



## **Vision/Mission**

### **Vision:**

We believe in the power of gardens as classrooms to inspire learning and growth. Through passive experiences in parks, schools, and backyard and active learning through interactive classes and volunteerism, we strive to create beautiful, food-focused landscapes that engage all ages and abilities.

### **Mission:**

Our mission is to cultivate relationships between individuals, food, and the environment.

## **5: Impact**

### **Volunteers**

2022: 1,517

2023: 1,230

### **Volunteer hours:**

2022: 4,264

2023: 4,269

**Number of Pounds of Food Grown in the Garden**

2022: 4,879

2023: 3,824

**Volunteer hours from adults and students with disabilities**

2022: 1,360

2023: 752

**Total kids impacted across all programs:**

2022: 2,357

2023: 2,492

Overview- In 2023 we moved our headquarters from the shared space at The Co-op at 1st to a 9 acre organic orchard. This is a beautiful community space that better fits our goal of teaching environmentally friendly growing practices and agriculture education. This was our lowest food production year to date. Crops were ruined by extreme weather conditions and excessive pest pressures, mainly grasshoppers. We hope next year will juxtapose this with the addition of our orchard as our highest yield ever. We had to cancel many garden events due to weather and this greatly impacted our programming for youth and individuals with developmental disabilities (I/DD). However, we feel like despite the weather, it was one of our most accomplished years to date. We built 3 new school gardens, installed gardens at the Colorado Village homeless shelter, ran weekly after school garden programs at 4 schools, ran weekly programming for I/DD, found a new location, moved our entire operation, planted over 140 trees, served 54 families with Energy Bill Assistance, supported 36 families with SNAP sign-up, hosted a super fun Fall Festival, and installed a 11,250 sq ft Native American Maze with Spirit of the Sun and a 5,000 sq ft Butterfly Pollinator Garden in partnership with Boy Scout Troop 815 to support biodiversity in the orchard. Whew!

**Board of Directors and Key Support**

**2023**

### **Board of Directors**

Kristina Welch  
Jeffery Lawhead  
Yvonne Welch  
Andre Leonard  
Sherman Phillips  
Emily Lauher

### **Key Support**

John Stolze  
Kristina Welch  
Cailyn Eveland  
Steven Hixson  
Paige Burns  
Dr. Shirl Smith  
Michael Jordan  
Katy Casper  
Richelle Cowan

### **Partners and Donor Thank Yous**

Thank you, sincerely, to all the amazing organizations, partners, foundations, government agencies, volunteers, donors, staff, community members and board members that have supported Jovial Concepts. We could not be who we are without you!

### **EOC**

This year was a tough year with many families struggling to pay energy bills with rates on the rise and cooler weather. We were honored to support 54 clients with their energy bills. Through Energy Outreach Colorado we were able to help distribute over \$30,000 in Xcel utility assistance.

### **Sustainability**

This year Jovial Concepts moved our headquarters to a 9 acre orchard with solar panels! To keep up with our sustainably green business practices, we utilized solar, composting, and held a completely zero waste event for our Fall Festival! Jovial Concepts was awarded as a 2023 Silver level sustainable business by the State of Colorado Certifiably Green Business program. We have implemented our best practices, and continued them into the new space. This includes recycling to minimize waste that goes into the trash. This year jovial concepts diverted 21 yards of waste from the orchard and 9 yards from our back yard gardens from landfills!

## **I/DD - Katy and MJ**

This year was amazing and bittersweet as we wrapped our program at the Co-Op at 1st location this season. The I/DD groups helped us get things going at the beginning to get the garden beds ready for the growing season by DPS transition youth coming out and helping to plant seeds, planting starts, spreading the flower seeds for ground cover and complimentary companion plants for each bed. The adults and youth came out weekly to help us with some irrigation duties early on and were very enthusiastic each day! As the season progressed, the I/DD groups were really excited to harvest the food and weigh it each day. They were loving to take items home to eat and were lively when we taught them how to prepare some of the harvest into healthy and yummy delicious meals!

The groups were very helpful maintaining the beds with us and cooperatively handled tasks with vigor and excitement! As the season winded down, the IDD groups helped us break down each bed by pulling the plants, harvesting what we could and broadforking to prep the beds for Winter. They loved gathering leaves from around the property to cover the beds and most were very sad about this being the last season at this property. However, they are all very enthused about the new location and have all promised to return next season!



■ Katy and Max.jpg



## Backyard Gardens

This year in our backyard gardening program, we served 28 backyard garden hosts, including a new partnership with the [Colorado Village Collaborative/Safe Outdoor Space](#) which serves up to 50 individuals experiencing homelessness at their Native American Inclusive site. In addition to supporting gardens at private residences, we cultivated and planted a large garden at the Juust Living addiction recovery facility, The Gold Crown Foundation, and partnered with Grow Local CO, to support a series of raised bed gardens in the community. We donated all of the fresh organic produce that was harvested to local hunger relief organizations.

We supported an high school intern in partnership with The Gold Crown Foundation. Jeff, the summer intern who worked with us, was an incredible help and is now a part-time garden team leader! To help support our garden projects and garden renovations, in addition to working with community volunteers, we partnered with multiple organizations such as Rocky

Mountain Human Services, Spark The Change Colorado, Encore Electric, The Receptionist, Zillow, The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation, Fidelity Investments, and Paytronix. We emphasize education with all volunteers we interact with, and sharing information about the benefits of gardening and fresh & healthy food is a core part of our programming.

