



# 2019 Annual Impact Report





## DEAR FRIENDS,

Looking back on 2019, we reflect on a year of change in staff, space, leadership, and plans. We started to see our strategic plan, Roots and Wings, shape our work. More than anything though, we had a year of tremendous growth, all made possible with the hard work of our staff and board members, and the unwavering support from our donors, volunteers and friends. With your help, we've given more people access to gardens and growing resources through the Community and Backyard Garden programs. We've shared our Salad Days model conceived and tested in Gloucester Public Schools to districts throughout the Commonwealth through an enhanced consultancy model.

And while it seems strange to be reflecting back on 2019 when so much in our world is changing due to the pandemic, we are overwhelmed with gratitude and hope. We are grateful to you for what we've been able to accomplish with your support and we are relieved that we made some important

changes that have prepared us to address the present day needs in our community.

We owe tremendous thanks to all in our community of growers and supporters for what we are sharing in this 2019 Annual Impact Report.

Stay well,



Lara Lepionka, Founder & Executive Director



Brian Orr, Board President

August 2020



**Backyard Growers' mission** is to cultivate healthy, connected, environmentally sustainable communities and to fight for food justice by teaching people how to grow some of their own food. We provide resources and support to establish vegetable gardens at homes, housing communities, organizations, and schools, and offer learning opportunities in growing and preparing fresh produce.

## 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **Dr. Brian Orr, President**

Pediatrician, Brian Orr  
Pediatrics

### **Larry Oaks, Vice President**

CEO & President, Mainstay,  
Supportive Housing & Home  
Care

### **Elizabeth Redmond, Treasurer**

CFO, Pathways for Children

### **Suzanne R. Gosselin, Clerk**

Owner & Clinician, Harbor  
Health Group

### **Jennifer Perry**

Director of Operations, The  
Open Door

### **Joel Favazza**

Attorney, Seaside Legal  
Solutions; Member, Gloucester  
School Committee

### **Betsy Brown**

Retired non-profit professional,  
Wellspring House and North  
Shore United Way

### **Sophie Courser-Kellerman**

Farm Manager, Alprilla Farm

### **Heidi McGrath**

Retired teacher, O'Maley  
Innovation Middle School

### **Jen Zola**

Volunteer Outreach Specialist

## 2019 STAFF

Lara Lepionka, Executive Director

J Harrison, Interim Program  
Director (Jan-May 2019)

Corinne Lippie, Program Director  
(May 2019-present)

Aria McElhenny, Development  
Director

Courtney Allen, Communications &  
Outreach Manager

Emily Brown, FoodCorps Service  
Member (August-December)

Abby Johnstone, FoodCorps  
Service Member (January-July)

Meghan Stratton, Associate  
Director of School Programs

Addy Shreffler, Garden Educator



# A STRONG FOUNDATION MADE STRONGER WITH SOUND PLANNING

## From Roots to Wings: Highlights from Year 1

2019 was the first year of Backyard Growers' 3 year Strategic Plan, **From Roots to Wings**. Here are some milestones and accomplishments from the year for each of the 3 goals.



### Expand and deepen Backyard Growers' involvement in Gloucester

**Key Accomplishment:** We created a vibrant learning, growing and collaborative space at Willowood Community Garden. Backyard Growers' volunteer Mentors, Joel Emerson and Peter DeNigris, along with our FoodCorps Service Member, Emily Brown, held a garden time together every week with residents of Willowood Park, a low-income Gloucester Housing Authority Development.

*"Backyard Growers' work at the GHA's Willowood Gardens Development has transformed a once-blighted area and brought a better understanding of the cultural diversity within that neighborhood through the shared experience of building sustainable gardens."*  
- David Houlden, Executive Director, Gloucester Housing Authority





**Develop a practice consulting to groups working to establish gardening programs in geographic areas beyond Gloucester**



**Strengthen Backyard Growers' organizational systems and infrastructure to support current operations and future growth**

**Key Accomplishments:** In 2019, Backyard Growers developed a Consulting Program Business Plan and expanded our program model to Western Massachusetts via our largest consulting client through a partnership with Ascentria Care Alliance.

