

**TEENS  
GROW  
GREENS**



**Internship Triannual Report  
June - August 2022**

**Leading For Justice:  
Food Sovereignty & Urban Gardening**



## September 2022

### Greetings!

This summer internship led not only to hundreds of pounds of fresh produce but also to increased connections, self-discovery and curricular discovery, and immediate impact in the Milwaukee community.

*Leading for Justice* aimed for a balance of labor and learning in an attempt to put the interns' dirty hands into a larger context: food justice. Dominic remembers telling them that the minute they put their hands into the soil on the first day, they were participating in the food justice movement. In all our labor and learning, then, with every mantra of *In Lak'ech* (p. 8), we were connecting, in our own small ways, to the legacy of Latino and Filipino farm workers (p. 6), indigenous agriculture practices, and even further back to the creation of this land when, as the Iriquois people tell it, Skywoman fell onto the Turtle's back (p. 10).

Interns learned about the American food system and alternative food systems like polyculture and companion planting, foraging and herbalism, and put their knowledge to use at Westlawn Gardens, where they planted their own raised beds as well as production beds for the community; at the Ultimate Farm Collaborative, where they planted a hoop house filled with okra, tomatoes, eggplant, and much more for Afghan refugee families; and at 6th & Howard, where they tended herbs in The Nest, field veggies at P3 Farm, and a new labyrinth planted by the Cottonwood School.

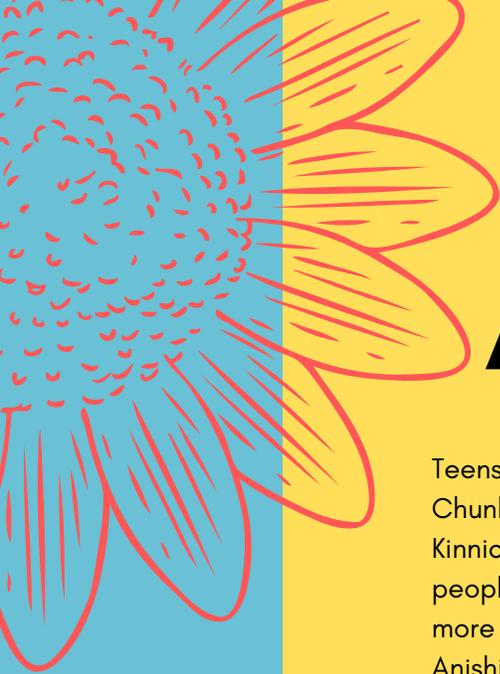
Our Education Apprentices Shakiya and Elysium taught their first leadership lessons in preparation for our new program called Mids Grow Greens, a four-day experience for middle school students led by the Interns (p. 9). We know what we need to do to make next summer's program even more fun and meaningful, but this year's was still a valuable (and tiring!) experience.

There's still so much more to harvest: food on the Northside and reflections on our part. We can't wait to share both with the community and our TGG team.

**Sincerely,**

**Dominic Inouye, Paula Lovo, & Ryan Smith  
Internship Team**





# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Teens Grow Greens acknowledges that we work on traditional Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, and Menominee homeland where the Milwaukee, Menominee, and Kinnickinnic rivers meet. We acknowledge that this land has also been home to the people of the Ojibwe, Odawa, Fox, Sauk, and Oneida nations and that today more than 7,000 Milwaukee residents identify as Native. We honor the Anishinaabe and Algonquin words that gave Milwaukee its name meaning “good land” or “gathering place,” and who, nonetheless, lived through and survived the harms colonialism inflicted upon them.

We honor the ancestral inhabitants and commit to the stewardship of this good land as we seed, grow, and harvest food with our young interns and apprentices. *In their memory, we pledge to sustain our work with youth toward our vision of healed and healthy humans leading change in their communities.*

We also acknowledge that Milwaukee has been, since its beginning, a city of refugees and immigrants. In fact, many of the Indigenous tribes that lived on the land before the French fur traders arrived were refugees pushed westward by colonizers. German immigrants were joined by Poles, British, Irish, Italians, Scandinavians, Serbs, Russian Jews, African Americans, Hispanics, and Latin Americans. More recently, Milwaukee is home to Somalis, Rohingya, Eritreans, Burmese, Russians, Hmong, Indians, Saudis, and other immigrants. We embrace our city’s growing diversity but condemn the historically racist policies of redlining and unfair housing and the “urban renewal” projects that displaced thousands of Black, Latinx, and Native residents, which exacerbated the segregation and inequities that still exist today. Finally, we celebrate the Milwaukee abolitionists who, in defiance of the Fugitive Slave Act, helped more than 100 slaves like Caroline Quarlls and Joshua Glover escape to freedom in Canada between 1842 and 1861. The Samuel Brown Farm near the present-day Alice’s Garden was a major stop on the Underground Railroad.

