


Annual Impact Report

July 2023 -
June 2024

BUILDING...



A Healthier Tomorrow,
Together



Connections & Cultivating
Change



Community & Growing
Stronger Roots





A Message from Olivewood

We are thrilled to share our 2023 - 24 Annual Impact Report, showcasing Olivewood's successes, learnings, and growth. In a whirlwind of a year, we continued to expand and strengthen our team, and completed a refreshed strategic plan - mapping out the next three years of impact and growth with a focus on Education, Access, and Advocacy.

We continued our quarterly staff reflection days, monthly 'Happy Hour & Empowers', and quarterly Staff & Board get-togethers to keep building our connections and internal community. Together we:

- **built a culture of care** with Saathi Impact Consulting,
- **shared our personal social impact stories** with Do-Good Leadership Collective,
- **gained strategies for cross-generational communication** with the National Conflict Resolution Center, and
- **updated our strategic plan** with support from T3 Strategies.

Our community of support is diverse, strong, and critical to this collective work - from staff and board, volunteers, donors, program participants, partners, and all who contribute to our work - **we are creating together the world we hope to see:** leading with love and care, centering community, celebrating culture, and caring for the environment. In uncertain times, **we remain committed to championing food and environmental justice, to supporting nutrition security and food sovereignty, educating youth and adults in environmental and nutrition science, developing job and leadership skills, and building a community of support.** *We are so grateful for this community and thank you for being a part of it. We look forward to continuing to grow together!*

With gratitude, The Olivewood Team

Through our educational programs, we

- **deepened our National School District partnership serving all students in the district's ten schools**
- served more high school students than ever through **three intensive internship programs** and year-round community service
- **graduated our 500th Kitchenista**
- **engaged 26 college interns in powerful learning experiences**

Through our food access program, we:

- **broke ground on our new greenhouse** - part of Phase I of our Master Property Plan
- **provided year-round produce to our community** through our weekly produce stand
- continued to **expand our food forest using nature-based growing methods**
- began **planting a 100-fruit tree orchard** which will provide harvests for years to come.

Through our advocacy work, we continued to **strengthen our partnerships with fellow community-based organizations and leaned into our community-centric values**, using these to guide our communications and resource generation strategies.

Mission, Values, & Context

Mission

To inspire youth and adults to be healthy and active citizens through organic gardening, environmental stewardship, and nutrition education.

Values

Equity: Inclusive and culturally responsive, we are committed to acting with respect, openness, and a desire to understand, value, and support our community.

Community: Our kitchen and garden are inclusive to all, and reflect the warmth of the community we serve.

Health: Olivewood's programs are centered in wellness and health.

Integrity: Olivewood is responsive and respectful to the needs of all our program participants, guests, volunteers, supporters, and staff.

Transformation: Using innovative and data-driven approaches, Olivewood's activities create deep, impactful, and sustainable change.



Context

National City has limited green space and ranks in the **top 15-20% of communities across the state for pollution impact and vulnerability according to CalEnviroScreen**. An estimated **1 in 3 National City residents is classified as nutrition insecure, compared to 1 in 4 San Diegans** and nearly 80% of local elementary students qualify for free/reduced lunch. Nutrition insecurity is associated with increased risk of several chronic diseases including heart disease and type II diabetes, and is higher in lower income and communities of color where access to fresh food is limited.

Several neighborhoods in National City are USDA-designated 'food deserts', or as coined by food justice advocate Karen Washington 'food apartheid', where a **history of inequitable policy, systems, and environmental decisions has led to limited access to fresh, nutritious food and an oversaturation of fast and processed food**.

Acknowledging this environmental and historical context, and actively working to address it, is an important part of Olivewood's approach.

Strategic Plan Overview



Strategic Priority #1: Operations & Infrastructure

- Staff members are fulfilled, connected, and passionate about the organization with high levels of retention.
- Advance JEDI-based and integrated structures, policies, procedures, and best practices across the organization.
- Board members effectively collaborate to guide, support, and advance Olivewood's mission using a lens of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Ensure safe and accessible property.
- Provide year-round produce for programs and community.

