

Annual Report 2018

Los Angeles
Community Garden Council



Los Angeles Community Garden Council (LACGC) is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to strengthening communities by building and supporting community gardens where every person in Los Angeles County can grow healthy food in their neighborhood.

20 Years of Community Gardens

In 2018, Los Angeles Community Garden Council celebrated 20 years of growing community gardens! At our celebration in April, Dr. Rachel Surls spoke about the early planning meetings where a group of dedicated volunteers, who were passionate about green space, social justice, and growing food, met to discuss forming a support network for community gardens. These people included Chris Braswell, Don Burgett, Glen Dake, Andy Fisher, Deborah Fryman, Al Renner, Bruce Saito, and Rachel Surls. Apparently, Ed Begley, Jr., attended a couple of the meetings and plugged in his electric car, a huge novelty at the time!

We are proud to have grown organically from our humble beginnings to work with more than 125 community gardens today, serving more than 6,000 people across Los Angeles County. We have helped communities acquire land, organize leadership teams, plant and grow healthy food, learn about native plants and water conservation, manage their finances, and transform their neighborhoods.

We are thrilled to have broken ground on the state-of-the-art East Hollywood Garden Achievement Center in March 2018! We are at a turning point in the future of our organization and are excited about the prospects for more green space and educational opportunities ahead of us. We hope that you'll enjoy reading about some of our accomplishments during the past year and join us in our upcoming adventures.

With best wishes for a healthy and abundant 2019,

The LACGC Team

Staff

Julie Beals
Executive Director

Diana Campos
Program Manager

Diana Voss
Temporary Program Manager (November 2018 to February 2019)

