

FOOD WHAT?!



**“The farm – being outside – helps me clear my mind
from anything I’ve gone through.”**

- Alejandro, FoodWhat Crew 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

NUMBER SERVED

- 98** youth served through our core programs
- 292** family and community members served by food access points
- 250** local students attended our farm-based educational event



EMPOWERMENT METRICS

- 100%** of FoodWhat youth shared they created a **supportive community**.
- 95%** of FoodWhat youth shared they gained useful **job skills**.
- 86%** of FoodWhat youth shared they were **eating healthier**.
- 86%** of FoodWhat youth shared they felt empowered to **make change**.
- 86%** of FoodWhat youth shared being outside improved their **mental health**.

FOOD ACCESS

Healthy Food Distributed:

7,081 lbs

Nourishing Meals
Consumed by Youth:

2,251

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Youth Earned Income:

\$195,549



SPRING INTERNSHIP

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION



The FoodWhat program is a specialized, paid youth empowerment program that operates along the farming cycle each year. The first season of our program, the Spring Internship, sets out to lay a foundation of powerful experience for youth in the areas of healthy food, meaningful work, personal growth, mental health, and environmental connectedness. Youth built this foundation through organic farming, culinary arts, making and eating healthy meals, relevant workshops,

and community building. Additionally, during the Pajaro Valley flood, youth cooked warm meals for impacted community members. FoodWhat youth who were impacted themselves received crisis cash assistance from FoodWhat as well.

"I feel more committed now since I'm working. I feel like I need to do it because I want to support my family with finances, so I feel more committed to do the work. This is my first job."

Raul, FoodWhat Crew 2023

BIG EXPANSION.

This Spring, we worked with a whopping 98 youth! This is a 33% increase from last year.

For the last several years, we've received nearly twice as many applications than we have available spots and experienced an even sharper increase this year. In an effort to meet

this clearly demonstrated need, we expanded our organization to work with more youth. This expansion included creating two new staff positions: the Farm Manager (Kellee Matsushita-Tseng) and the Farm to Food Manager (David Antonio Robles). These staff members have allowed us to expand the number of youth served while seriously increasing the breadth and depth of our offerings on the farm and in the kitchen. We also launched new alumni youth roles, including the Farm to Food Assistant and Affordable Farm Stand Coordinator.

33% INCREASE IN YOUTH



"My biggest accomplishment was learning how to farm because farming can be really hard, especially if you're not having fun while you're farming. I have waaaay more respect for people who farm every day. I look up to them. You're doing it and it's hard, but you're still doing it."

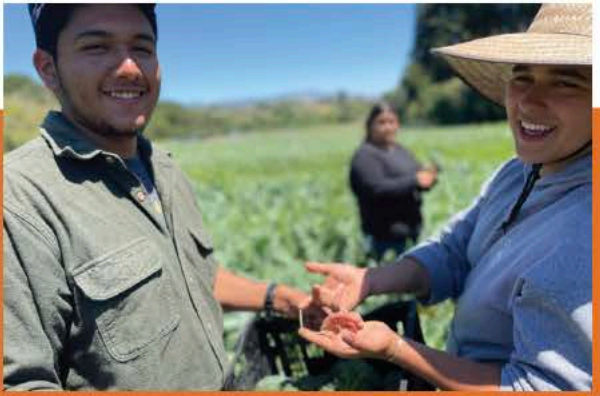
Rayna, FoodWhat Crew 2023

SUMMER JOB TRAINING

DIGGING DEEP

The second season of our program, Summer Job Training, is the period where youth engage in the most intensive growing, learning and training alongside one another. While continuing to farm, cook, eat, and learn, youth also power food access and environmental stewardships projects. Projects include:

- **Family Produce Box and Meal Kits:** weekly produce boxes youth assembled with produce they grew and accompanying cooking ingredients. They used this food during our online cooking classes.
- **Affordable Farm Stand:** healthy food distribution at PVUSD's Wellness Center.
- **Garden BLASTs:** stewardship of school and community gardens.