Strategic Priority #2: High Impact Programs

- Programs are integrated, connected, and build towards common goals.
- Support the holistic health and education of youth in National City and beyond.
- High School Leadership Program advances youth development through internship and community service opportunities.
- Support empowered health leaders through the Cooking for Salud and Kitchenistas Community Engagement Programs.
- Provide meaningful volunteer and internship opportunities.
- Olivewood is a leading voice in the county for environmental and food justice.

Strategic Priority #3: Resource Generation & Communications

- Engage and mobilize a network of mission-aligned supporters.
- Practice and advocate for community-centric fundraising.
- Practice a culture of inclusion and create a sense of belonging.
- Offer high quality, revenue generating programs that build a community of health.
- Olivewood is well-known, respected, and supported locally and beyond.

Our FY2025 Team



Staff

Jacqueline Ante*, Kitchenista Outreach Coordinator

Jeni Barajas*, Director of Youth Programs

Yolanda Bernal*, Administrative Coordinator

Ellyse Briand*, Events & Culinary Program Manager

Salina Brice, Environmental Education Specialist

Patty Corona*, Director of Kitchenista Engagement & Cooking for Salud

Angelica Gastelum*, Communications & Marketing Manager

Claire Groebner, Associate Director

Morgan Harris, Youth Nutrition Education Specialist

Sabrina Heimer, School Garden Specialist

Monica Lim*, Kitchenista Program Manager

Rocina Lizarraga*, Garden Support Specialist & Transit Project Coordinator

Maya Markillie, School-Based Environmental Education Specialist

Jen Nation, Executive Director

Paola Orjuela*, Accounting Coordinator

Kelsey Pennington, Youth Program Coordinator

Isaac Ramos, Garden Support Specialist

Jorge Robledo, Facilities Maintenance Specialist

Teddy Routsis, Volunteer Coordinator

Adan Teposte, Garden Support Specialist

Leonard Vargas, Director of Gardens & Facilities

Jennifer Walker*, Development Manager

Alyssa Zurita, Garden Support Specialist - Fruit Tree Focus

Board

Krupa Asher, Business Strategy, Calbright College; Former Google

Ari Beer - Board Treasurer, Energy Risk Manager, San Diego Gas & Electric

Rita De La Fuente - Board Vice Chair, Communications & PR Consultant

Angela Elo-Rivera - Board Secretary, Media Communications Specialist, UCSD T. Denny Sanford Institute of Empathy and Compassion

Sabrina Falquier Montgrain, MD, CCMS, DipABLM - Board Chair, Culinary Medicine Physician, Consultant, Sensations Salud, LLC, Founder & CEO

Esperanza Guerrero*, Former Restaurant Owner

Teresa Palzkill, Home Economist, Retired School Administrator

Marisa Aurora Quiroz, President & CEO, International Community Foundation

Blanca Meléndrez, Executive Director, UCSD Center for Community Health Altman Clinical and Translational Research Institute

Garry Rollins, Community Connector, Tech Consultant

*Kitchenista

Impact in Numbers

10,056 Community Members
Served



4,589 TK - 6th graders
served through NSD
school garden lessons
and/or field trips

**85 high school and
college students**
trained in sustainable
urban agriculture,
culinary arts, nutrition,
and leadership



Graduated 51 adults
from Cooking for Salud
and engaged 75+
Kitchenistas in year-
round programming

1,679 adults
attended adult cooking
classes, quarterly dinners,
and special events



**Over 6,800 pounds of
produce grown, 1,875
Fish to Family meals**
provided to the
community, our nutrition
programs, and in school
gardens

**2,120 youth and
adults**
participated in family
and community
education and advocacy
programs

Nourishing Our Roots

National School District Partnership

"My class enjoyed our field trip to the Olivewood. In the Kitchen, my students collaboratively prepared "Happy Rice." As my students chopped and ripped each of the ten vegetables, they engaged in conversations about each vegetable's name, color, shape, size, smell and plant parts. Incredibly, each of my student's honored the "Be Kind to Food" pledge and eagerly tasted a bite. **They were filled with happiness, excitement and pride over the food they all took part in making!**

Next, we went outside where my students were actively exploring the garden to complete a guided scavenger hunt. This hands-on hunt gave my students the opportunity to identify the different roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds. The experience Olivewood Garden gave my students was incredible. **This field trip was filled with purposeful learning that made my students beam with excitement and motivation to learn throughout the entire time!**" - National School District teacher

Olivewood's first program in the spring of 2010 was our field trip program in partnership with National School District (NSD). **Since that first field trip, our partnership with NSD has been a part of our DNA, our roots.** Our flagship program - the Children's Field Trip Program - provides a three-part field trip series to ALL NSD 4th grade students, as well as field trips for school groups from throughout the County.