Al Renner
Outreach Director

Holly Witham
Bookkeeper

Board of Directors

Glen Dake
Chair

Ada Berman
Treasurer

Cynthia Hubach
Secretary

Juan Diaz-Carreras

Ron Garretson

Jose Gutierrez

Steve List

Kavita Sharma

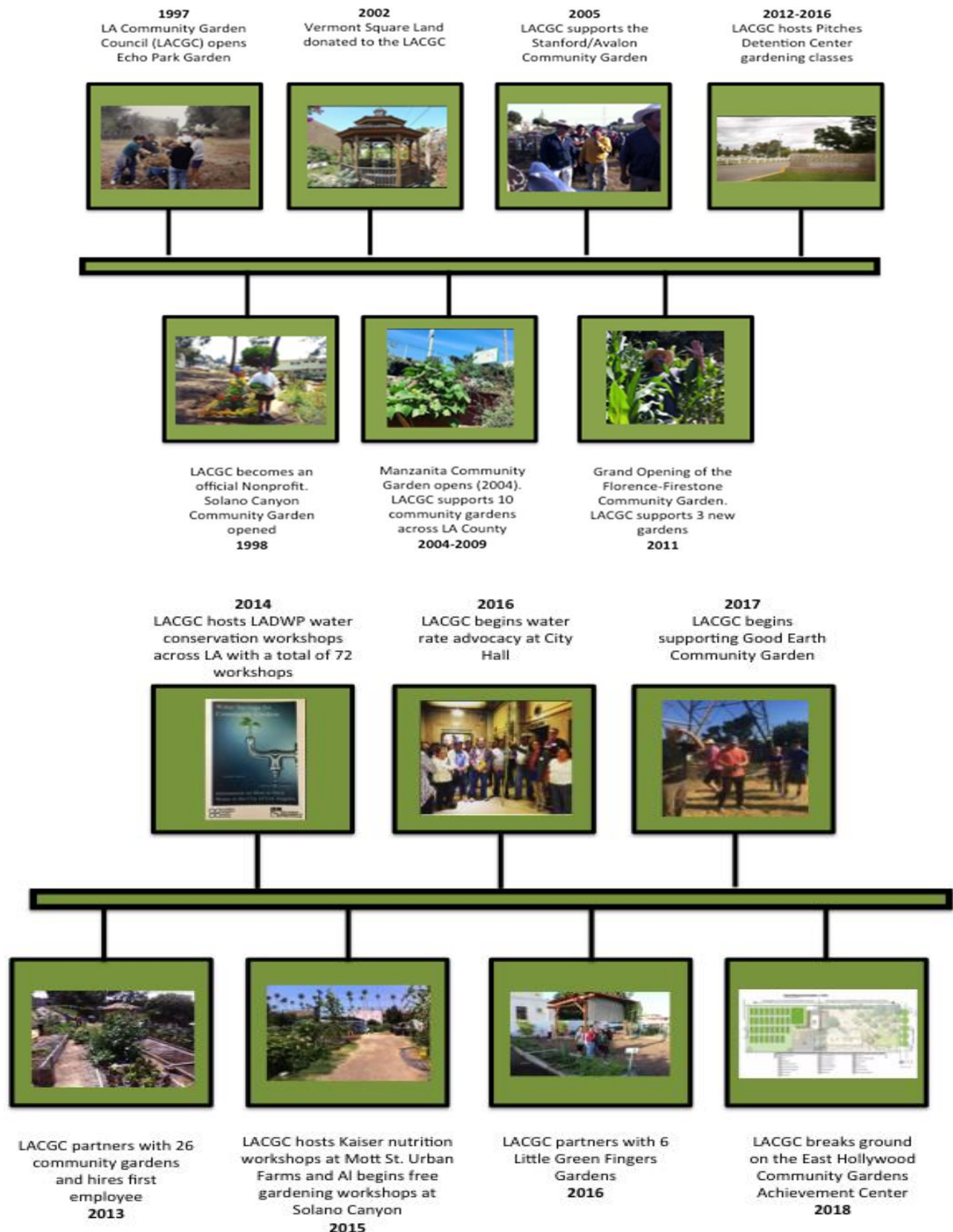
The LACGC Family of Community Gardens

Belvedere Park Community Garden
BEMA Trust
Brian's Orchard
Crenshaw Community Garden
Eagle Rockdale Community Garden
East Hollywood Garden Achievement Center
Eastwind Community Garden
El Cariso Mountain Community Garden
El Sereno Community Garden
Elysian Valley Community Garden
Florence-Firestone Community Garden
Fountain Community Gardens
Gaffey Street Community Garden
Glassell Park Community Garden
Glendale Community Gardens
Good Earth Community Garden
Hermosa Beach Community Garden
Howard Finn Community Garden
Jardin Del Rio
LA Green Grounds
La Madera Community Garden

Lavender Hill Farm
Leimert Park Garden Tour
Manzanita Street Community Garden
Mariposa-Nabi Community Garden
Milagro Allegro Community Garden
Monterey Road Eco-Community Garden - East
Monterey Road Eco-Community Garden - West
Mott St Urban Farm
Pacoima Community Garden
Pasadena Community Garden
Patton Street Community Garden
Santa Monica Roots
Seeds of Carver
Solano Canyon Community Garden
South Pasadena Community Garden
Spring Street Community Garden
Stanford Avalon Community Garden
Vermont Square Community Garden
Villa Verde Community Garden
Willowbrook Community Garden
Wilmington Community Garden

20 Year Timeline

Here is a glimpse of some of the highlights of the last two decades at LACGC.



LACGC Events in 2018

20th Anniversary Celebration

We celebrated our 20th Anniversary at our Annual Fundraiser at the beautiful home and garden of Board Member, Cyndi Hubach, in Silver Lake the afternoon of Sunday, April 29th. The event was well-attended and we met our fundraising goal. The guests enjoyed appetizers from Green Street Restaurant, wine from the Silver Lake wine store, green gem stone cupcakes, and music by The Eagle Rock Trio. Councilmember O'Farrell and Dr. Rachel Surls gave brief presentations.

We thank all the sponsors and guests who made this event possible, especially our lead sponsors at the Emerald level, Cypress LLP and the Rim of Heaven Foundation.



12th Annual Gathering of Community Gardens

Our 12th Annual Gathering of Community Gardens took place at the Solano Canyon Community Garden on Saturday, October 20th.

We honored Al Renner, Co-Founder of LACGC, for his 20 years of dedicated service to community gardens. Gardeners from more than 16 community gardens came together to get to know each other, tour the 5-acre site of Lavender Hill Farm and Solano Canyon Community Gardens, and enjoy a light lunch in the garden with music by the Vignes Rooftop Revival.