**Key Accomplishments:** Backyard Growers initiated an Annual Board Retreat and also strengthened internal financial controls. We secured a new, centrally-located office space to host vibrant community events and affinity organizations, including a social justice panel (pictured above), a Cape Ann Local Food kick-off gathering, regular Cape Ann Climate Change meetings, and Extinction Rebellion meetings.



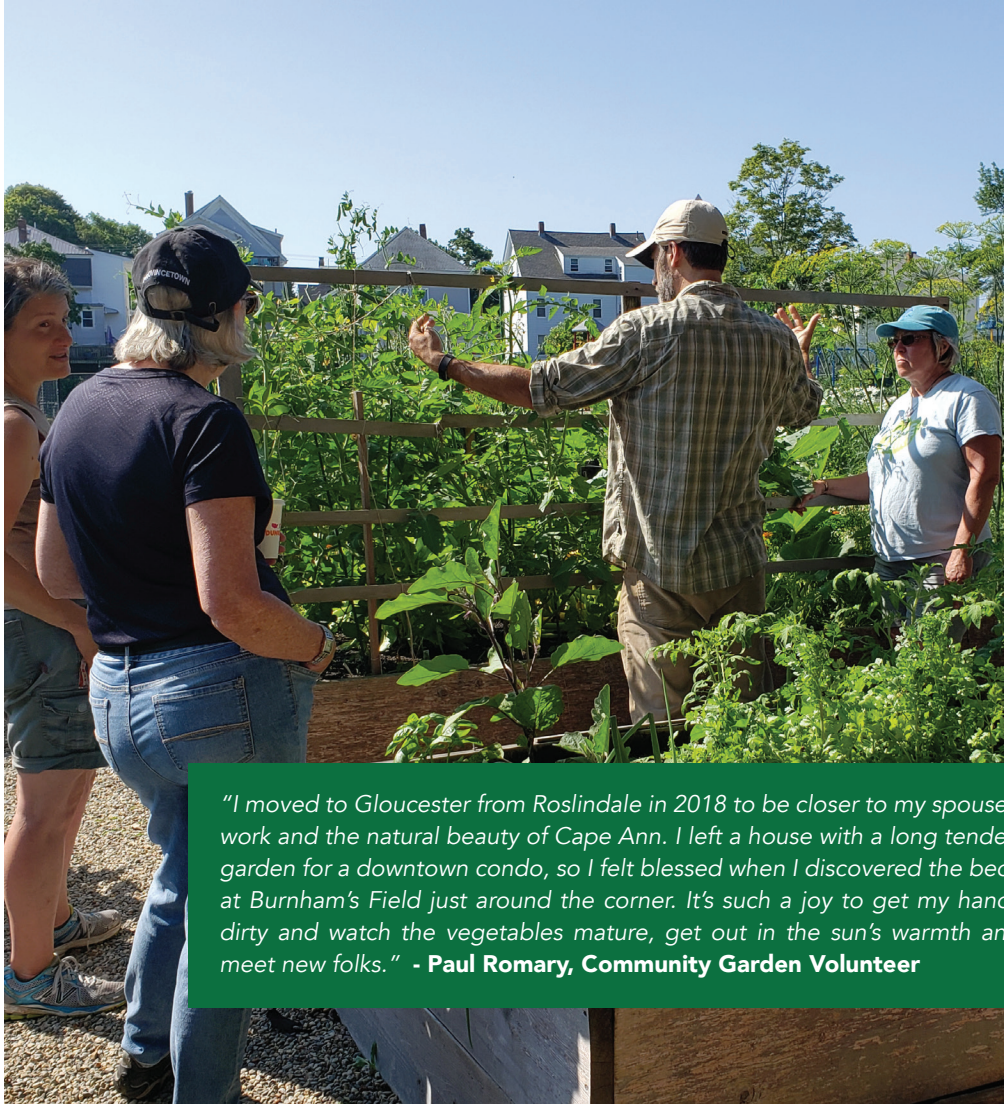
## LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS & WELCOMING VOLUNTEERS

### Volunteers are the Backbone of Backyard Growers

We are **grateful** for the dedication of our corps of volunteers who help with new gardener mentoring, garden maintenance, and help with administrative and special events work.