FY- 24 was our third full year of serving all NSD students through our school-based environmental and nutrition science program, and managing all 10 NSD school gardens. Students receive hands-on learning experiences in their school gardens starting in TK through 6th grade, **deepening their knowledge about ecosystems, how to grow food, and the nutrients needed for a healthy body; attitudes related to trying new foods and being outdoors; behaviors related to consuming fruits and vegetables and caring for the environment .**



Nourishing Our Roots

Nature & Me Summer Camp

The second of a two-year program, Olivewood **partnered with National City-based nonprofits A Reason to Survive and Ocean Connectors** to create a multi-faceted, experiential learning program that immersed students in activities that support environmental, physical, and emotional health. Because of the length of the program, students gained strong relationships with each other, and developed positive relationships with adult mentors. Throughout the duration of the program, activities were intertwined, showcasing **connections with the environment and health such as garden-to-table nutrition activities, explorations of ecosystems and the importance of relationships, and art activities depicting ocean environments and creating garden vegetable signs.**



“I would like to thank you guys for the program. My kids loved it! The staff was very professional, they enjoyed the activities and making the different recipes. **The kids would always come home with smiles on their faces and excited to share the adventure they had that day.** Thank you so much for providing this to our community. Hope you guys continue to provide programs like this. I will definitely be referring to you guys and hope my kids can attend future events. You guys are awesome!!” - Parent from Summer Camp



Exploring & Growing

Together

Family & Children's Programs

From intimate programs like Talls & Smalls to our signature festive events like the Day of Play and Halloween, Olivewood's family and community programs focus on supporting shared learning, practicing health-oriented behaviors, and exploring new activities and foods together. 100% of family survey respondents reported a desire to start a garden at home and/or start cooking more at home.

"I had the opportunity to start volunteering with Chefcitos and absolutely loved it. I fell in love with the class, the educator (Morgan), and the kids. I love to see how excited the kids are about trying something new. They are nervous at first sometimes, but always try the food, and end up liking it. And now it's more and more common to see kids bringing to-go containers to share with family." - Danielle, Volunteer



Interview with Chefcito & Garden Explorer Roberto

What programs have you participated in at Olivewood?

- Chefcitos, Garden Explorers and Family Classes

What's your favorite thing about Olivewood?

- I like to come to Olivewood and **learn new things while I'm having fun and meet new kids.**

What have you learned from Olivewood programs?

- To **make healthy food** in Chefcitos and in Garden Explorers I have learned to be **respectful with plants and nature** and that we need to take care of them.

Do you do any new things at home because of what you learned at Olivewood?

- **I'm more adventurous trying new food and to plant my own veggies.**

What's your favorite vegetable?

- Corn, carrots and cauliflower

Olivewood recipe?

- I love all the recipes! but my favorite are: Apple nachos, Sushi, Fruit Sushi and Popcorn Seasoning

++
++
++
++



Cultivating Leaders



High School Leadership Programs

Our high school programs focus on cultivating leadership, building urban agriculture and culinary skills, placemaking and community engagement, and job and life skills.

- Sustainable Urban Agriculture Entrepreneurship Academy: **students planned and led multiple plant sales, raising over \$2500.**
- Youth Community Leadership Program: students led two community listening sessions and **built a three-part compost system now used by the Kitchenista Compost Masters, seating areas, and an arbor entrance to the North Garden.**
- Garden 2 Kitchen: students **planned and prepared an appetizer for the Seedling Soirée serving over 300 guests.**

"I came to Olivewood Gardens in 4th grade on a field trip, and ever since then have wanted to come back. Now I'm in high school volunteering, and I'm also interested in doing an internship here, and maybe one day working at Olivewood Gardens!"