Changing Times

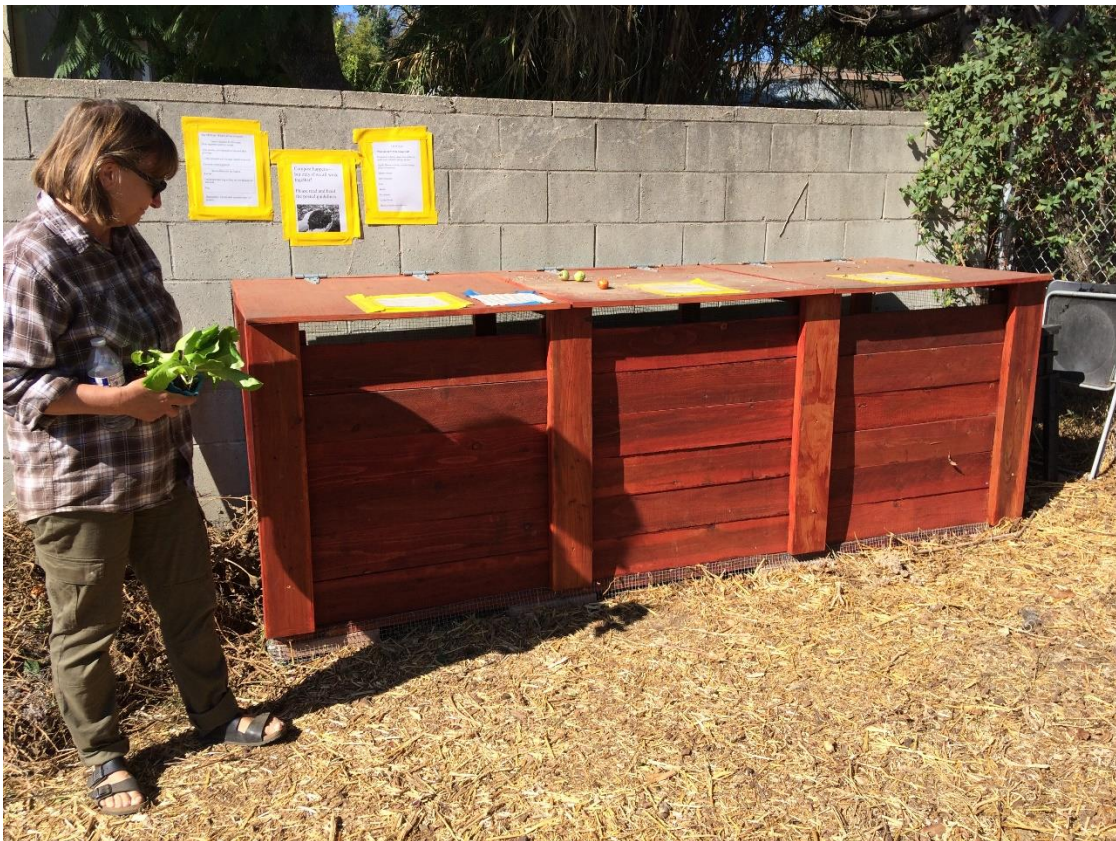
These are changing times for community gardens! The 289% increase in water rates is adversely affecting the largest community gardens where gardeners are struggling to pay their increased dues and we are seeking new revenue streams to cover operating costs for these gardens. Due to LACGC's limited financial and human resources, in 2018 we reluctantly had to decline partnerships with several large and established community gardens which are facing closure due to the water rate increases. We hope to be able to partner with them in future.

The community garden model which works best for LACGC is that of a garden with approximately thirty-five 8' by 4' raised beds that are large enough to grow food for a single family. We try to include as much communal space as possible in our new community gardens to ensure that more community members can participate in gardening activities while they are on the waitlist for a plot.



