



Interim Report - Soil Born Farms

June 1, 2025

Progress Report

I. List the primary goals and objectives included in your proposal and describe the progress made toward each, including specific examples. Explain any variance from your goals or expected progress.

Objective 1) FARM-BASED TEEN TRAINING: *Launch and expand teen training at Soil Born Farms to facilitate 2,740+ farm-based learning experiences for 400+ teens per year.*

Internships - *6-10 Cordova High School students per semester dig into 8-week internships, completing training and career exploration while earning school credit.*

This spring we had 5 high school interns, including one from The Met high school and 4 from Cordova High. These interns invested 242 hours of labor/training on the farm. This year for the first time one of our teen interns joined our farm team. Marley, a freshman in high school, spends 5 hours each Tuesday and Thursday working with our farm team.



She has become such an integral part of the team. She is mentored by Community Educator Stuart Jones, who meets with her weekly to set up goals and report back to her school on her growth. Marley recently expressed that she can't imagine working anywhere else because she has recognized how the farm team has supported, challenged and mentored her, creating lasting impacts in her life. Marley has logged nearly 200 hours of work experience to date.

Year-Round Job Training - *20+ teen job trainees per year gain real-world work experience across our program areas, earning income and building job skills.*

To date (Dec - Apr), 15 paid teens have worked a total of 1,345 hours as members of our Youth Education team, farm team, kitchen and pack teams. On Saturdays we have a large number of teens running Phoebe's Cafe, taking on the roles of barista, cashier, busser, etc. While tasks and work experience are valuable, the most impactful part of the Teen Empowerment Program is the mentorship and coaching that is taking place. There are many ways that our staff are helping to provide an environment that encourages both job training but also personal growth. For example, upon arrival each

Saturday morning all students and the kitchen team participate in a morning huddle. During the huddle the team uses “mood chips”— colored poker chips that each person drops into a jar to indicate their emotional state (e.g., yellow for happy, green for neutral, blue for sad, red for having a hard day). This helps us check in with each other and build emotional awareness.



Following the check in, a review of team and personal goals is done. An example of a team goal this past month was: “Acknowledge coworkers and customers verbally and with eye contact.” We practice this with roleplays to reinforce the skill. An example of a personal goal might be: “Stay organized and in my lane.” We end the huddle with a reflection question, such as: “Find one new fact about the farm today.” The teens

carry these goals and questions with them throughout their shift.

One of the most powerful skills teens are learning is self-confidence. For example, a teen who started out incredibly shy, rarely making eye contact, now speaks confidently with customers and has become a trainer and leader among the new teens. They’ve even shared that they feel more confident and comfortable in social settings. Watching that transformation has been amazing.

Another standout moment involved a teen who began reflecting on their environmental impact. When they first joined, they weren’t aware of how our practices contribute to climate change, but through their time at the farm, they began reflecting on their own habits. They started cooking more at home and choosing high-quality, local ingredients. One day they told me, “Why would I buy from a place like Amazon when there’s farm-fresh food and real people right around the corner?” It’s been incredible to see this teen connect the dots between environmental sustainability and personal action.

Summer Job Training - *An 8-week summer program provides 15-20 teens per summer with work experience, skillbuilding, personal growth and job readiness.*

This summer we will restart our Teen Counselors in Training program for our Youth Summer Day Camps. This program gives young teens the chance to learn how to teach kids about gardening, nature, healthy eating, sustainability, cooking, and more. Teens are trained on various tasks as they work with younger students, and are encouraged to develop leadership skills and take risks trying new roles. At the end of each camp day, we reflect on successes and areas for improvement. Teens that

complete this program are eligible for a paid Summer Day Camp counseling position the following summer as part of our Teen Job Training program.

