

# GROWING PLACES GARDEN PROJECT



## Gratitude Report 2012



"I HAVE HAD A FANTASTIC TIME WITH THE GARDEN! MY SON IS ALWAYS SO EXCITED TO GO CHECK WHAT HAS GROWN AND WHAT WE CAN PICK. I HAVE HAD A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST THE WHOLE SEASON AND WAS LUCKY TO HAVE ALMOST EVERYTHING I PLANTED GROW. I AM ALREADY PLANNING OUT NEXT YEAR'S GARDEN!"

FIRST-YEAR GARDENER



**FANTASTIC FIRST YEAR!**  
First-year gardener Gloria Castano and her two sons, with their mentor, Carolyn Sellers



**BEVERLY'S GARDEN**  
A power garden helps this gardener build a power salad.

## A Dream Come True

Second-year gardener expands her beds and palate

"I'm a frustrated farmer at heart," said Beverly, a Fitchburg resident. New to gardening when she received her Growing Places garden in 2011, Beverly has now expanded her original, three raised beds with two more beds dedicated just to squash.

*Beverly and her son like squash.*

"I think I had about 30 winter squash," she said. "I have them down in my cellar on a rack. I went hog wild with butternut! Maybe next year I'll try acorn and Hokkaido squash."

*Beverly said having a garden was a dream come true.*

"I've always wanted to have a garden, but the whole thing was too overwhelming to me. I'd think, 'How do I get started? I don't even know what I'm doing.'"

When a friend told her about Growing Places and how they would help her get started, she said "instead of feeling 'I can't do this,' I thought, 'Oh, I can!'"

*Beverly understands that gardening is a learning process.*

"I could see that some plants were being overcrowded," she said. "I learned that less is more; that by spreading the plants out, they'll get more sun and more nutrition."

*She and her children even tried some new vegetables.*

"We ate the kale all summer long, and now I'm addicted to kale!" Beverly said. "Then I learned 101 new ways to prepare kale. There was a 'power salad' recipe with kale that we made everyday and I sent it [in] for the newsletter."

"My older son thought anything green was poisonous when he was growing up, and now he asks me to make the power salad. I just about fell over! I never thought I'd see the day he ate something green and healthy."

*But Beverly learned gardening is about more than just good nutrition.*

"Being outside and digging in the dirt is so good for you," she said. "We were just made to do that. It gives you such a good feeling. It makes you healthy because you are eating healthy food."

"I can definitely say that Growing Places got me going. I probably wouldn't be gardening now if I hadn't had some help."

# How YOU Made an Impact

## 2012 BY THE NUMBERS

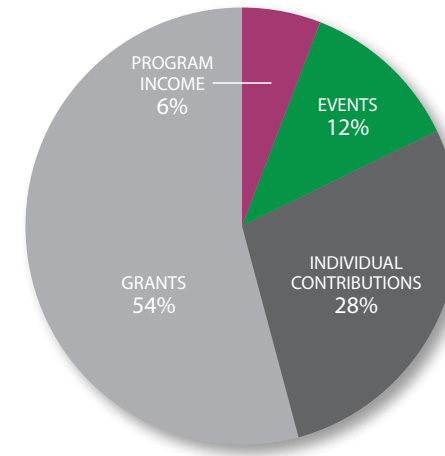
- 104 Raised beds installed
- 18 Container gardens installed
- 56 New gardens installed
- 225 New individuals benefit from gardens
- 3 School-based gardens in Fitchburg
- 3 Senior center gardens in Clinton, Lancaster & Leominster
- 4 Community gardens in Shirley, Fitchburg, Gardner & Leominster
- 100 Individual volunteers
- 60 Students participate in afterschool gardening program

## IMPACT IN DOLLARS

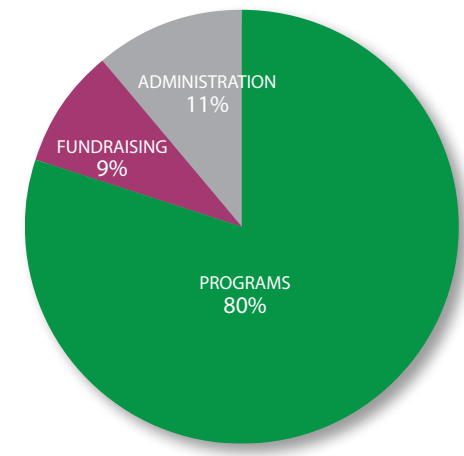
Small in size, big in reach.