"How did I grow this summer? I feel like if I was like a light, it got brighter. I stopped shying away from whoever I am. Stopped closing myself up as much as I did before. I'm not imprisoning myself with everything."

Champ, FoodWhat Crew 2023

CULINARY SHARPENS FOCUS.

As we grow and deepen, our culinary offerings have been taken to the next level in service of youth as they develop relationships with healthy food. As a result of our expansion, we created new recipes, upgraded our culinary learning environment, and added new learning opportunities in the kitchen.

"This summer has helped my mental health. I had an open mind for everything at FoodWhat. I feel a lot more happier than I was before. Definitely from being outdoors, and being with friends, having a good time. I loved it."

Juanito, FoodWhat Crew 2023

FARM ROOTS DEEPEN.

As a result of our recent expansion, we now have a Farm Manager who's sole focus is around creating meaningful ways for youth to connect with the land and grow organic food. This deepening of focus has strengthened the experiential learning that takes place on the farm, our ability to grow culturally-relevant foods, and the number of opportunities youth have to connect with each other through meaningful work with the land.

FALL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

YOUTH POWER IN ACTION. Our third and final season, Fall Project Management, is where youth apply the skills, knowledge, and self-confidence they've cultivated all year to lead projects related to organic farming, food access, entrepreneurship, and community education. We held our Harvest Festival, which connects hundreds of local students to our farm and nonprofit organizations. We doubled our Flower Business clients this year. Not only did youth grow and prepare flowers to go into bouquets, they outreached to local businesses, secured new clients, and delivered bouquets to clients in an effort to build relationships. Finally, FoodWhat youth led our Community Educators project by delivering FoodWhat workshops in schools.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONNECTEDNESS. By developing knowledge and skills in the organic farming world, FoodWhat youth experience a unique connection to our environment as students, stewards, and agents of change. This Fall, they built on their connection to the land and the environment by kayaking at Moss Landing, tide pooling in Monterey, and hiking in Nisene Marks. Through these experiences and their time on the farm, youth develop relationships with the outdoor world based on ancestral knowledge, cultural rootedness, and the ethics of environmental justice.

GROWING TOGETHER. Through the entire year, youth co-created safe spaces of belonging where they engaged their minds, bodies, and spirits in ways that resonated most with them while connecting deeply to the land. Through these physical spaces, purposeful experiences, and deep relationships, youth began to unpack their wounds and heal, and cultivated their agency and identity, leading to self-determination and well-being.



"I'm eating more vegetables. I used to be really picky about vegetables. I was like, 'hmmm,' if it looked funny. Like I've never tried eggplant. But since we got eggplants (through the Family CSA), me and my sister just put them in the oven and they got a little roasted and it was really good."

Jadet, FoodWhat Crew 2023

"Something that I accomplished and that I've been working on for the longest time was being more social. I managed to make more friends, and I managed to talk a lot more with more people that I don't know, especially being introverted. It's difficult for me to open up and speak to other people. And FoodWhat has helped me understand that not all people are going to be judgemental against you. It feels incredible."

Inez, FoodWhat Crew 2023



FINANCIAL REPORT



INCOME - \$1,554,000

- Foundation Grants **27%**
- Government Grants & Contracts **23%**
- Donor Advised Funds **22%**
- Corporate Grants & Donations **19%**
- Individual Donations **9%**

EXPENSES - \$1,236,828

- Program - **63%**
- Youth Salaries & Stipends - **16%**
- Fundraising - **12%**
- Administration - **9%**



Please note, most of our budget surplus consists of multi-year grants which are recorded this year, but earmarked for next year.

OUR MISSION

"Food, What?!" is a youth empowerment and food justice organization. At FoodWhat, youth engage in relationships with land, food and each other in ways that are grounded in love and rooted in justice. We provide meaningful space where youth define and cultivate their empowerment, liberation and well-being.

**Thank you for another year
of powerful support!**

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