

# TEENS GROW GREENS



*Arafah (2024 Intern in The Kitchen: Healthy Choices and Culinary Training Internship), cooking a Tofu Stir Fry.*

2023 - 2024

# IMPACT REPORT



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

How much do we change? How much do we stay the same? Ten years ago, we founded Teens Grow Greens (TGG). During this last decade of working alongside Milwaukee youth, I would answer both questions by saying, “a lot.”

The theme of this report is adaptation. During the last 10 years, Teens Grow Greens has adapted significantly.

Founded in 2014, Teens Grow Greens has grown from 10 teen interns to 110. To work with the busy schedules of our teens and align with their diverse and varied interests, we adapted our internship program transitioning from one nine-month program to four three-month internships. Because of this change the **retention of teenagers starting and finishing the program has jumped from around 50% to 91%**. In addition, Graduates of the Internships can now continue their employment with TGG to grow their skills and opportunities.

While we have adapted our programming, the foundation of this program has

remained strong. Our core values - respect, responsibility and resilience - are core to our work. Our mission is deeply rooted in experiential education. Teens are financially compensated for this work and their skill development. **Most importantly, our focus has remained singularly focused on teenagers.**

Fortifying our roots, we were thrilled to invest in our home - Webers Greenhouse. Webers has been our home base for TGG programming since our founding in 2014. Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, we have been able to invest in our programming, building new greenhouses and creating a more customer-friendly experience for our patrons. Webers and the Rufus King neighborhood have been home to this program for more than a decade; I am excited to embark on the second phase of our expansion in the upcoming years.

Teens Grow Greens is growing and adapting to meet the needs of teens in Milwaukee. Thank you for being part of this journey. I am grateful for your commitment to youth in our city.

# LETTER FROM A TEEN

I'm Lesly, a second year education apprentice with Teens Grow Greens. I've been with Teens Grow Greens (TGG) for almost four years. I'll be honest, I decided to join TGG because my school required me to join a program and was going to earn money.

My first year at TGG wasn't the best, probably because I was a really shy and reserved person. I rarely interacted with the other interns, unless we had to work together. And even then I would keep my interactions minimal.

I do remember the virtual cooking lessons and the Perennial. The cooking lessons were the best, probably because I love cooking and baking. During this time I learned how to cook healthy meals, different cutting techniques, and how to modify a recipe. The Perennial was a challenging event for me, having to talk to strangers and convince them to buy my product. But **thanks to this event and the Entrepreneur Internship, I gained some confidence with my voice and persuasive skills.**

I decided to join the Education Apprenticeship because I was - and still am - interested in becoming a teacher

and had to become confident using/ projecting my voice. I started doing more of this during my second year.

I was in charge of doing presentations/ lessons on food justice and mental health. The lessons had to be educational, but also fun for the interns. The first lessons were facilitated by my co-worker. Working with my fellow apprentices and the Apprenticeship Director, we created a list of useful skills for an Educator. We researched/ investigated what type of educator/facilitator the interns wanted, and one of the main things they kept repeating was to feel included.

Just like TGG I would like to do this when I become a teacher. I'm currently majoring in Early Childhood Education and Social Work. I've always been passionate about helping people and over the years I've seen how the education system has gotten worse. By being an elementary teacher **I want to teach students the basics, encourage them to be curious about the world, and how to use their voice** whenever they need help or want to know something. I believe their early years have a big influence in their future and I want to make sure they get the appropriate space to learn and dream.

**SINCERELY,  
LESLY RENDÓN MORALES**



# 10 YEARS OF TEENS GROW GREENS



## 2014

**TGG is founded** and starts first Internship with 10 Teen Interns from the North side of Milwaukee

## 2019

**TGG expands** to add a Southside chapter to the nine-month internship program



## 2022

Nine month Internship split into three separate 3 month internships. **Retention of Teens finishing Internship jumps from 50% to 91%.**

## 2023

**50% of TGG staff and leadership are Graduates of the program.**



## 2018

**TGG purchases Webers Greenhouse** (as the new programming hub for TGG), Founded in 1931 in Rufus King neighborhood

## 2020

**First Apprentices (Graduates of TGG) hired on Education and Agriculture.**

TGG hires 50 teenagers in this year.



## 2024

**TGG hires 110 teenagers through Internships and Apprenticeships.** TGG completes Phase 1 of Green Acre, building new greenhouses at the site of Webers Greenhouse.