**In 2019, we had the help of 250 volunteers contributing 960 hours of service.**





*"I moved to Gloucester from Roslindale in 2018 to be closer to my spouse's work and the natural beauty of Cape Ann. I left a house with a long tended garden for a downtown condo, so I felt blessed when I discovered the beds at Burnham's Field just around the corner. It's such a joy to get my hands dirty and watch the vegetables mature, get out in the sun's warmth and meet new folks." - Paul Romary, Community Garden Volunteer*

## 2019 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Action, Inc.  
Cape Ann Farmer's Market  
Cape Ann YMCA  
City of Gloucester  
Endicott College  
FoodCorps Massachusetts  
The Food Project, Inc.  
Gloucester Housing Authority  
Gloucester Public Schools  
The Grace Center  
Massachusetts Farm to School  
Mass in Motion Cape Ann  
Northshore ARC  
North Shore Health Project  
Pathways for Children  
Rose Baker Senior Center  
Sawyer Free Library  
The Caleb Group  
The Open Door  
Wellspring



## WE TEACH SCHOOL KIDS HOW TO GROW FOOD & MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

**The Impact of School Gardens**







In the fall of 2019, we worked with two separate student groups from Simmons College Graduate in Nutrition program. One group worked on our school consulting expansion connected to our strategic plan and the other evaluated behavioral and attitude changes towards healthy food as a result of Backyard Grower's repeated presence working with kids in Gloucester schools. The overwhelming results of the behavioral change analysis was: **"Kids LOVE Backyard Growers and get excited when they come,"** and the evaluation determined a clear positive association with healthy food leading to a change in attitude among children in Gloucester elementary schools as a result of Backyard Growers.

Some of the things the research team observed kids at Veterans' Memorial Elementary School saying during our Kale Monster Smoothie taste test in fall 2019:



"Veggies are super healthy for you"

"Veggies make you big and strong"

"My new favorite veggie is kale because I loved this smoothie so much"

"I'm going to try to make this with my mom and add new ingredients to it"



## WE FIGHT LONELINESS & ISOLATION

### The Impact of Community Gardens: Antoinette's Story



Antoinette is a refugee from Congo who spent most of her life in a refugee camp in Uganda. She and her mom have garden beds in Backyard Growers' Community Garden at Willowood Park Housing Development. Antoinette and her mom, Demeteria, speak Swahili, as does Backyard Growers' garden mentor, Joel Emerson. This connection through language and food has grown well beyond the perimeter of the garden.

*"I can say that this garden has done a great job and a wonderful thing for our family because it is the one which connected us to Joel. Knowing Joel is very important to our family. He has helped us a lot. [Back] home, that's what we do, we farm and we feel happy when you see things like these red tomatoes in your garden!"*





*"This garden gave him so much joy; from planning and gridding the bed, to planting, to attending, to making trellises, the whole process was joyful to him, especially after our Mom passed."*

**- Margi Green, Rob's Daughter**

## WE HELP PEOPLE ACCESS HEALTHY FOOD

### The Impact of a Backyard Garden: Rob's Story

Rob and Mary Jane Green were married for 67 years. When she passed, he needed to focus on doing something interesting, nurturing and fun. So for the last two years of Rob's life, his garden from Backyard Growers was his happy place! It became the backdrop for his birthday and other family get-togethers with his three daughters, Susan, Margi, Sarah, and Sarah's husband Hugo. Rob also enjoyed just sitting by it and engaging in occasional conversations with those passing by.

Rob was an engineer and loved to solve programs. His garden provided a perfect habitat to continue to put these skills into practice. Planning what to grow and how to grow it was taken on with gusto. With help from Margi, he managed to source the seeds, grow seedlings and eventually harvest his favorite Hatch peppers, culminating into his favorite dish of Chile Relleno.

## THANK YOU!

We're so grateful for the many generous donors who partner with us in our work. You provide the support that improves the well-being of our community.