Building confidence

"The greatest lesson I learned from G2K was that it's not that hard to reconnect with people as I expected it to be. I got to be more confident and connect with others during this program."

Exploring careers

"I am more likely to choose a career path in public health now that I completed the internship because I've learned about having a sustainable lifestyle."

Learning health-oriented skills

"I learned about many edible plants and learned to make healthy foods that can replace not so healthy food."





Cultivating Leaders



College Internships

April, a Dietetic Intern completed multiple projects during her time at Olivewood including:

- Created and facilitated a recipe demo and tasting activity at Olivewood's weekly donation-based produce stand, outlining the nutrients of the dish.
- Developed and facilitated a 'Health At Any Size' framework presentation for Olivewood staff.
- Led a Seedling Soirée make-your-own salad booth.

Internship Projects

Core to all of our college internships is the completion of a project that will support the community and Olivewood's efforts in advancing health and environmental stewardship. Projects included:

- **Recipe Translation** into Tagalog.
- Creation of additional resources for Cooking for Salud including a **National City grocery store list and a list of reliable online nutrition sources.**
- **Development of hands-on educational materials** such a new Rethink Your Drink board.

"I did not expect to have time in the garden. It gave me a better appreciation for the food and the amount of time and energy that goes into growing the food. This internship exceeded my expectations. Being involved in so many different programs was helpful in learning how to approach nutrition education with different target audiences and making nutrition more fun and interesting for different audiences."

- April, Dietetic Intern





Connecting Food, Culture, & Community

Cooking for Salud & Kitchenistas Development Program



Our impactful and empowering 9-week nutrition education program, Cooking for Salud, graduated **Generations 27 - 29**. Participants learn to transform the way they cook, engage family members in the meal process, and join a community of support.

Program graduates, **Kitchenistas**, are invited to return to Olivewood to participate in the Kitchenista Development Program as volunteers and attend workshops and activities that will support their growth as community leaders. In this program Kitchenistas continue to learn about health and nutrition, and begin to understand the value of teamwork, communication, organizational skills, kitchen logistics, management, and public speaking.

The mission of the **Kitchenistas** is to share with family and community the experiences and tools that have supported their journey to become healthier.

“I’m very conscious now when I go to the grocery store, I try to limit prepackaged foods. I am very excited about sharing everything I have learned.” - Generation 27 participant

“I have started **using alternatives to sugar. Use less salt and try to explore flavor through spices. Try to incorporate more vegetables in my diet.**” - Generation 27 participant



Connecting Food, Culture, & Community

Walking for Salud

Started in July 2023, this activity turned into a **health journey for some as they saw results in lower cholesterol, blood pressure levels, weight loss, and overall improvement in energy.** For others, it was a **great opportunity to discover and explore the beauty of National City.**

Kitchenistas have discovered new friendships and learned that a good pair of tennis shoes can provide so much comfort beyond the asphalt. The group will continue to walk together, seeking better health, building stronger friendships and finding new adventures in every step. **Walked a total of 619 miles as a group.**

Knitting Club

This group has inspired more than one Kitchenista to explore that entrepreneurial spirit and gain confidence in selling their knitted works of arts; first, at our annual Holiday Bazaar and later outside the Kitchenista community. They have supported our annual Seedling Soirée by volunteering countless hours knitting works of art that have generated revenue to support our programs. **They have demonstrated entrepreneurship, teamwork, creativity, perseverance and above all the willingness to provide social support to one another in difficult times.**

Kitchenista Community Composting

This program started with 5 Kitchenistas who, after being trained for 5 weeks on composting by South Bay Sustainable Communities in 2021, took on the challenge of collecting pre-consumed fruit and vegetable food scraps from the rest of the group. This group discovered along the way that this morning activity was not only a great therapy session with friends but also an opportunity for laughter as they learned to appreciate different critters and adjust to different smells. **The group has grown to 15 members that meet every two weeks taking turns to process food scraps.**

- **Diverted 813lbs of food scraps from the landfill,** reducing methane emissions and waste.
- **Harvested 140lbs of compost that will go back to the land,** creating new life.



