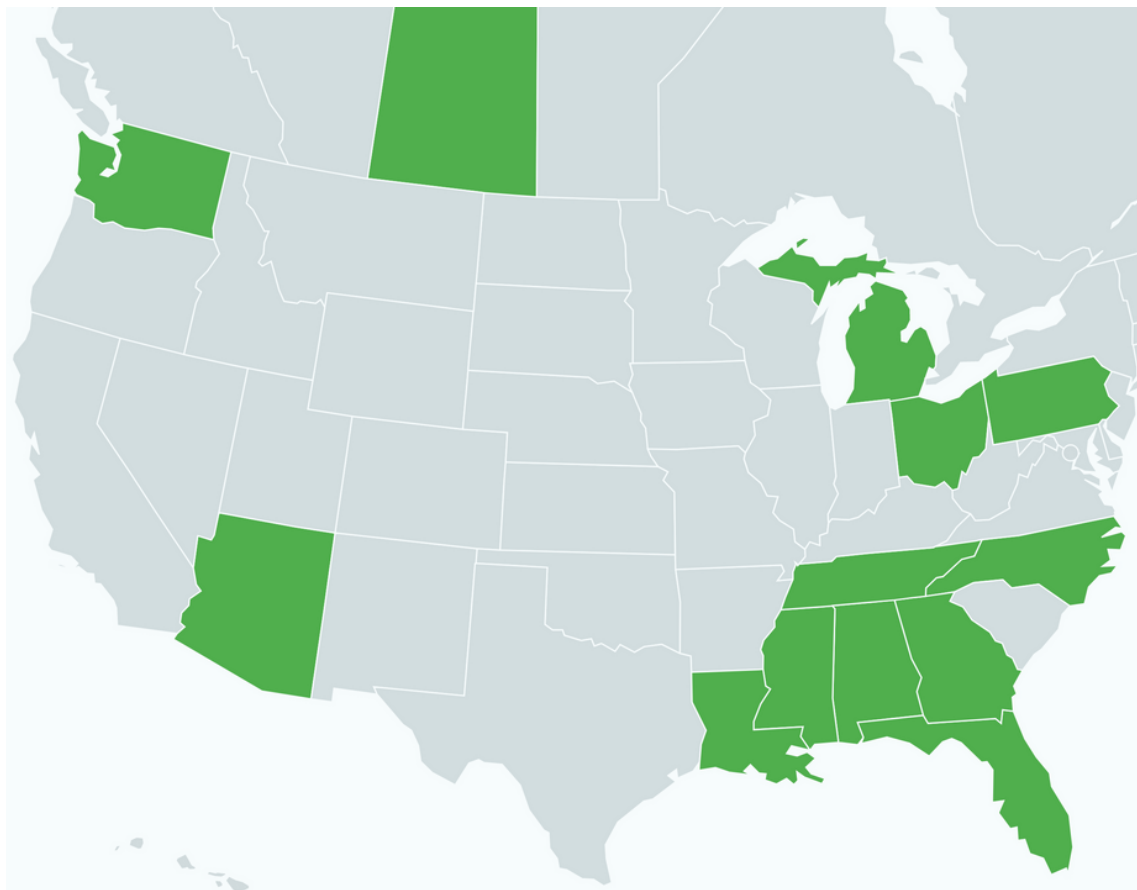
Verner Elementary



our curriculum

Our standards-based, K—5 curriculum has been purchased by over 35 programs in 12 states & 1 Canadian province!

This includes school districts, non-profit organizations, gardening programs, local ecologists, home-schooled families, and University Extension programs.



new additions to our team

In 2019, we welcomed Hannah Locke, our new Garden Educator, as well as 4 new AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows!



Hannah completed a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Castleton University. Her experience includes teaching preschool and second grade students, as well as being an Environmental Educator at Rock Eagle 4-H Center. She is excited to work with SYR and continue to grow as a gardener and share her love of the outdoors.