### 2019 Supporters

Donors by Giving Level from 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019

\*Denotes donors of 2 years or more

#### Up to \$99

Jerry Ackerman\*  
Farris Ajalat\*  
Araneo Landworks\*  
Cat Arnold  
Wendy Banks  
Charlee Bianchini\*  
Jane Bowers  
Mary John Boylan\*  
Jillian Brown  
Suzanne Brown  
Lisa Bruce  
Kimberly Buckley\*  
Caffe Sicilia  
Cake Ann  
Margaret Calkins  
Peter Canny  
Cape Ann Tree Service  
Margo Casey  
Jo-Ann Castano & Andy Innes\*  
Classic Cooks  
Judith Cody

Lisa & David Cohen\*  
Darrah Cole  
Sara Collins (In Memory of Pete Stevens)  
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Amy Connors  
Julie Cooper  
Charlie Costello  
Sam Coulbourn  
Livia Anne Cowan  
Jessica Crovetti  
Gigs & Bob Cunningham\*  
Salvatore & Pamela Cuomo\*  
Frank & Louisa Deland\*  
Susan Doheny (In Memory of Robert Green)  
Melissa Donati, Willow Rest  
Ken & Nicole Duckworth  
Renee Dupuis & Joe Cardoza\*  
Stefan Edick  
Lyn & Bill Fenollosa\*  
Jennifer Fernandes  
Mary Flaherty  
Jamie & Philip Friend  
Nicole & Sal Frontiero  
Julia Frost  
Gloucester Stage Company  
Andrew Goodman  
Nancy Goodman  
Pattie Goulart  
Bob Granese  
Halvah Heaven  
Laura Harrington (In Memory of Robert Green)  
Dawn Heanue (In Memory of Joseph Heanue)  
Karen Heil  
Nancy Henry  
Melissa Herron  
Priscilla & Daniel Hurley (In Memory of Robert Green)

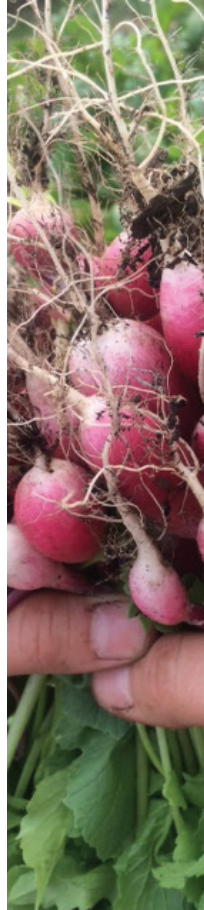
Ellen & Eric Korsh  
Ann Lafferty (In Memory of Robert Green)  
Martha Lazarus  
Richard Leonard  
Gary Griffiths & Leslie Pearlman (In Memory of Robert Green)  
Kristen Lindquist  
Heather & Rob Lovett  
Debra Lucey  
Abbie Lundberg  
Judi Mackenzie  
Elly Madrigal  
Jeanne Magazu  
Charles Marcous  
Jocelyn Martich  
Stephanie Martinonis  
Mayflour  
Aria & John McElhenny\*  
Dana Menon  
Emily & Daniel Murphy\*  
Suzanne Newman\*  
Ruth Noyes\*  
Bethel Palmer\*  
Patagonia  
Betsy Piebenga  
Susan Quatemán  
JoAnn & Marc Reiss  
Rebecca Reynolds  
John Rockwell  
Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken  
Peggy Russell  
Stephen Sacca & Janet Ulwick Sacca (In Memory of Robert Green)  
Mackenzie Sains  
Shaza Saker  
Mark Salwasser\*  
Carmel Sanders  
Brynn Sibley  
Kristina Simon  
Anne-Seymour St. John

Susan Steiner (In Memory of Robert Green)  
Sara Stotzer\*  
Monica Stratton\*  
Superfine  
Anna Swanson  
Shay Wainwright  
Sage & Linda Walcott\*  
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Laura Wiessen & Steven Lewis\*  
Susan Williams  
Lee Williamson\*  
Ariane Wolff (In Memory of Susan Lentnek)  
Pamela Wood  
Deb Worth Telep\*  
Linda Zoeller Anderson  
Abigail Zola