## **Schools**

2023 was packed with one of the most rainy seasons in Colorado. With the amount of transitioning for Jovial Concepts and the rainy season, the energy put into the schools did not slow down. We had 3 Jefferson County new school builds this season. Dutch Creek Elementary, MeikleJohn Elementary, and Two Roads Charter School had some elaborate, amazing new gardens installed. Along with the help of volunteers, these beds came out just right. These will be followed by garden workshops to help educate the kids in order to maintain the beautiful gardens for the future.

Jovial provided weekly garden/ DIY workshops with Maple Grove Elementary. This workshop consisted of 17, 1st-5th graders on a weekly basis. The children learned to identify invasive weeds vs. plants, harvest, understand good bugs vs bad bugs in the garden, taste testing etc. and doing fun DIY garden projects.

We also upgraded the greenhouse at Edgewater Elementary with automated sprayer irrigation; the greenhouse is used for classes and the seedlings grown there are sold in an annual school plant sale.

Bradford Elementary visited our gardens for the second year in a row as part of an annual field trip and educational experience.

In partnership with Denver Public Schools, we hosted weekly Summer and Fall workshops with up to 20 youth at Barnum Elementary. The children were taught a basic knowledge of how to plan, plant, grow and maintain the garden beds, built on School grounds. The gardens provided a fresh farm to table experience through weekly cooking classes in partnership with Slow Food Denver.

We also hosted garden day field trips, career development, and pop-ups for students from Escuela de Guadalupe, DPS Transition Youth, Farmers Market with youth at Denver's Park Hill Seven Day Adventist Church, and Gold Crown Foundation and Clubhouse.



## **New Forever Home -**





On Sept 1st 2023 Jovial was gifted a 9 acre orchard from Foothills Park and Rec. The orchard came fully irrigated with several dedicated volunteers and supporters from Feeding Many. The space is absolutely beautiful, but needs a lot of work. The orchard is always open to the public and we welcome the community in harvesting and learning with us.



Things you will find if you explore the 9 acre property:

500 Fruit Trees including Apple, Nectarine, Peaches, Cherry, and Pear

63 Vegetable Garden Beds

20 Beehives in the Apiary

3 Vineyards

1 Large Shade Structure

In 2023 Jovial completed a couple BIG projects at the orchard

Boy Scout Troop 815 with our Americorp Vista redid the bricks and planted a 5,000 Sq Ft

Butterfly Shaped Pollinator Garden

We built the outline of what will be an 11,250 Sq Ft Native American Maze

We cleared out a 4th vineyard that didn't survive, removing over 11 yards of weeds and are working on transforming it into a berry patch!

Include skyview photo:





Some of our big vision pieces for 2024 are to host weekly classes in the orchard. These classes will include everything from grape juice and jelly making to honey extracting and our normal weekly vegetable growing classes. Spirit of the Sun will do regular classes about how we all can participate in being good stewards of the land while introducing cultural traditions and medicinal plant lore. There are some existing pest pressures, mainly grasshoppers and we hope to use chicken, ducks, and other pesticide free methods to minimize the damage of these insects. We will be addressing blight that has spread untreated through the orchard and our hope is to grow 20-50,000 lbs of food annually on our new land. All the food grown by Jovial continues to be donated to local Elementary schools and foodbanks.

For walk-in cooler storage and tools, we purchased a house that backs up to the park. This is for non-profit office use only and allows us access to a kitchen to host cooking, canning, and other food classes. We have updated the house to be ADA accessible for our amazing I/DD friends and even hosted a 500 person Fall Festival just 6 weeks after taking over the space.





## Looking Forward

1. Increase our harvest to 15,000 lbs donated to families in need.
2. Add plants to the Native American Garden Maze we built this year with Spirit of the Sun.
3. Add plants to our Butterfly Pollinator Garden with Boy Scout Troop 815
4. Increase permaculture and increase biodiversity at our new orchard location to hopefully result in fewer blight and pest pressures.
5. Support families with social services such as EOC and SNAP.
6. Expand our services to individuals living with disabilities to include more youth within the City of Denver and Jeffco.
7. Create many different online classes where participants can engage and learn different skills pertaining to healthy eating and living.
8. Host weekly in-person classes at our community orchard throughout the growing season.

## Pictures

 20230602\_110149(1).jpg



Link: [The beginning of a mobile outdoor garden at the Safe Outdoor Space at 4635 Peoria...](#)

Caption: The beginning of a mobile outdoor garden at the Safe Outdoor Space at 4635 Peoria St, Denver, CO 80239






Link: [Mid season snapshot of the mobile outdoor garden at the Safe Outdoor Space at 46...](#)

Caption: Mid season snapshot of the mobile outdoor garden at the Safe Outdoor Space at 4635 Peoria St, Denver, CO 80239.



Link:  A stellar crew of volunteers from Rocky Mountain Human Services at Weaver Creek Park..jpg  
Caption: A stellar crew of volunteers from Rocky Mountain Human Services at Weaver Creek Park.





Link: [Group photo from a volunteer day with Paytronix we planted 40 fruit trees and put multiple r...](#)

Caption: Group photo from a volunteer day with Paytronix; we planted 40 fruit trees and put multiple raised gardens to bed for the winter.





Link: [A foggy morning of fruit tree planting with volunteers from Zillow.jpg](#)

Caption: A foggy morning of fruit tree planting with volunteers from Zillow.





Link: [Barnum workshop1-blur.jpg](#)

Caption: A school garden workshop at Barnum Elementary in partnership with Slow Foods.





20230602\_110139.jpg



Link: [school garden completed build.jpg](#)

Caption: A completed school garden build



Link: [school garden build production 2.jpeg](#)



Caption: School garden build in production



Link: [school garden build production.jpeg](#)

Caption: a school garden build in progress.



Link: [school garden build final 1.jpg](#)

Caption: School garden build finished