Zion Jones, Sustainability Fellow
Denver, Colorado



Elliott Smith, Development Fellow
Birmingham, AL



Taylor Walters, Gardens2Schools Fellow
Overland Park, Kansas



Laura Binford, PR & Marketing Fellow
Dothan, AL



"Students are making connections to the real world.

They want to share their knowledge and background of gardening. They look forward to being outside because they know they will have hands-on activities. It is something they look forward to every week."

- 4th Grade Teacher,
Verner Elementary

2018-2019 program snapshot



Students seen: **4,755**



Instructional hours: **1,054**



Lessons taught: **1,512**



Alabama State Standards: **48**



Produce harvested: **1,185 lbs.**



Money earned by schools
through farmstands: **\$967.25**



New Sheds & Outdoor Classroom!

In 2019, we were able to build a new shed at Oakdale Elementary and a new shed & outdoor classroom at Central Elementary, thanks to our fruitful partnership with Craig Wedderspoon and the kind folks at the UA Sculpture Department. Thanks to Craig and others, these gardens now have beautiful and functional storage and shaded areas for growing minds!

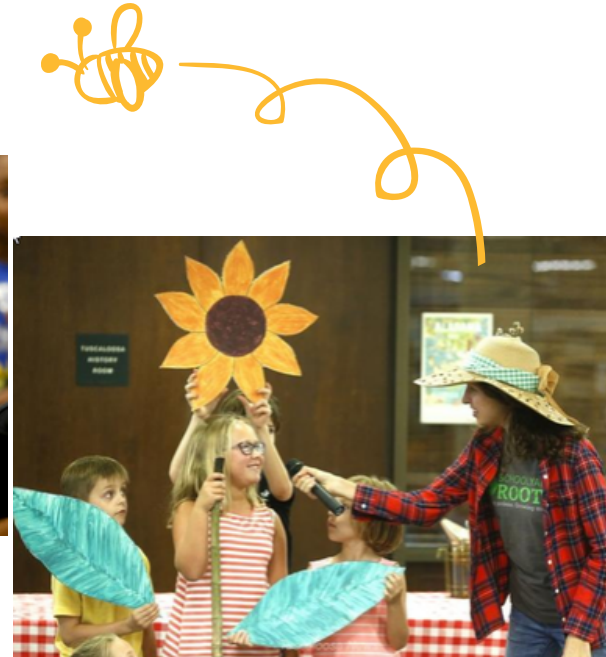
G2S VISTA Taylor Walters holds garden classes with 3rd grade in the new outdoor classroom at Central Elementary, September 2019.



Garden Educator Tom Rathe and 3rd grade students stand in front of new shed at Oakdale Elementary, Fall 2019.

Watch it, Don't Squash it!

This summer, Schoolyard Roots partnered with the Tuscaloosa Public Library to provide educational programming to over 500 children during the annual Summer Reading Program. SYR Staff focused on the benefits of our pollinator pals during an interactive program that ended with children singing along with "Old Pine Grove", a catchy, pollinator-centric rendition of "Old Town Road", written and performed by SYR Garden Educator and local musician, Tom Rathe.



new resource

The new Schoolyard Roots Guide to Cooking in the Classroom

In 2019, we published our official Guide to Cooking in the Classroom! Thanks to a generous grant from the Alabama Farm to School Program, we are able to offer this amazing resource as a free download on our website.

The guide includes 12 lessons plans, recipes and recipe cards, instructions and material lists for building your own Mobile Cooking Unit and all of our favorite tips and tricks picked up from thousands of hours cooking in the classroom!

Additionally, we were honored to be invited to present on our new guide at this year's Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network Food & Farm Forum!

THE SCHOOLYARD ROOTS GUIDE TO COOKING IN THE CLASSROOM



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after school programming

In the Fall of 2019, our staff offered two after-school programs at our partner schools:

Budding Entrepreneurs at Central Elementary, led by SYR Americorps VISTA member, Taylor Walters. Budding Entrepreneurs students learn the ins and outs of running a business through the lens of running their own farm stand. Students learn and practice cash-handling, marketing and promotions, product knowledge, and more.