#### \$100 to \$249

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Toni Armstrong  
Heather Atwood  
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Rosemary Costello  
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Lee & John Cunningham\*

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Margaret Fisher  
Abbey Flores  
Susan Flynn  
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Robert Gillis & Pixie Harrington\*  
Valerie Gilman  
Samantha & Tony Goddess\*  
Tracey Gould  
Janet Green Garrison  
Joe & Paulette Grimaldi  
J & Karen Harrison\*  
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Terry & Jen Holmgren  
Sharon Infante\*  
Sally Jackson  
Susan & Chuck Kelly\*  
Polly & Joe Knowles  
Jessica Lanier & Greg Morell\*  
Regina Larocque  
JoAnn & Rob Leavitt  
Mary Ellen Lepionka\*  
Lucy Littlefield\*  
Elizabeth Lovejoy  
Paul & Christine Lundberg  
Jane Lyman  
Matthew MacLellan  
Kirstin Elaine Martin  
Karen & Jake Maslow  
Larry Maver





Anna McCoy\*  
 Nurhajati McMahon  
 Carol McNeill  
 Marty Morgan  
 Garland & Jody Morse\*  
 Kathryn & Robert Nowak  
 Molly Oldfield\*  
 O'Maley Middle School PTO  
 Stephanie & Randy O'Neil  
 Jen Perry\*  
 Wendy Pierson  
 Plum Cove PTO  
 Kristal Pooler  
 Jonathan & Susan Pope  
 Phoebe Potts  
 Privateer Rum  
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 Robin & Paul Regensburg  
 Kathy Reynolds  
 Paul Romary\*  
 Bob Rosenfield & Marjorie Halperin\*  
 Ryan & Wood Distilleries  
 Keith & Ellen Shaughnessy  
 Miffy Somers  
 Lauren Sottile  
 Rita Stapulonis  
 Carolyn Stewart  
 Eric & Susan Swanson  
 Suzanne Tucci  
 Veterans Memorial PTO  
 Michael Ward  
 Sandra Warren  
 West Gloucester PTO\*  
 Katharine Worth\*  
 Diane Wortis  
 Carol Ann Zapustas

**\$250 to \$499**

Nan & Dave Araneo\*  
 Associated Charities of Gloucester

Jean M. Baird  
 Edward & Sheila Becker\*  
 Black Earth Compost\*  
 Carol Cataldo  
 Sophie & Noah Courser-Kellerman\*  
 Jean & William Dugan\*  
 Thomas & Jennifer Eddy  
 Neil Glickstein & Barbara Kelly  
 Suzanne Gosselin\*  
 Sarah Green\*  
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 Margaret Hegarty-Steck  
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 Caroline & Tom Hovey  
 Chad Konecky & Elizabeth Solomon\*  
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 Gretchen Parker\*  
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 Christina Rhodes  
 John & Dawn Sarrouf\*  
 Claudia Schweitzer & Brent Davison\*  
 Ellen Sibley  
 Mern Sibley & Roger Garberg\*  
 Val & Evelyn Somers\*  
 United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley  
 Muffy & Tad White\*

**\$500 to \$999**

Annisquam Sewing Circle\*  
 Mara & Duncan Balsbaugh  
 Beauport Financial Services\*  
 Nonie Brady\*  
 Cape Ann Medical Center  
 Tracy & Ed Davis\*  
 Wendy & Jody Davis  
 Joel Favazza\*  
 Ferrara Electric & Alarm  
 Gloucester Meetinghouse

Foundation\*  
 Sally & Don Goldenbaum\*  
 Beth & Allan Harrington\* (In Memory of Robert L. Goodman)  
 Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation  
 Eric & Hilarie Holdsworth\*  
 Meg Hollender\*  
 Alexandra Lepionka\*  
 Serena Low\*  
 Heidi & Joe McGrath\*  
 Larry & Sarah Oaks\*  
 Wendy Perlman\*  
 Barnaby Prendergast & Tamsin Aspinall\*  
 Maggie & Joe Rosa\*  
 Annie & Wayne Shreffler\*  
 Susan Talbot  
 The Local Beet  
 The Rotary Club of Gloucester  
 Victoria Wallins\*  
 Nancy Warny\*  
 Windover Construction