#FreeTheFood

Thanks to a grant from the City of Los Angeles and a partnership with LA Compost, we built new composting hubs at eleven of our community gardens and taught the gardeners and local residents best composting practices for the Southern California climate. These composting hubs are open to the public at least once a week for local residents and small businesses to drop off their food scraps. The hubs are saving thousands of pounds of food waste from entering the landfills. Meanwhile, gardeners are benefitting from the rich, free soil. We plan to expand this program throughout 2019 and work with the City of Los Angeles to promote the residential food waster green bin pilot program.



Educational Programs

At LACGC, we take as much pride in seeing people learn to grow their own food for the first time as we do in seeing an experienced gardener learn a new grafting or irrigating technique! Learning to garden is a lifelong process and we see the educational component of our work as essential in ensuring the success of community gardens.

LACGC Co-Founder and Outreach Director, Al Renner, continued to teach free gardening classes on the third Saturday of each month at Lavender Hill Farm throughout 2018, meeting many new and enthusiastic gardeners and giving each participant individual attention to prepare them to tend their own gardens.



LACGC Board Member, Steve List, led weekly gardening classes at South LA Wetlands. Steve's full-time work is at the agriculture program at Sylmar High School and many of his students have donated time and energy to LACGC to help distribute many of their seedlings and trees to community gardens.

Maria Pedroza, a gardener at the Stanford-Avalon Community Garden, taught classes across Los Angeles in English and Spanish about best practices for the growth and use of medicinal plants.

East Hollywood Garden Achievement Center

We are thrilled to have broken ground on this new site at 1171-1174 Madison Avenue in East Hollywood in March 2018!

We are in the process of transforming this 24,000 square foot lot into a community garden with 35 raised beds, large communal gardening areas, and a 640 square foot building to serve as LACGC's office as well as an educational center. The Trust for Public Land is building a public park at the front of the site which includes exercise equipment, a basketball "tree", a children's playground, citrus trees, a mural and mosaic, and an outdoor community space.

All storm water from this site will be collected in a state-of-the-art infiltration pit, which will become a central point of discussion in our water conservation workshops.

We are planning extensive programming at this location including all levels of gardening classes, landscaping and irrigation training, and nutrition and cooking workshops.



Volunteer Days

In 2018, LACGC hosted more than 20 volunteer days for corporate employees, high-school and college students, and other groups. Working in a garden makes a welcome break from an office environment and helps co-workers get to know each other. It is also a great physical workout! Our largest volunteer events were in September when more than 300 Pepperdine University students helped maintain ten community gardens and groups of UCLA students volunteered at six community gardens. Other groups that we hosted included volunteers from Moleaer, Occidental College, UCI, and USC.



Partners

We continue to partner with From Lot To Spot to provide more hands-on community organizing at our Florence-Firestone, San Pedro, and Stanford-Avalon community gardens.

Los Angeles Conservation Corps is our go-to non-profit organization to provide crews of high energy youth to build new community gardens and we thank them for the weeks that they dedicated to building the new garden for foster children and their families at the Westside Children's Center, on a tight timeline, in the heat of the summer of 2018.



Our partnership with LA Compost has grown this year and they built 11 state-of-the-art composting facilities at our partner gardens and taught best composting practices in more than 25 workshops.

We consider the Los Angeles Food Policy Council to be our advocacy branch. They continue to research policy issues relating to food equity and justice and provide leadership in this area. Our Board Member, Cynthia Hubach, is co-chair of the Urban Agriculture Working Group, which is offers informative sessions with networking events for people involved in all areas of urban agriculture.

