

WELCOME...



**LIFE
LAB**
Science
Program 

to **Life Lab Science Program's 2007-2008 Annual Report.** Welcome to 29 years of dedicated garden-based learning, experiential hands-on training, and environmental sustainability through education. *Our mission at Life Lab Science Program is to inspire learning and conservation by engaging students and educators in the natural world.* Each day we strive to meet this mission through the programs and workshops we offer in the Garden Classroom, and the many school-based projects we run in our community.

Following is a year in review highlighting a few of the on-site programs we offer in the Garden Classroom, our outdoor living laboratory, located on the amazing site of the Center for Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems at the UCSC Farm and Garden overlooking the Monterey Bay in Santa Cruz, California.



TEACHERS & EDUCATORS WELCOME

This year, Life Lab Science Program has had a full schedule of professional development workshops reaching people from many different regions in California and beyond. A highlight has been working with a growing number of enthusiastic gardeners who are collaborating with their local communities to support school gardens. We have almost doubled the number of workshops offered in garden-based learning and expanded to include *Math and Science in the Garden*, and *Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden*, while we continue to provide educators with the basics of garden-based education in *The Growing Classroom*.

In this time of high stakes testing and educational mandates, many teachers feel inspired, and even restored, by participating in engaging and educational lessons and networking with other educators interested in garden-based learning. After a recent workshop an educator remarks, "I will use just about every lesson presented, plus many more from your book! I was really pleased to find that the lessons in the book were used as tools for us to understand so much more, how to engage kids, present science, and

the purpose of doing this." Many workshop participants say they feel enthusiastic and motivated by the connection they see between the garden, the lessons in our curriculum, and their own cross-curricular learning goals for the year.

Next year, in addition workshops, Life Lab is working on some new curricula for educators, including information on gardening with preschool children and garden-based nutrition. We are also looking forward to collaborating with the California Department of Education to train teachers and food service personnel on improving public school lunches, while simultaneously educating students to eat healthier. In our 30th year, Life Lab will continue to be a resource for school garden enthusiasts everywhere.



CHILDREN WELCOME

Friday's Farmer's Market day at Life Lab's Summer Camp is a flurry of activity and excitement. Campers work hard all morning to harvest fresh vegetables from the UCSC Farm and prepare displays to sell produce to their families at the end of the day. When family members arrive to the Garden Classroom, children enthusiastically show their family all they have learned during their day at camp. One camper pulls her mom towards the chicken coop, imploring, "Come on Mom, I want to introduce you to Zsa-Zsa!" While other campers slurp half melted fresh cranked frozen yogurt and try to explain how to play the Tree O' Tunes. Each spot in the garden holds another story for campers to share. However, it is when they get to the produce stand, set up on a picnic table under the shade of a walnut tree in the garden, that a striking transformation in the campers becomes apparent.

Many students who come to Life Lab Summer Camp have never liked vegetables. What is surprising is how their opinion of the edible plant kingdom changes by the end of a session of camp. After preparing foods fresh from the farm, many campers find they actually like the taste of vegetables. The campers often notice how different veggies taste when they are picked straight off the vine. By Friday's market, campers are urging their parents to buy summer squash and beans and expertly touting the virtues of each vegetable. "Dad, you have to buy the green beans my group picked, they're sooooo good!" What choice do bewildered parents have but to slip their quarters into the basket on the table and fill up bags of veggies? Here at Life Lab, we continue to tackle improving child nutrition, one camp session and one field trip at a time.



WELCOME... FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thanks to your considerate support, Life Lab Science Program (LLSP) enjoyed a year of growth by meeting the needs of thousands of youth in the garden, and a bountiful harvest by reaping the benefits of community and individual sustenance for our programs.

Over the last several years LLSP has been working to reach out to the community to improve garden-based education, provide a hands-on inspired program for local youth, meet the needs of more youth and teachers, diversify funding and reduce overhead expenses. Last year we saw the exciting culmination of our work. We are thrilled with the results:

- We worked with 395 educators, 170 of these educators were trained right here in the Garden Classroom.
- We touched the lives of over 400 youth participating in the Food What?! program.
- We increased and diversified income through sales of curriculum and individual donations.
- We reduced our overhead expenses to 16%.
- Over 3000 children visited the Garden Classroom for field trips and camp.
- We worked with over 50 schools in Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey Counties to improve ecological sustainability and teaching practices.

We are excited to bring you this good news as Life Lab Science Program continues to dedicate itself to providing quality educational programs for youth and teachers. Each day we touch the lives of youth and educators, focusing on learning, conservation and creating sustainable solutions with hands-on experiential lessons. Most of our work could not be done

without the help of many student interns, the Life Lab Board of Directors, CASFS farm staff and apprentices, and all of the amazing donors who support our programs throughout the year. Many thanks to each of you.

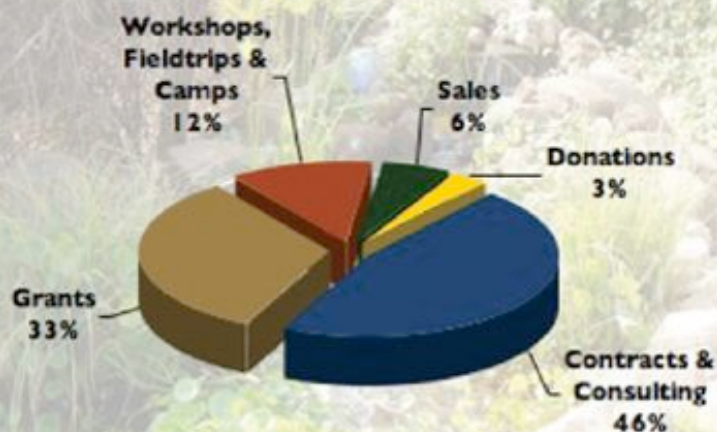
During this season of giving, we invite you to support our work to create a sustainable, healthy world for our youth. Life Lab has received a generous donation from a local foundation and we have the opportunity to match funds. We hope to raise an additional \$100,000. Please help us meet this goal. All donations are gratefully accepted and used wisely.