Field Trips - *Host 15-20 field trips per year for Cordova High School classes.*

To date, 8 field trips have been hosted for Cordova High School Agriculture Academy classes. These trips are led by our youth education team and provide lessons aligned with class curriculum and state standards. We are working on ways to cultivate involvement from other Career and Technical Education programs at Cordova High as well including Culinary, Business, Construction, Floral and Biology programs. Field trip lessons are aligned with class curriculum, and a dedicated CHS shed provides easy access to instructional supplies.



Cross-Age Mentoring - *CHS students are trained to lead younger peers in garden/nutrition activities during 2-3 cross-age mentoring events per year, inspiring younger students to engage in the Food and Agriculture Career Pathway.*

Great work has been happening in our efforts to increase cross-age mentorship between Agriculture Academy students at Cordova High and younger grades at Cordova Gardens Elementary's school garden. This spring high school students worked after school once a week for 3-4 weeks to prepare lessons and activities, which they taught elementary students during a morning session in their school garden. All lessons relate to topics currently being taught in garden lessons. The high school students served 150 elementary students total. After the activity, the CHS students returned to Soil Born for a debrief and reflection while we had lunch. This has been a powerful experience and one that students demand we keep on the schedule.

In addition, there are other examples of cross-age mentoring throughout our programming. Our teen farm intern Marley, mentioned earlier, has been partnered with our Community Educator Stuart throughout their internship. Each week they goal-set and work to develop new skills, and we see Marley being challenged and guided by the experience and knowledge Stuart has in farming and in life skills. The cross-age mentorship happening in this relationship has been powerful to witness.



Another example can be found in our homeschool program. We have many students that have been in our program for years, and they often don't want to leave when they age out at 12 years old. In this case, they are offered a student leadership role and are given tasks during each homeschool class that develop their abilities while also attending to the needs of some of our younger students that are just entering the program. The tasks might include doing research on a particular topic and then teaching this to the rest of the class, preparing a game related to their class topics or creating an art activity. Each semester we have been identifying 1-2 teens as student leaders.



Training Garden Development - *Establish a new ½ acre Market Garden Training Plot, designed for CHS students and community members to get hands-on experience managing regenerative agriculture systems.*

The Training Garden is in production and looking great, providing a space for experiential learning that is larger than a home garden but smaller than our commercial farm operation. The site is used by teen interns, and hosted 90 students from 3 Cordova High School floriculture classes who planted flowers this spring.



Cordova High School Ag Academy Students focused on Floriculture

Objective 2: MODEL and TEACH REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE - *Provide urban residents with education and resources to access healthy food and practice regenerative food production in the urban environment - supported by Teen Empowerment Program trainees.*

Our teen employees and interns contribute significantly to this objective by taking on meaningful roles as they work and learn across our program areas. Teens have become an integral part of our service to the community -

- Teens working in the Marketplace and Cafe distribute locally-grown and locally-made foods.
- Teens working in the Farmhouse Kitchen prepare healthy meals with ingredients sourced from our fields and local farms.
- Teens supporting our summer day camps engage younger students in learning about organic gardening, health, and nature.
- Teens working on the farm team learn and contribute to growing organic food using regenerative practices, and support the farm as a training ground for urban gardeners.

Objective 3: FUTURE ANIMAL PROGRAM ROLLOUT - *Lay the foundation for the launch of Soil Born Farms' new Animal Education Program, which will provide CHS students with hands-on education in regenerative agriculture, natural resource management and animal science.*

We are thrilled that funding has been secured for our new Animal Barn education facility, and will be breaking ground on construction this summer. Animal Program curriculum development is underway, designing hands-on lessons that will allow students to help tend livestock for ecological land management. Topics range from animal breed selection, care and health, to bigger picture topics of traditional vs modern ranching, animal behaviors and their ecological impact, and livestock micro-enterprises (wool, milk, meat, grazing for hire, etc). This curriculum development will also be part of a wider education/docent plan for students on field trips, summer day camp, homeschool, and the visiting public.