As we work with our young interns and apprentices to develop the tools necessary to live healthy, financially secure, and creative lives, we honor those who did and continue to do the difficult work to dismantle racism and embrace diversity and equity in our city. *In their memory, we pledge to sustain our work with youth toward our vision of healed and healthy humans leading change in their communities.*

# 100% of Interns

feel somewhat or extremely confident in their ability to "lead a life of food justice" for themselves, their families, and their communities

Food justice is a combination of education, resourcefulness, collaboration, and mindfulness. It means knowing the history, causes, and effects of food injustice and food production, leading all the way back to corporations and systemic problems, then using what you know to...work with your community to provide healthy foods.

**Hannah Turcin**

Food justice is growing, nurturing, and eating the foods *you* plant, getting the nutrients from them.

**Journey Starks**

For me, "leading for justice" meant being able to plant and tend to food and herbs that would be used by people in the community.

**Guinevere Hoerig**

Leading for justice means growing plants for the community and learning new things about how growing vegetables and fruits is part of the change.

**DeMarco Roberts**

# 92% of Interns

report that they have increased their understanding of the American food system versus alternative food systems



# 56 high school applicants

22 total  
Northside  
interns  
hired

20 total  
Southside  
interns  
hired

including 10  
new hires

including 14  
new hires

68%  
completion  
rate\*

75%  
completion  
rate\*\*

50%  
of summer Interns  
continued on  
to Internship 2!

\* due to competing job,  
transportation, or  
attendance issues

\*\* due to college,  
transportation, sports, or  
attendance issues

# 21 high schools represented:



**Atlas Prep**  
**Augustine Prep**  
**Bradley Tech**  
**Carmen Northwest**  
**Carmen South**  
**Cristo Rey Jesuit**  
**El Puente**  
**Hamilton**  
**Holy Redeemer**  
**Homeschool**  
**Messmer**  
**Milwaukee Academy of Science**  
**Milwaukee Excellence Charter**  
**Milwaukee School of Languages**  
**Pathways**  
**Pius XI**  
**Reagan**  
**Riverside**  
**Rufus King**  
**Shorewood**  
**West Allis Central**

# ISANG BAGSAK

## The Story of the Unity Clap

On May 3, 1965, Filipino grape farm workers in Coachella, California, struck until they received a 40-cent raise to \$1.40/hr. The strike eventually moved to Delano.

On September 8, 1965, Filipinos in the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), led by Larry Itliong, walked out of the Delano grape vineyards and were joined one week later by Chicanos in the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. The two unions became the United Farm Workers.

At the end of their group meetings, farm workers—who could not understand each other’s language—would do a unity clap that would start slow, then grow faster, stronger, and louder until someone cried out “Isang Bagsak!” (ee-SUNG bawg-SAK), Tagalog for “One Down!”, to signal a unified front, to fall and rise together. Isang Bagsak originated in the Philippines as an anti-martial law chant.

The strike lasted 5 years and gained national attention with its grassroots efforts: consumer boycotts, marches, community organizing, and nonviolent resistance.

In July 1970, the strike resulted in a collective bargaining agreement between workers and grape owners which affected more than 10,000 workers.

**1 month**  
of food systems  
lessons

**6**  
Apprentice-led  
leadership  
lessons

**8 weeks**  
lessons from  
The Cottonwood  
School

**Daily**  
lunch cooked  
by Southside  
interns

**Weekly**  
Fresh Friday  
lunches cooked  
by Northside  
interns

**1**  
hoop house  
planted for  
Afghan refugee  
families

**200 ft**  
of raised beds  
planted for  
Westlawn  
Gardens

**6**  
raised beds  
planted by and  
for interns

**Guests**  
including  
Will Allen &  
Charlie Koenen

**500 lbs**  
of fresh produce  
harvested and distributed  
to Westlawn Gardens  
community since mid-July!



*This poem became our mantra at the beginnings  
of most of our meetings this summer, often  
accompanied by a Unity Clap (p. 6).*

# IN LAK'ECH

**Mayan-inspired poem “Pensamiento Serpentino”  
by Luis Valdez**

In Lak'ech

*Tú eres mi otro yo.*

You are my other me.