## GRADUATE OF THE YEAR - TRAVON FOSTER

“When I was a teenager I always thought of my future and how it would look? Then I found my first job at Teens Grow Greens. **Teens Grow Greens has been a life changing experience for me.** I probably wouldn’t be the person I am today if it weren’t for this program.

I am most thankful for my entrepreneurship experience. It is because of that I was able to achieve many of my goals today, such as winning 1st place on Project Pitch It, and becoming a chef and even currently as a teacher.

In 2023, I also got the chance to mentor a group of teens and help them with their very own pitch for their product! It was amazing to see the room filled with so many great ideas and inventions. **As I worked with the teens, I reminded them to follow their dreams and remember dreams make good stories but everything important happens when you’re awake.** Lastly, I would like to say a quote from one of my favorite movies, **“A great leader does not seek to lead, their called to it and they answer”**

## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS WITH AN UPDATE FROM GRADUATES OF TGG



**2014: Quashiana**  
Child and Family Case Manager. In the future she hopes to operate a community service to help tackle the social, legal and economic barriers that trap people and keep them in at-risk situations.



**2015: Quinn**  
Universal Banker at North shore Bank and a TGG board member. He is studying technology at UWM.



**2016: Thadniya**  
Long term care as a Staff Nurse and Nurse Supervisor in assisted living. Going to school to be a Registered Nurse at Herzing University.



**2017: Edward**  
Finishing up UWM with a Bachelor’s in Letters and Sciences. He is going to Medical School to study neurosurgery and Anesthesia.



**2018: Yona**  
Entrepreneurship Apprentice Educator at Teens Grow Greens. She hopes to collaborate with other programs to increase the outcomes for teenagers from Milwaukee!



**2019: Eh**  
Customer Service Representative at Engage Workforce Solutions. He is going back to UWM for a Masters in Accounting.



**2020: Karina**  
Marketing Associate at Teens Grow Greens. In the future she wants to stay connected with nonprofit work as well as continue to develop her nail business.



**2021: Mario**  
Marquette University majoring in Criminology and law studies and Sociology, He wants to go back to Marquette for Law School.



**2022: Ruby**  
Freshman at Colgate University focus on Latin and American Studies. In the future, she wants to work with high school students through teaching or being at a nonprofit.



**2023: Asha**  
Cashier at Wegmans in Boston. In the future, she wants to go to college.



**2024: Ian**  
Senior at Pathways High School. He is pursuing a culinary internship at Blue Bat Taqueria through a partnership with Marcus Corporation.

## INTERNSHIP REPORT

This year, we added a new city exploration internship to our culinary, gardening, and entrepreneurship programs. The Kitchen, The Garden, The City, and The Workshop provide intensive project-based learning experiences for high school students where they can find belonging, take risks, and develop leadership skills. Highlights this year include:

- **After the Kitchen Internship:**  
92.3% of interns report that they feel confident that they can make healthy food and nutritional choices.  
92.3% of interns report that they feel confident that they can plan and prepare a complete meal for four.
- **After the Garden Internship:**  
1,000 pounds of food grown and distributed by Interns to residents of Westlawn Gardens.  
88.3% of interns report an increased knowledge about food justice issues
- **After the Workshop Internship:**  
88.9% of interns report increased creativity and problem solving skills.

## APPRENTICESHIP REPORT

With career-centered apprenticeships, project-based learning, and purposeful relationships, youth actively drive and nurture their own growth. Our apprentices are building the skills, confidence, and leadership qualities that will drive meaningful change in their lives and communities. In 9 months, a young person will average 30+ hours of professional development and 300+ hours of hands-on job training while managing family and personal life. They receive coaching and mentorship centered on topics such as communication, problem solving and careers. A TGG Apprenticeship is a job with purpose. We are proud of the growth that the '24 cohort has achieved in such a short time!

- **Significant Leadership Development:**  
100% of apprentices reported growth in their leadership abilities
- **Mentorship and Confidence Building:**  
Close to 40% of apprentices have a mentor who assists in navigating personal, educational and professional decisions.
- **Expanded Program Reach:**  
After four years, 81 apprentices will have completed the program, providing an alternative career pathway for graduates of the program.