Growing Food for Community

Donation-Based Produce Stand

- Served 10 - 20 families weekly
- Impacted over 400 community members



Fruit Tree Orchard



Throughout 2024, we have been researching, planning, preparing the ground, setting irrigation, **planting a 100 fruit tree orchard.**

This orchard will activate our south and east facing hillsides and provide harvests for years to come for our programs, produce stand, NSD partnership, and more.

Greenhouse & Production Buildings

Buildings

We were excited to break ground on our new Greenhouse and Production Buildings in the summer of 2024! These new spaces will allow us to process and grow

exponentially more seedlings for our programs, including the NSD school gardens.



Food Forest

Our North Garden Food Forest has been providing an abundant harvest this year with much more to come! From an oasis of **banana trees, Three Sisters - corn, beans, and squash; various herbs, and more,** this space utilizes **nature-based growing methods** including adding biomass to create a healthy soil ecosystem and allowing seeds to grow and flourish with minimal intervention.



Learning Garden

Our Learning Garden is the focal area for our youth garden education programming. Our Youth Programs and Garden teams collaborate to identify specific plant varieties to grow in this space that align with learning outcomes. Some special **new additions to this garden space include a greenhouse (formerly in the Production Garden), strawberry 'alley', jamaica, and herb garden.**



Strengthening Our Ecosystem

Engaging in Shared Learning

Thrive Community of Practice

- Participated in 5 months of structured programming facilitated by the San Diego Foundation focusing on **Equitable Design, Brainstorming Problems of Practice, Examining root cause to problem, Brainstorming solutions.**
- Developed project with partners Ocean Connectors, Living Coast Discovery Center, Sweetwater Union High School District.

Other collective learning spaces:

- Environmental Education Leaders Network:
- National City STEAM Collaborative
- Growing School Gardens Summit
- Place-Based Teaching and Learning Group

Food & Environmental Justice Advocacy

National City Healthy Culturas Coalition

- Developed letter and made public comment regarding **need for better support of flood victims** and long-term infrastructure strategies to prevent future disasters
- **Advocated against polluting fuel transfer station** proposed for the already overburdened Westside National City

San Diego Food System Alliance Stewardship Committee

- Continued participation in the **implementation and network building around the Food Vision 2030**

SANDAG Social Equity Working Group

- Engaged community members year-round to provide feedback to inform the Regional Plan.
- Advocated for programs, policies, and funding for **key programs including the Youth Opportunity Pass and the Vision Zero strategy.**



Building Community

Olivewood's fee-based programs and special events are an important part of our impact, provide a revenue stream that supports programs and facilities, and builds community.



Adult Cooking Classes, Dinners, & Private Events

Holiday Bazaar

- 4th annual event
- 29 vendors, including 15 Kitchenista booths

Seedling Soirée

- 303 guests & over 100 volunteers
- Raised over \$127k
- 17 food & 4 drink booths including two Kitchenista booths, Garden 2 Kitchen booth
- Knitted ceiling by Kitchenista Knitting Club

- Mole Making with the Kitchenistas Sory & Isabel
- Ravioli and Gnocchi
- Dumplings with chef Kevin Young
- Sourdough with expert Beryl Foreman
- Pierogi with chef Karina Kmiotek-Ally

- 'The Kitchenistas' screening & dinner
- Valentine's Day Dinner with chef Sandra Orozco
- Mother's Day Brunch

Catering, facility rentals, and team wellness programming for various partners including San Diego Foundation, UCSD Center for Community Health, and Mujeres Aca Entre Nos