*Si te hago daño a ti,*

If I do harm to you,

*Me hago daño a mi mismo.*

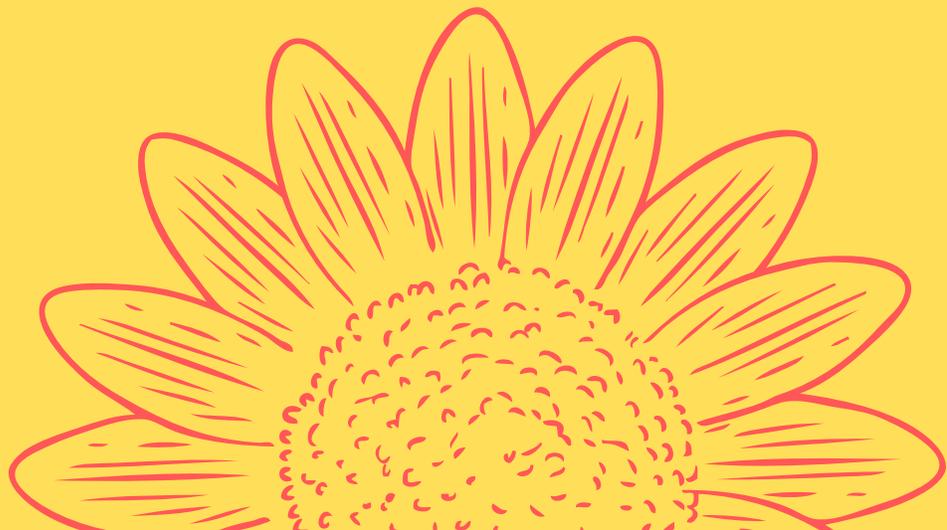
I do harm to myself.

*Si te amo y respeto,*

If I love and respect you,

*Me amo y respeto yo.*

I love and respect myself.





# MIDS GROW GREENS

We inaugurated our summer experience for middle school students that was led by summer Interns. All lessons and activities connected to themes of identity, voice, gardening, and community action. Almost 50 students registered! Although we ran into some snags (including COVID), we all had fun, cooked and crafted together, and walked away knowing how to better prepare next year!



# GREEN & HEALTHY SCHOOLS CONFERENCE

This year, we registered *all* of our Interns for the 6th annual conference, held at Vincent High School this year. Interns spread the word about TGG, learned about dozens of organizations throughout the state, and a group of Interns inspired by ACE (Action for the Climate Emergency) jumped on a bus the next day to protest in Madison!



*This ancient Iriquois story about the creation of what is now called North America established the kind of relationship we want with the earth.*



# SKYWOMAN

**As retold in Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants  
by Robin Wall Kimmerer**

In the beginning there was the Skyworld.

She fell like a maple seed, pirouetting on an autumn breeze.\* A column of light streamed from a hole in the Skyworld, marking her path where only darkness had been before. It took her a long time to fall. In fear, or maybe hope, she clutched a bundle tightly in her hand.

Hurling downward, she saw only dark water below. But in that emptiness there were many eyes gazing up at the sudden shaft of light. They saw there a small object, a mere dust mote in the beam. As it grew closer, they could see that it was a woman, arms outstretched, long black hair billowing behind as she spiraled toward them.

The geese nodded at one another and rose together from the water in a wave of goose music. She felt the beat of their wings as they flew beneath to break her fall. Far from the only home she'd ever known, she caught her breath at the warm embrace of soft feathers as they gently carried her downward. And so it began.

The geese could not hold the woman above the water for much longer, so they called a council to decide what to do. Resting on their wings, she saw them all gather: loons, otters, swans, beavers, fish of all kinds. A great turtle floated in their midst and offered his back for her to rest upon. Gratefully, she stepped from the goose wings onto the dome of his shell. The others understood that she needed land for her home and discussed how they might serve her need. The deep divers among them had heard of mud at the bottom of the water and agreed to go find some.