Objective 4: PARTNERSHIP BUILDING - *Collaborate with Folsom Cordova Unified School District to cultivate a long-lived partnership.*

Our partnership with Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD) is actively focused on developing a strong food and agriculture career pathway, which includes school day programming for Agriculture Academy students, afterschool programming for Cordova High Interns, in-school support for school garden programs, teacher training, procurement goals for nutrition services, and planning for our Animal Program. We collaborate with their team through a monthly meeting that includes Nutrition Services representatives, Amy Strawn (Principal of Cordova High), Shanan Spears (Career Technical Education Coordinator), Jim Huber (Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services), and Sean Martin (Assistant Superintendent of Business Services). Each month we address various aspects of our partnership goals and identify challenges, highlight accomplishments and set up next steps to improve our partnership and the growth of our shared programming.

In addition to these regular check-ins, we use this time to introduce new partners to the work. Jim Huber facilitates visits from various members of the district each month so that our work/partnership can be more widely known. In the month of May our time was spent orienting the Superintendent of FCUSD to our work and discussing our goals for the coming year. This has been a very helpful process. We will be hosting a number of conversations in early June to evaluate our successes with current activities and strategically plan for next year.

II. Has the timeline, budget, approach, or plans changed from what was described in your original proposal?

No changes to the original budget or scope of work.

III. Describe the response of the community or clients to the program thus far.

Each Saturday over 500 visitors come to the farm for a day of food, learning, volunteering and community connection. The increasing number of teens present and

engaged on this day in particular is leaving a lasting impression with these visitors. We receive constant comments on how much they appreciate the energy and effort of both our teen employees and interns. This love and appreciation is deeply felt by our youth and is an important contributor to their self-esteem, job satisfaction and sense of purpose. As we continue to grow this program and engage a greater number and cross section of teens and young adults, this impact will increase. The association of Soil Born Farms as a youth-focused organization will also increase exponentially, helping us to better support our young people with the life and leadership skills they need to thrive.

IV. Please describe any unanticipated challenges encountered with this project to date and explain how you plan to address those challenges.

No substantial challenges have been encountered.

V. Describe specific successes achieved to this point, which demonstrate the positive impact of the program and reinforce why it is a worthwhile endeavor.

The Teen Empowerment Program has made great strides in the first 6 months of the project, as evidenced by the stories included in question 1 above. While still in the early stages of development, the program is not only employing teens but mentoring them through emotional awareness, skills building, communication and confidence building, goal setting and future planning. The impacts are deep and the potential for continued growth and development of this program are immense.

VI. Are there any changes that you wish to make now to the grant budget, goals and objectives? Please explain. Changes will need prior written approval from the Grantor.

No changes requested.

VII. What steps are being taken to ensure sustainability of the project beyond the grant period?

Sustaining this program is an ongoing priority. We have secured a large 3-year grant from Sprouts Community Foundation to support organization capacity building, which includes a focus on fund development work that will support long-term financial sustainability for this program and our organization as a whole. We currently are awaiting response on 5 grant proposals that include funds for teen wages and staffing for the Teen Empowerment and Job Training program.

Interim Budget Report

Date: May 24th 2025

PROJECT REVENUES:		
To Date: 11/30/2024-4/30/2025		
Impact100 Greater Sacramento Grant:	\$25,000.00	
Corporations/Businesses	\$25,000.00	US Bank
Corporations/Businesses	\$5,000.00	Target
Corporations/Businesses	\$5,000.00	Teichert
Total Revenue	\$60,000.00	
PROJECT EXPENSES/COSTS:		
	Impact100	Other (above)
Project Payroll Costs		
Project Director Salary	\$15,931.34	\$7,028.31
Insurance, Benefits and related taxes	\$3,279.78	\$3,196.09
*Other (specify) Teen Wages	\$5,788.88	\$35,137.75
	\$25,000.00	\$45,362.15
Total Expense	\$70,362.15	

Interim financial report is filled out above and additional organizational financial information is attached.


Shawn Harrison - Executive Director

5/24/25
Date


Janet Zeller - Board Officer

5/24/25
Date