With Gratitude,

Gail Harlamoff

Life Lab Science Program Executive Director

Income Fiscal Year 2007-2008



Above:

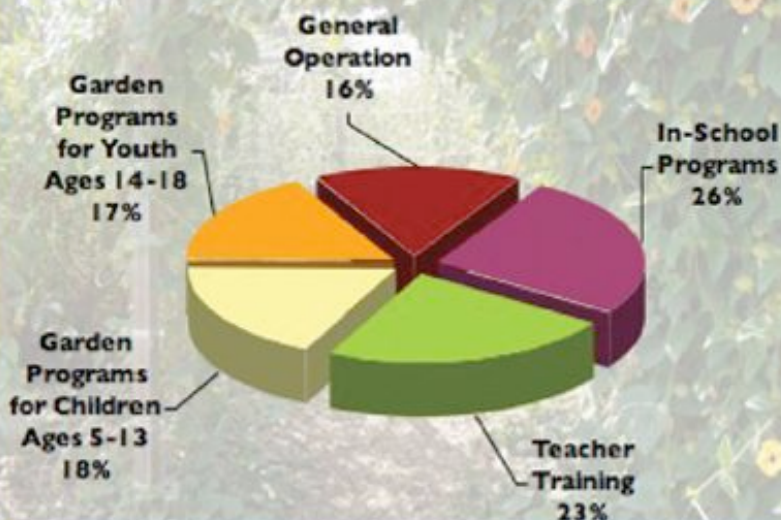
Chart of Income generated to support all Life Lab programs.

Right:

Chart showing allocation of funds.



Expenses Fiscal Year 2007-2008





YOUTH WELCOME

Food, What?!, a new program here at Life Lab, has just completed its second successful season empowering youth and providing job training for high school students. In the spring, we worked with 18 youth for 15 weeks on the farm to plant our ¼ acre with mixed vegetables. During the program, we engage youth in concepts of sustainable agriculture,

nutrition, personal and community health and end each day by cooking with farm fresh food.

Also in the spring, the *Food, What?! Strawberry Blast* hosted 85 middle and high school students from Santa Cruz County to inspire youth to eat well and make healthy living choices. Students came to the farm to harvest their own berries, make smoothies and strawberry-kiwi tarts, learn to read food labels, and voice their ideas about healthy and delicious school lunch programs.

In the summer *Food What?!* worked with 15 youth for 30 hours a week to maintain the farm and gain life skills and job training. The youth marketed their own produce in the Beach Flats community, attended workshops about food systems, financial literacy, and nutrition, cooked healthy food, and hosted the 10th annual Rooted in Community national youth conference.

This fall, many of the youth from the summer held specialized learning internships in farm and market management, training in the culinary arts, and event planning.

In addition, the youth attended both the Bioneers Conference and the Brower Youth Awards. The fall culminated in the *Food, What?! Harvest Festival* drawing 215 middle and high school students to the farm to learn more about sustainability and nutrition and by carving pumpkins, pressing apple cider, making mini apple pies, goat husbandry, and taking a hayride farm tour.

Next year, *Food What!?* could use your help. Check out our website and blog at www.foodwhat.org.



"I made bomb diggiest food. I got my first job. I learned how to run a farmer's market and how to grow healthy veggies."
-Brighton

"I've worked hard, improved my interpersonal skills, and come out of my shell. I've learned a ton about crop science, but also about responsibility, staying on task, and working in a group. I've become more assertive and less shy. I've expanded my comfort zones. I've learned to become more of a leader." -Kitty



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...and all of our generous donors, volunteers and interns.

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 Picnic Tables
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 Irrigation Supplies
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We're going green with an e-newsletter! Please email us at admin@lifelab.org or update your address on the enclosed envelope.

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Life Lab Science Program

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Workshops / Conferences:

Math and Science in the Garden- February 27. Topics include angles, graphing, and structure and function in plants.

Growing Classroom Workshop- March 13 & 14. Learn to guide children in a garden setting, how to connect your school garden to academic standards, and tips on basic gardening and composting.

Discovering the Garden in Early Childhood Education- April 4. Learn how to incorporate garden activities into a pre-school program or into family life.

Life Lab / Monterey Bay Science Project Conference- April 19 A one day science conference showcasing science content and educational gardening at CSUMB.

Field Trips / Camps:

Feeling Fine with Fresh Foods- January thru March. Winter Nutrition Field Trips for 4th & 5th grade

Spring Break Gardening Day Camp- April 6-10. Sign up beginning in January - only 12 spot available.

Seeds of Wonder Field Trips- April thru June. For Pre-school thru Kinder.

Watch learning come to life in the garden!

Events:

School Garden Bus Tour- January 21. This tour is offered as part of the Ecological Farming Conference. This all day field trip will visit three thriving school programs focusing on Farm to School. For more information visit: www.eco-farm.org.

Life Lab Science Program's 30th Birthday Bash- May 30. Please join us to celebrate our 30th year in the beautiful Garden Classroom. Activities for the young and young at heart, come re-connect with the Life Lab family!

For more information, please see - www.lifelab.org

INSIDE:**LIFE LAB'S ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008**

Happy Holidays & Warm Wishes for the New Year!