Garden Leaders at Verner Elementary, led by SYR Garden Educator, Natalie Wulf. Garden Leaders get the opportunity to take on a leadership role in their school garden by helping with planting, weeding, composting, and more. Students get the chance to engage in special garden activities like tastings and beautification projects.





farm stands

This year, we harvested

1,185

pounds of produce!

Our kids raised

\$967.25

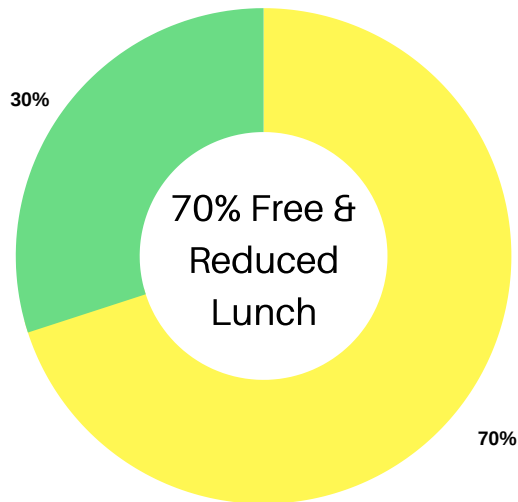
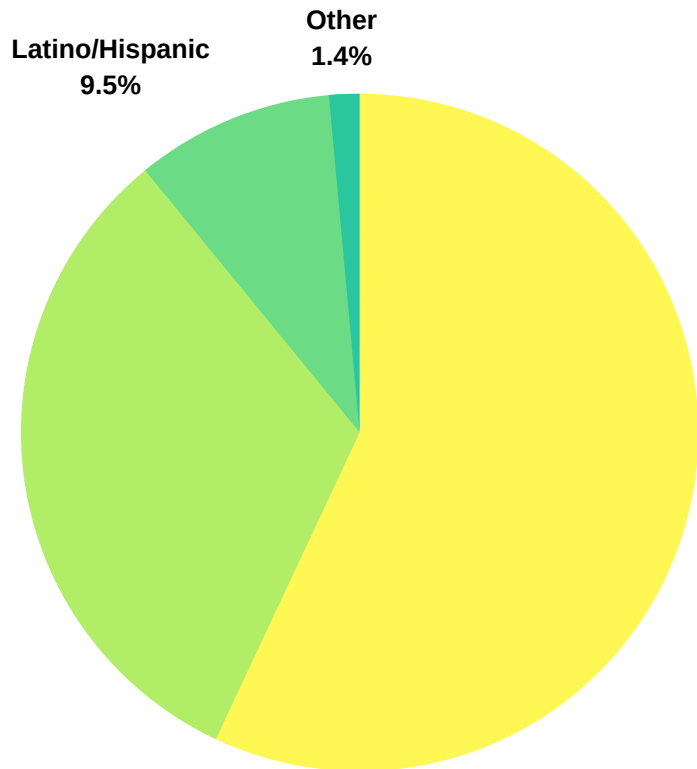
The money raised goes
directly back to schools!



98%

of teachers surveyed agree or strongly agree that the garden program improves their students' willingness to try new fruits and vegetables.

who we serve



African American
57%

Total Number of
Students:

4,755

our volunteers

this year we had

200

volunteers

which translates to over

980

hours of service!

Special thanks to:



Center for Service & Leadership
Serving Bama



University of Alabama partners

We are grateful that the University of Alabama (UA) is dedicated to investing in our community. Among our many campus partners, these departments deserve special recognition for going above and beyond this year in supporting the children and families we serve at **Schoolyard Roots**:

Center for Service and Leadership

Capstone Agency - Creative Campus

Circle K International

The College of Community Health Sciences

The College of Engineers

The Department of Art and Art History

Department of Student Involvement

The Honors College

New College

Student Environmental Council

Student Financial Aid - Work Study Program



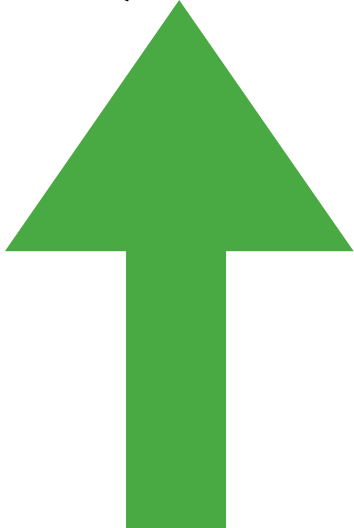
“I believe gardening teaches many things textbooks and lectures cannot.