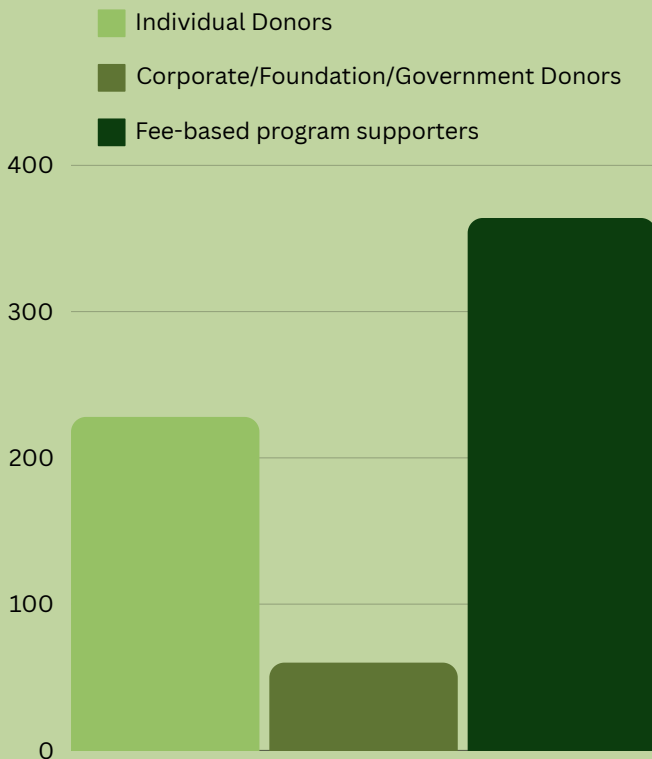
Community of Support

Our diverse, multi-faceted, love-filled, generous community of supporters are pillars of Olivewood’s impact. Whether giving gifts of time, talent, treasure, or all the above - our supporters - YOU - are integral to our collective impact. As an organization that embraces and values the principles of Community-Centric Fundraising, we understand that we need all of us, in the many different ways and capacities we are able to give, to create a healthful, nourished, and joyful community.



Donors

Our incredible community of donors and fee-based program participants **donated \$2,003,713 to our annual programming and operations, and \$1,700,345 to our Cultivating the Future Capital Campaign** From those who have supported Olivewood since our first field trip, to monthly Roots for Health donors, to first-time supporters and program participants - our dedicated and generous donor community is a cornerstone of our collective impact!



Volunteers

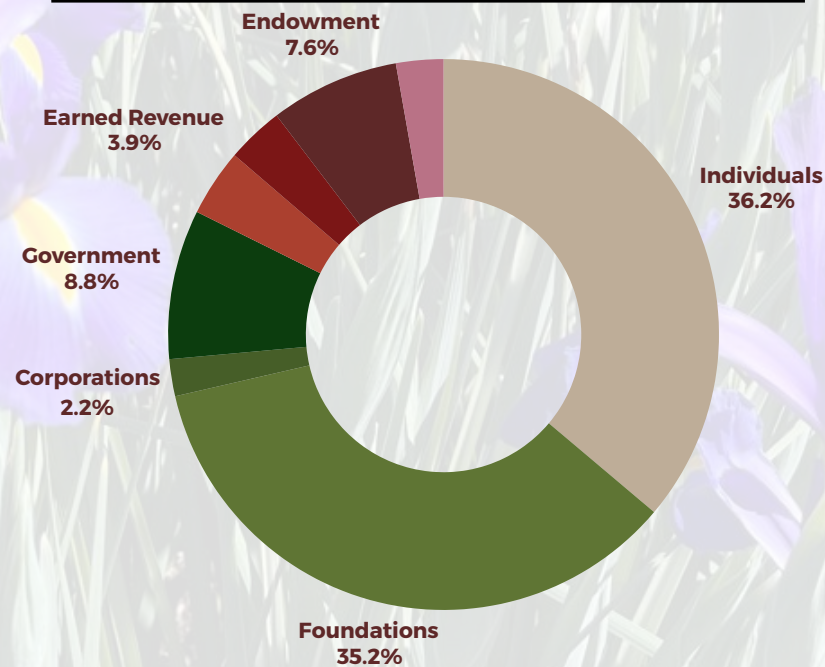
Our **amazing community of volunteers donated 7,228+ hours** to support Olivewood’s programs, operations, and events. From weekly garden volunteers to Kitchenistas supporting Cooking for Salud to weekend Chefcitos and Garden Explorers volunteers to our Board Members, and more - we couldn’t do it without this incredible group of talented and passionate individuals!



