

Program Report for 2012

March 2013

On behalf of the staff and board of directors of Life Lab, we wish you a wonderful spring and 2013! We are happy to share the following highlights of the last year with you, which the support of donors like you helped to make possible.



On November 6th, we hosted our first workshop designed specifically for a group of foster parents. They came because they want the children in their care to grow up strong, confident, and healthy. They know that if these children learn to love healthy food now, they will love it for a lifetime. At the end of the day, one participant said,

"I will use lots and lots [of the activities]... getting my kids more involved in picking out food and helping prep; starting my garden from seedlings.... I would recommend that all families come and have this experience! So wonderful. I loved it all."

Life Lab programs include field trips and day camps for kids, youth empowerment through food justice for teens, undergraduate internships, and educator trainings. All focus on the power of one: *reach one, teach one, change a life, change the world.*

In 2012 Life Lab:

- ❖ Hosted 3,088 kids from 4 to 14 years old for life-changing experiences in our Garden Classroom field trips and day camps.
- ❖ Trained 417 educators in California and across the U.S. in 1- and 2-day workshops on garden-enhanced nutrition education, creating effective garden classrooms, science inquiry in gardens, and more, impacting over 10,000 students.
- ❖ Inspired 1,058 additional educators at shorter format presentations and conference workshops.



- ❖ Provided intensive 10-week trainings to 53 undergraduate interns in garden-based environmental education, catalyzing future leaders in the field.
- ❖ Supported the growth of 50 teens facing challenging life circumstances in our Food, What?! youth empowerment program, and hosted 610 middle and high school students on our farm for dynamic events on food justice, nutrition and farming.
- ❖ Distributed more than 700 copies of our curriculum materials for educators, including *Life Lab Science*, *The Growing Classroom*, and *Sowing the Seeds of Wonder*, impacting more than 20,000 students across the state and country.

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During the summer and fall, Food, What?! youth, who had connected with the land on our organic farm and started to feel the benefits of healthy food, shared the experience with their families and communities. They took family produce shares totaling 1,850 pounds of fresh organic produce that they helped grow home to their low-income households. The 23 summer job program teens ran four produce stands at local elementary schools, too, selling 200 pounds of produce to the community. In the fall, Brandon and Keyah led ongoing weekly market stands for nine more weeks, selling 1,350 pounds of produce at affordable prices at affordable prices and accepting EBT. The youth and staff also hosted a Family Cooking Night at the farm attended by over 90% of the families.



Nutrition and healthy foods have long been at the heart of our work, and in 2012 a CDFA Specialty Crops Block Grant helped us expand our impacts statewide. Partnering with fellow longtime educators from Davis and San Diego, we began training 1,500 teachers across California in a two-year project focused on Garden-enhanced Nutrition Education and Creating and Sustaining School Gardens. Half of the workshops are “train the trainers” sessions, with mini-grants to support the participants’ delivery of additional peer workshops in their home regions. This project will also assess the impact of this training on thousands of students across the state.

We also advanced long-term food education and change by partnering with FoodCorps to expand its national school-food-focused AmeriCorps program to California. Life Lab joined with our longtime collaborator, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, to serve as co-host site partners for FoodCorps statewide. The combination of Life Lab’s school garden and nutrition education experience and networks with CAFF’s farm-to-school leadership will catalyze the growth of FoodCorps in California in the coming years, adding significant momentum to the nutrition education, school garden, and healthy school food procurement movements statewide.



Life Lab also changed and grew in 2012. Long-time executive director Gail Harlamoff stepped down in June to start a family feed store business (a longtime dream) and joined our board of directors. Our co-directorship model provided for a seamless transition, as Don Burgett took on the executive directorship and hired new associate director Audries Blake in the fall. Through a very generous gift from Meg and Gary Hirshberg, we also added a new FoodWhat associate director position in the fall and hired Alexandra Carelli from New York to join the expanded program team.

Life Lab has changed lives in positive, healthy ways for more than 30 years. We fulfill our mission *to teach people to care for themselves, each other, and the world through farm- and garden-based programs* with passion and persistence that reflects that of the youth and teachers we serve. Thank you for your support and partnership. Your generosity is having real impacts today and will change lives for many years to come!