My students have a much stronger sense of independence and have really reaped the rewards of a little hard work by tasting their own planted vegetables.”

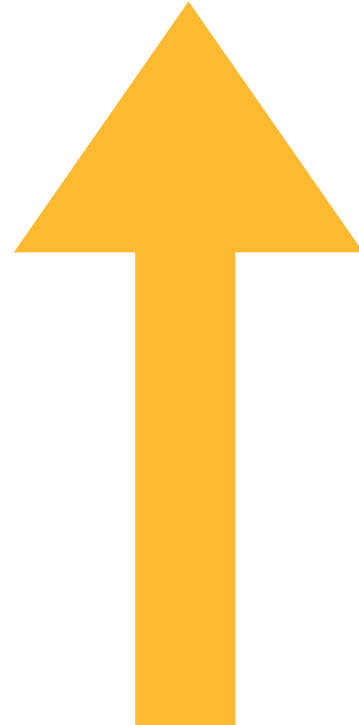
- 1st Grade Teacher, Woodland Forrest Elementary



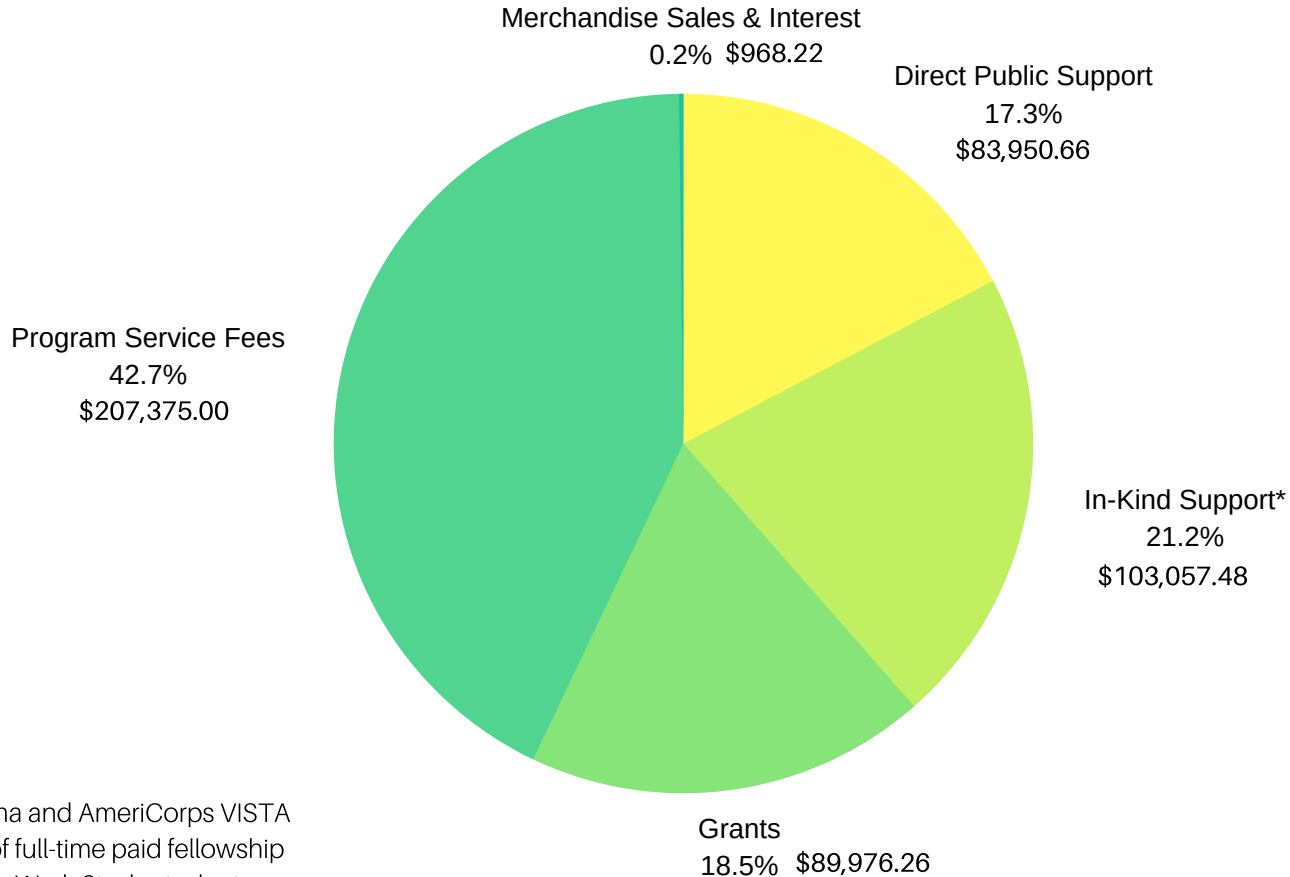
Expenses
\$337,520.14



Income
\$382,270.14

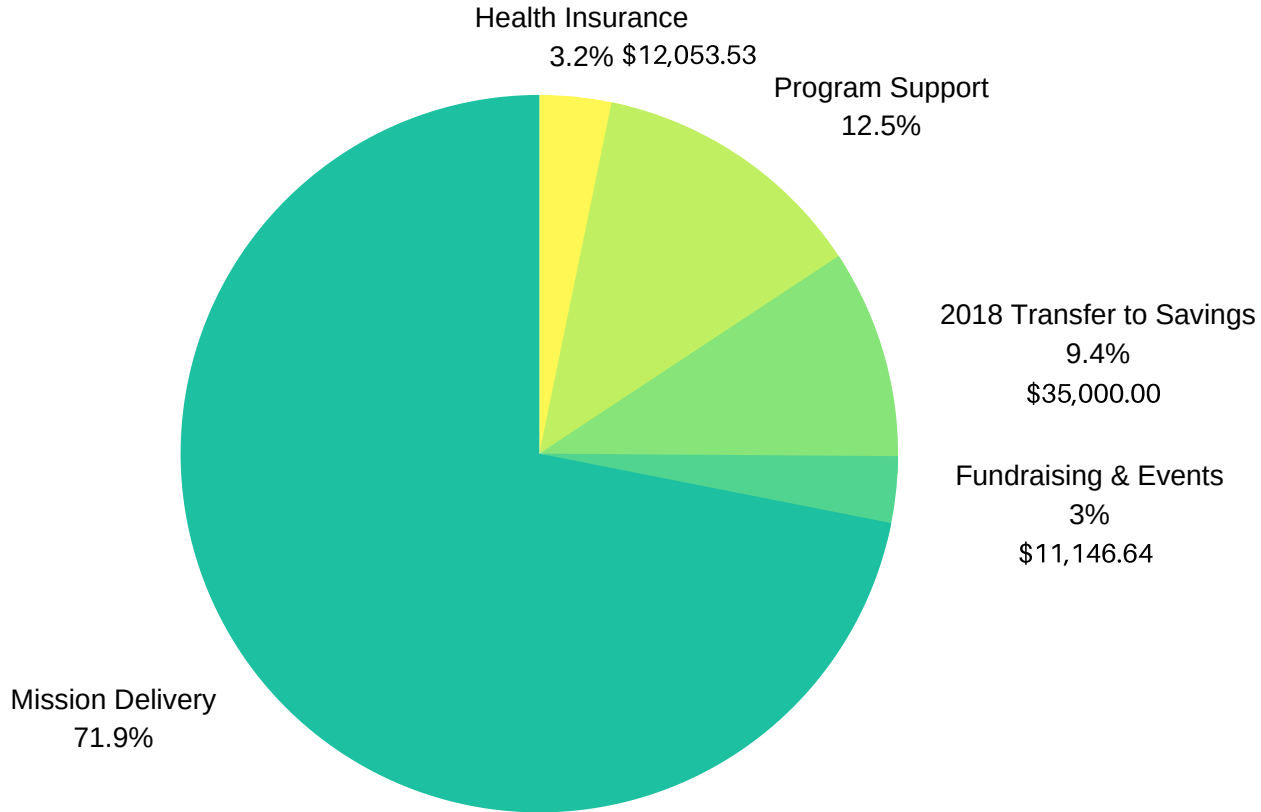


where our funds came from



*The University of Alabama and AmeriCorps VISTA provide in-kind support of full-time paid fellowship positions and part-time Work Study students

how we spent our funds



the garden party

28

local restaurants,
breweries &
bakeries

14

local farmers

160

local artists &
businesses

\$60,000

raised to help support our teaching gardens and programming in the coming year. Thank you to all of our amazing partners and donors who made the 8th Annual Garden Party our most successful to date!