## WEBERS REPORT

This year marked significant progress for Webers. We were able to provide employment opportunities for eight Teens, continuing our mission to support youth in the community. A new full-time staff position was also created, Greenhouse Coordinator, which was filled by one of our program graduates. The rebuilding of our greenhouses completed phase one of the Green Acre redevelopment project. The new facility has greatly enhanced our operations, allowing us to achieve key business improvements:

- **Net sales increased by 24%**
- **The number of customers we served increased by 10%**
- **8 Apprentices employed through Webers**

# ACCORDING TO THE TEENS

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“Food justice is as big as giving communities healthy foods they need or creating your own small garden to produce foods to help yourself and others to become healthier individuals.”

**- ALEX, TGG INTERN 2022**

“We started our TGG journey together as Southside Interns. Now we want to end it together as Apprentices.”

**- EH MER, MAKIYA, PAYTON,  
TGG INTERNS 2023, TGG APPRENTICES 2024**

“TGG helps Teens develop different skills that they themselves wouldn’t have considered or been able to do, it makes them grow as people and members of society.”

**- ASHA, TGG APPRENTICE 2023-24**

“Thank you for always having the time for us even when we are already in college. Makes me super happy knowing that I still have a support system and people always willing to help me out.”

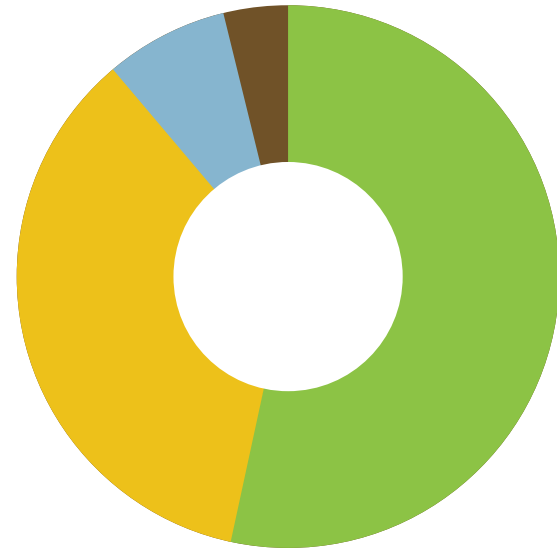
**- BRENDA SANCHEZ, TGG INTERN, 2022**

“Teens Grow Greens lets us know what a healthy working environment looks like so we know what to look for in the future.”

**- NAY, TGG INTERN 2018, TGG APPRENTICE 2019-2020**



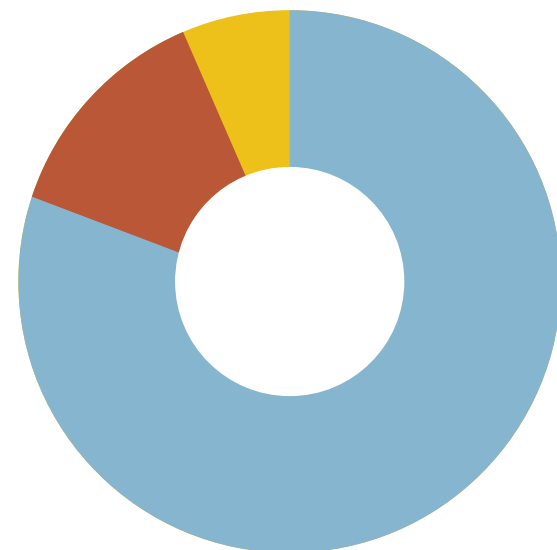
# 2023 FINANCIALS



## REVENUE\*

● Individuals.....	\$1,313,800.90
● Foundations/Organizations .....	\$876,576.53
● In-Kind Revenue.....	\$6,567
● Earned Revenue.....	\$83,374.44
● Corporate.....	\$174,626
● Interest .....	\$2,557.50
● Special Event Revenue.....	\$87,434.07
<b>Total Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$2,457,502.73</b>

\* Revenue includes a capital campaign for Webers Greenhouse and expansion of the Apprenticeship program.



## EXPENSES

● Program Expenses .....	\$1,069,202.21
● Management Expenses .....	\$181,697.72
● Fundraising Expenses .....	\$81,765.83
<b>Total Expenses.....</b>	<b>\$1,332,666</b>



## BOARD & ADVISORY

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**2015 TGG Graduate**

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**TEENS**  
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