Financial Overview

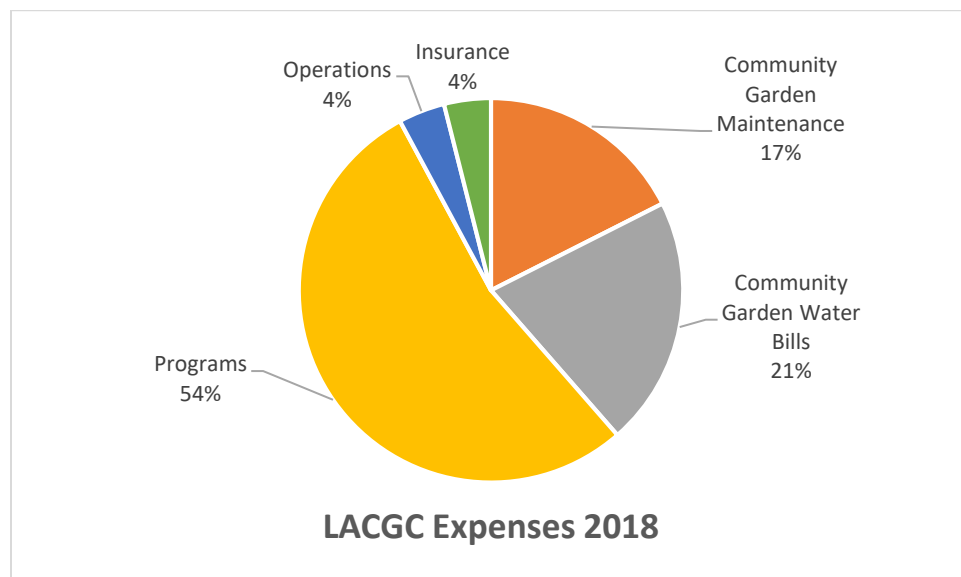
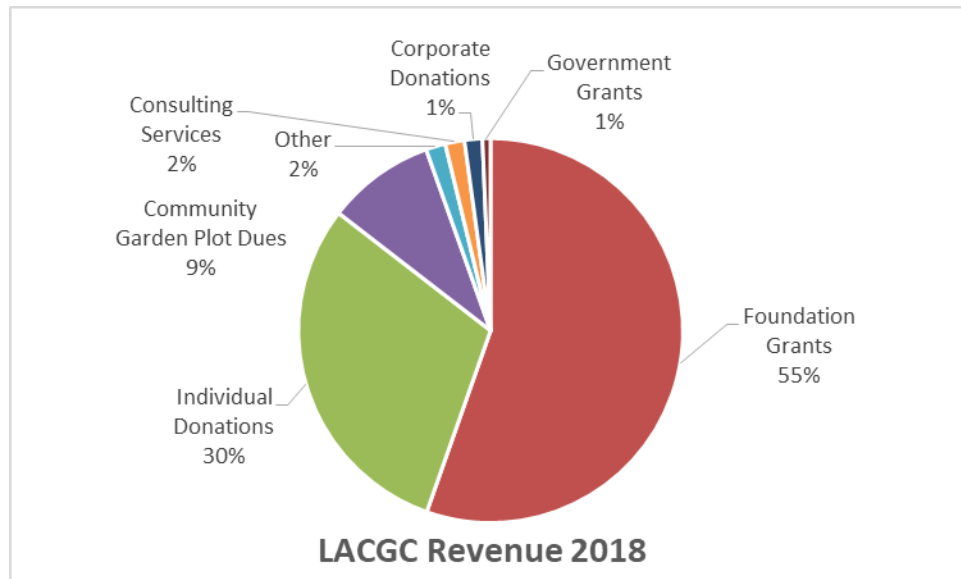
We were delighted to welcome Holly Witham as our new bookkeeper in November 2018 and we are in the process of updating our accounting system to serve our partner garden more effectively and to offer greater transparency to our donors.

LACGC seeks corporate, foundation, and government grants for the capital expenses of building new gardens or major garden improvements. We were thrilled to install decorative wrought iron fences at the front of both of the Vermont Square Community Garden sites in fall 2018 thanks to a grant from the Los Angeles County Parks and Open Space District.



The operating costs of our community gardens include the water bills, replacement of gardening tools, and basic garden repairs. These are funded by the plot dues that each gardener pays. We try to keep the dues as low as possible in order to keep the gardens accessible to all community members, especially those who most need to grow fresh food for their families. The plot dues have had to increase recently in order to cover the increased cost of water.

LACGC ended 2018 in a strong financial position. LACGC sources of revenues and expenses break down as follows.



Thank You to All Our Supporters in 2018

Our work in community gardens would not be possible without your generous donations.

Altadena Community Garden
Amazon Smile Foundation
Anonymous
Bank of America
Julie and Kenneth Beals
Benevity Comm Impact Foundation
Ada Berman
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