YOUR dollars were put to good use again this year. In FY 2012 we generated \$155,213 in income and incurred \$147,898 in expenses to serve over 300 youth, adults and seniors. Thanks to the support of donors like YOU!

THESE FIGURES ARE BASED ON OUR INTERNAL ACCOUNTING RECORDS AND HAD NOT BEEN REVIEWED BY OUR ACCOUNTANTS AT THE TIME OF THIS PRINTING. OUR MOST RECENT 990'S AND A COMPLETE LISTING OF THE INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES, AND FOUNDATIONS WHO HAVE LENT THEIR TIME, TALENT AND TREASURES TO MAKE THIS WORK POSSIBLE, CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE [WWW.GROWINGPLACES.ORG](http://WWW.GROWINGPLACES.ORG)



INCOME



EXPENSES

## IMPACT OVER THE YEARS

Since our inception in 2001, we have installed gardens and provided support to over 1000 low-income people in the North Central region of Massachusetts. Working with thousands of volunteers and numerous partners, we have built gardens in backyards in Clinton, schoolyards in Fitchburg, a senior center deck in Leominster, a veteran's home in Gardner, and reclaimed lots in Fitchburg. Working in partnership with *Cooking Matters*®, we have offered gardening and nutrition programs to nearly one hundred school-aged children. **Together, we are changing lives through gardening.**



**"NOT EVERYONE AROUND HERE SPEAKS ENGLISH, SO IT'S A COMMON LANGUAGE... YOU SPEAK GARDEN!"**

GARDEN RECIPIENT & VOLUNTEER



"Gardening is definitely a get-back-to-nature thing. I feel silly in that I never knew broccoli was a flower that hasn't opened. After growing fresh basil, sage, rosemary and thyme, I don't think I'll ever use the powder version from the supermarket again. Picking beans, tomatoes, peppers and such is like a game. The more you look, the more you find!"

FIRST-YEAR COMMUNITY GARDENER



"I am looking forward to another summer of fresh vegetables to consume and share. This has been a boon to my economy and my health. Not only do I get fresh food – I get needed exercise in the great outdoors plus an abundance of God's Vitamin D."

SECOND-YEAR GARDENER

# Mentoring

The key to mentoring success?  
A passion for gardening and helping others.

A desire to help others and learn about raised- bed gardening prompted Laura Kischitz to volunteer for Growing Places after moving to Bolton. She wanted a garden herself, but because her backyard was full of ledge, she wasn't sure she could have one.

“What we learned as a family on the Growing Places’ garden builds, we replicated here at home,” Laura said. “We built four raised beds and a double-raised bed for asparagus.”

## “THE REWARDS OF DOING THIS FAR EXCEEDED MY EXPECTATIONS.”

LAURA KISCHITZ, VOLUNTEER MENTOR

be a mentor; I just liked growing organic food for my family and playing around in my garden.

“I’m no master gardener, [but] Donna, in a neighborly way, roped me in to stepping up my commitment.”

Laura’s neighbor, Donna, who got involved with Growing Places after admiring Laura’s beds, eventually turned to Laura to encourage her to be a garden mentor.

“My husband and I and our two boys had been building and installing beds for about four or five years,” Laura said. “I didn’t believe I was good enough to



**JOYFUL GARDEN**  
These gardens gave joy to mentor and family alike!

In her first year, Laura mentored two families. This past season, she mentored Ray and Monika, a father and his adult daughter who live in a duplex in Clinton.

“Monika and Ray were so excited to grow their own food. They became interested in having a garden because one of Monika’s children had an allergic reaction to pesticides and chemicals in food,” explains Laura. “Over the summer we were sharing recipes. When I went back to deliver garlic I had my dad with me. He and Ray just hit it off. Monika and I are planning a play date for them! My intention is to continue this relationship.”

Laura encourages others who love gardening to consider mentoring.

“The rewards of doing this far exceeded my expectations,” she said. “Providing healthy nutritional food to families in need was very significant. I didn’t expect to feel that joy.”

# Building & Growing with Volunteers



THOSE WHO BRING SUNSHINE TO THE LIVES OF OTHERS CANNOT KEEP IT FROM THEMSELVES.

JAMES MATTHEW BARRIE

## GROWING PLACES GARDEN PROJECT



Growing Places provides vegetable gardens, mentoring and educational support to low-income individuals and communities to help them realize the social, economic and health benefits of growing their own food.

Our gardens are:

- Customized based on the dietary needs and preferences
- Environmentally friendly and designed to conserve water and be maintained without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides
- Intended to grow enough produce for a 1– 4 person household

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