the garden party



We could not have grown in 2019 without these amazing community partners!

Alabama ONE Credit Union

Alabama Public Radio

Amason & Associates

AnnMackay Young

Black Kow Compost

Drs. April & Ralph Lane

Bank First

Blue Cross Blue Shield - The Caring Foundation

Bryant Bank

Cade & April Warner

Cadence Bank

City of Tuscaloosa

Claire Friday

Clif Bar Family Foundation

The Community Foundation of West Alabama

Craig Wedderspoon

Crimson2Go

Delview Construction

Echols, Taylor & Associates, P.C.

Ellis Architects

Emily & Jack Leigh

Erik & Brooke Peterson

Erin Hisey

First Federal Bank

Fitts Agency

Fitts Architects

GI Associates of West Alabama

H.A. Edwards Inc. Real Estate

Hotel Indigo

Innisfree Irish Pub

Kathryn Bettis

Keller Williams Realty Tuscaloosa

Liberty Recycling

McAbee Construction Inc.

MedCenter Urgent Care

Morgan Stanley

National Christian Foundation of Alabama

Nick's Kids Foundation

Nucor Steel Tuscaloosa, Inc.

Parker Towing

Pat & William Patton

Peco Foods

Pritchett-Moore

Progressive Properties

Randall-Reilly

Raymond James

Reese Phifer, Jr. Memorial Foundation

Regions Bank

SmartBank

Spire Inc.

State Rep. Bill Poole

Steve Davis

Mr. & Mrs. Steven B Tucker

Sysco Central Alabama

The Jessica Marie Tooson Memorial Fund

The Nicholas Wilson Memorial Foundation

The Radiology Clinic

Toulmin Cabinetry & Design

Tuscaloosa Pediatric Dentistry

Tuscaloosa Tourism

UNFI Foundation

United Way of West Alabama

University Medical Center

US Department of Agriculture



96%

of teachers surveyed
agree or strongly
agree that the garden
program improves
their students'
enthusiasm for
learning.