Finance

	Without donor restrictions	With donor restrictions	Total Revenue
Operating Activities:			
Support & revenues			
Contributions	\$505,291	\$2,921,045	\$3,426,336
Special Events	\$127,450		\$127,450
Program Fees	\$6,168	\$128,782	\$134,950
Facility Use	\$15,322		\$15,322
Net assets released from restrictions	\$1,586,896	-\$1,586,896	
Total operating support & revenues	\$2,241,127	\$1,462,931	\$3,704,058
Expenses			
Program Services	\$1,462,594		\$1,462,594
Management & General	\$140,595		\$140,595
Fundraising	\$171,190		\$171,190
Total program & supporting services	\$1,774,379		\$1,774,379
Cost of direct benefits to donors	\$49,453		\$49,453
Total operating expenses	\$1,823,832		\$1,823,832
<u>Non-Operating Activities</u>			
Investment income, net	\$67,290		\$67,290
Realized & unrealized gain, net	\$38,528		\$38,528
Total non-operating activities	\$105,818		\$105,818
Change in net assets	\$523,113	\$1,462,931	\$1,986,044
Net assets at beginning of year	\$1,377,071	\$3,746,366	\$5,123,437
Net assets at end of year	\$1,900,184	\$5,209,297	\$7,109,481

ASSETS	2024	2023
Cash & cash equivalents	\$842,050	\$2,268,748
Accounts receivable	\$273,029	\$112,470
Deposits & prepaid expenses	\$14,441	\$5,835
Investments	\$3,461,614	\$305,720
Property & equipment	\$2,759,795	\$2,738,197
Total assets	\$7,350,929	\$5,430,970
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable & accrued expenses	\$91,448	\$157,533
Economic Injury Disaster Loan	\$150,000	\$150,000
Total Liabilities	\$241,448	\$307,533
Net assets		
Without donor restriction	\$1,900,184	\$1,377,071
With donor restriction	\$5,209,297	\$3,746,366
Total net assets	\$7,109,481	\$5,123,437
Total liabilities & net assets	\$7,350,929	\$5,430,970



Looking Forward

1 Celebrating our 15th Year Anniversary

In March 2025, we will celebrate 15 years of serving our community! This milestone will include a community celebration, mission and vision refresh, and special 15 year programming and branding.



2 Creating Collective Impact

We anticipate the years to come to be unpredictable and to have sweeping impacts on our community from immigration to environmental policy to racial justice. **We are committed to staying true to our mission and working with our broad community - including YOU - to continue advancing health equity, leveraging collective resources, and maintaining safe spaces for all.**



3 Growing into New Spaces

During the fiscal year 2025, we will be growing into new spaces in both infrastructure and programming. These include:

- **Outfitting our new Greenhouse to begin production and completing the Production Buildings** to improve post-harvest processing
- **Implementation of an afterschool program in partnership with NSD at all 10 schools.** This program will utilize hydroponics gardens and cooking carts for extensive culinary and agriculture learning.



THANK YOU!



OlivewoodTM
Gardens & Learning Center

2525 N Avenue | National City, CA 91950

Stay Connected



[instagram.com/olivewoodgardens](https://www.instagram.com/olivewoodgardens)



[facebook.com/olivewoodgardens](https://www.facebook.com/olivewoodgardens)



[linkedin.com/company/olivewood-gardens-learning-center](https://www.linkedin.com/company/olivewood-gardens-learning-center)

Build Community with Us

Cultivate: Stay up-to-date on all things Olivewood through social media and our e-newsletter!

Grow: Share with others about Olivewood and invite them to visit with you!

Harvest: Join us for a program or event!

Nurture: Share your time, talent, and/or treasure!

Upcoming Events:

[olivewoodgardens.org/upcoming-events](https://www.olivewoodgardens.org/upcoming-events)



Schedule A Visit or Plan Your Team Building Activity:

info@olivewoodgardens.org

Donate Today

[olivewoodgardens.org/donate](https://www.olivewoodgardens.org/donate)



Make a Gift of Stocks or a Legacy Gift

Contact Claire:

claire@olivewoodgardens.org