Loon dove first, but the distance was too far and after a long while he surfaced with nothing to show for his efforts. One by one, the other animals offered to help—Otter, Beaver, Sturgeon—but the depth, the darkness, and the pressures were too great for even the strongest of swimmers. They returned gasping for air with their heads ringing. Some did not return at all. Soon only little Muskrat was left, the weakest diver of all. He volunteered to go while the others looked on doubtfully. His small legs flailed as he worked his way downward and he was gone a very long time.

They waited and waited for him to return, fearing the worst for their relative, and, before long, a stream of bubbles rose with the small, limp body of the muskrat. He had given his life to aid this helpless human. But then the others noticed that his paw was tightly clenched and, when they opened it, there was a small handful of mud. Turtle said, “Here, put it on my back and I will hold it.”

Skywoman bent and spread the mud with her hands across the shell of the turtle. Moved by the extraordinary gifts of the animals, she sang in thanksgiving and then began to dance, her feet caressing the earth. The land grew and grew as she danced her thanks, from the dab of mud on Turtle’s back until the whole earth was made. Not by Skywoman alone, but from the alchemy of all the animals’ gifts coupled with her deep gratitude.

Together they formed what we know today as Turtle Island, our home.

Like any good guest, Skywoman had not come empty-handed. The bundle was still clutched in her hand. When she toppled from the hole in the Skyworld she had reached out to grab onto the Tree of Life that grew there. In her grasp were branches—fruits and seeds of all kinds of plants. These she scattered onto the new ground and carefully tended each one until the world turned from brown to green. Sunlight streamed through the hole from the Skyworld, allowing the seeds to flourish. Wild grasses, flowers, trees, and medicines spread everywhere. And now that the animals, too, had plenty to eat, many came to live with her on Turtle Island.

**96% of Interns**  
feel somewhat or extremely  
confident that they could start  
their own gardens

I'd like to tell next year's  
Interns that they're  
going to enjoy the pride  
they get when they see  
their plants grow before  
their eyes!

**Chanaya Benson**

Working at the gardens  
has been a really  
transformative  
experience. It's truly  
relaxing to disconnect  
from society for a few  
hours and really  
become one with the  
soil in the gardens.

**Ace Frederksen**

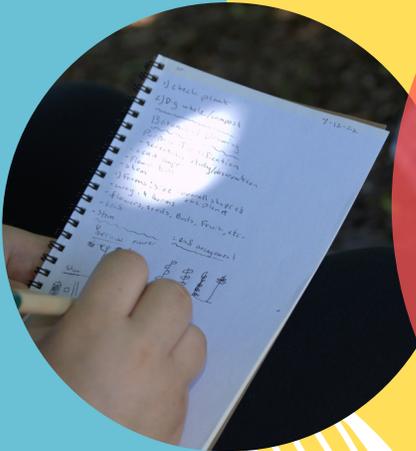
I gained community skills and I  
found my voice, because I was  
really an introvert and I liked  
sticking to myself, but when I  
met friends that worked with  
me, that gave me motivation to  
come out my shell and have my  
voice heard more.

**Jazhyia Handy**

I gained gardening  
skills and mental  
skills like patience.

**Fatima Abdallah**

**88% of Interns**  
report that their confidence in  
themselves as facilitators has  
increased



# Special thanks to our partners . . .

Ascension All Saints Family Care Center  
BeeVangelists  
Cottonwood School  
El Puente High School  
Escuela Verde  
Green & Healthy Schools Conference  
Northwest Fresh Food Access Council  
People Power Produce  
Silver Spring Neighborhood Center  
TransCenter for Youth  
Ultimate Farm Collective  
Westlawn Gardens Community Gardens

# . . . and friends.

Katie Boland  
Laura Brusky  
Francis Graf  
Lynn Klipstine  
Charlie "Charbee" Koenen  
Marvin Martin  
Lisa Neeb  
"Nurse Jenny" Ovide  
Sandy Short  
Jordan Steiner  
Adelle White  
James Wilbern  
Paul Williams  
Deven Zender



# Welcome to the fall entrepreneurship Interns!



[teensgrowgreens.org](https://teensgrowgreens.org)