a student favorite

GREEN SMOOTHIE

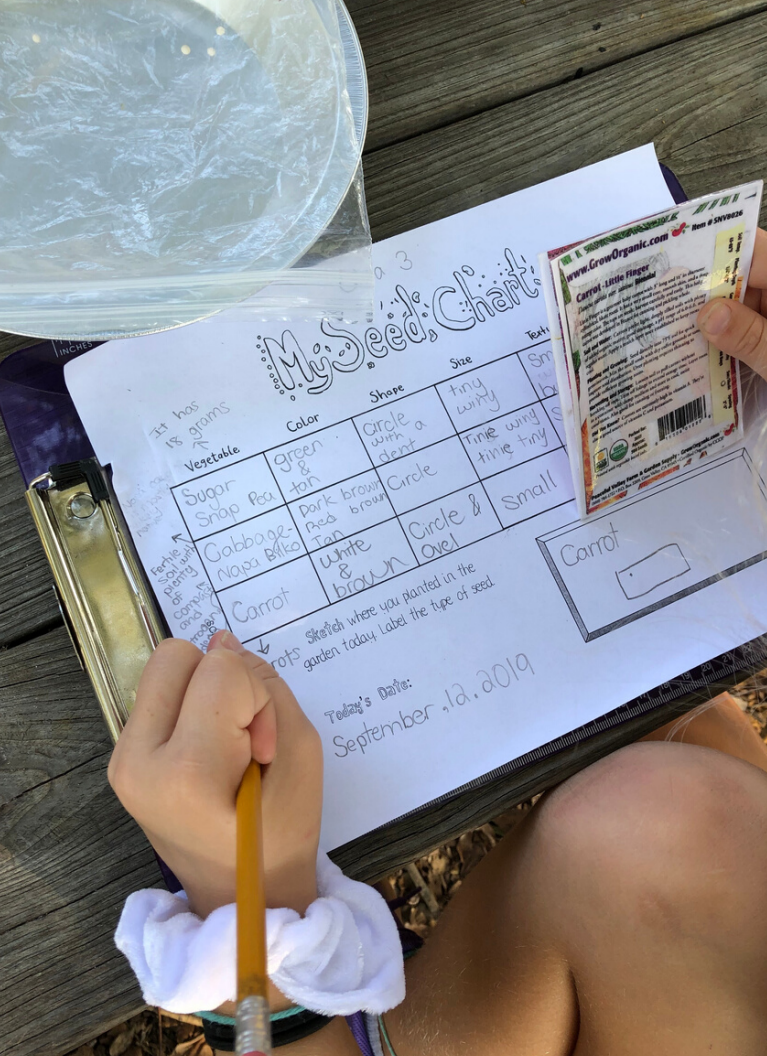
Ingredients

- 2 cups (or about 6 large leaves) green leafy vegetables, such as collards, kale, chard, spinach
- 1 cup apple juice
- 1 banana
- 1 cup frozen mango
- 1/2 cup vanilla yogurt (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. honey (optional)

Directions

1. Strip leaves from the stem and tear into smaller pieces
2. Place leaves in blender with apple juice
3. Blend until smooth
4. Add banana, mango, and optional ingredients
5. Blend until smooth
6. Serve and enjoy!





follow us!

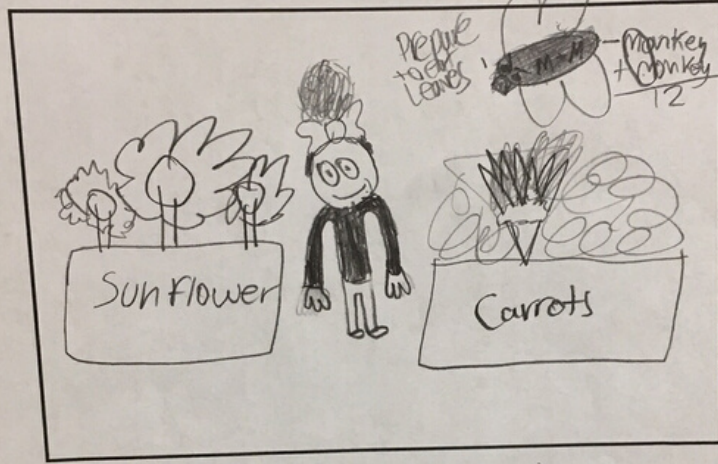
We're planting seeds for 2020
- our 10th year of growing
gardens, growing minds!

Follow us on social media to
see what we grow!



@schoolyardroots

This year in our school garden..



This year in our school garden I saw sunflowers and carrots and even pods and took care of bugs they had crickets and their were fish and a pond I liked the pods and the sunflowers I am excited to eat the carrots and pods its gonna be kinda new to me because i never seen an actual garden before maybe i could get away from my fear of bugs in the garden.



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P.O. Box 2374
Tuscaloosa, AL 35403
205.523.5450
schoolyardroots.org

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