**\$1,000 to \$4,999**

Richard & Charlotte Alexander  
 Annisquam Landcare, Inc.\*  
 BankGloucester  
 Sarah & Jeffrey Bell  
 John & Janis Bell  
 Beth Israel Lahey Health Addison Gilbert Hospital\*  
 Bomco, Inc. \*  
 Ed Boudrot  
 Carla Bregman\*  
 Brookline Bank\*  
 Betsy & Mike Brown\*  
 Building Center of Gloucester\*  
 Cape Ann Savings Bank\*  
 Sarah & Gib Carey\*  
 Kenneth & Robin Carlo\*

Clif Bar Family Foundation\*  
 Cedar Rock Gardens\*  
 Linzee Coolidge\*  
 Davis-Standard\*  
 Michele & Martin Del Vecchio\*  
 Randa Dubnick  
 Barbe Ennis-Abramo\*  
 Elena & Hugh Foster  
 Joe Ann Hart & Gordon Baird\*  
 Suzanne Hogan  
 Ann & Dan Lasman\*  
 Lyon-Waugh Auto Group\*  
 Manchester Athletic Club  
 Massachusetts Service Alliance  
 MJ Mazur\*  
 Mark McDonough\*  
 David Meyer  
 MGHfc Food Allergy Center  
 Allison & Joe Mueller\*  
 Debbie Nelson  
 New England Biolabs\*  
 Brian Orr Pediatrics\*  
 Paul & Edith Babson Foundation\*  
 Sue & Sam Philbrick\*  
 Ruth Pino\*  
 Project Bread\*  
 Elizabeth Redmond\*  
 Bud & Margaret Ris  
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 Short & Main\*  
 Marianne Smith  
 Hope & Adam Suttin\*  
 Karen & Dick Taggart\*  
 The Caleb Group\*  
 Frederick E. Weber Charities Corporation\*  
 Richard Wilson Fund\*  
 WORKS by Jesse DeBenedictis\*  
 Jennifer & William Zola\*

**\$5,000 to \$9,999**

Anonymous  
 Essex County Community Foundation  
 Johanna Chao Kreilick & Eric Paul Kreilick\*  
 McCarthy Family Foundation\*  
 New England Biolabs Foundation\*

**\$10,000+**

Applied Materials Foundation\*  
 Bruce J. Anderson Foundation\*  
 100 Women Who Care Cape Ann Saab Foundation  
 The Boston Foundation/Open Door Grant  
 The Cummings Foundation  
 The Lenny Zakim Fund\*  
 Western Philanthropies  
 Whole Foods

Note: Our goal is to keep the most accurate records possible. If you notice a discrepancy, please contact Melanie Murray-Brown, Development Director [melanie@backyardgrowers.org](mailto:melanie@backyardgrowers.org).



*"As a former principal, I have seen firsthand that children learn eagerly and enthusiastically through the programs of Backyard Growers. The basic core of the work they do brings communities together. When I donate to Backyard Growers I know that funds will be well spent on quality teacher training and a curriculum that helps students learn how to take care of themselves and their communities by growing food together. I know my gift is making a difference."*

## YOUR SUPPORT EMPOWERS US TO FIGHT FOR FOOD JUSTICE & FOOD SECURITY

### The Impact of Giving: Ellen's Story

Ellen Sibley was the principal at Beeman Memorial School in Gloucester and the first to welcome Backyard Growers school garden program to her community. In those early days, she helped provide valuable feedback and support to Backyard Growers educators and continues to champion our work through her financial support.



**Want to help sustain and support  
Backyard Growers in the community?  
Some of the ways to take action are...**



**DONATE.** Visit [backyardgrowers.org/donate](https://backyardgrowers.org/donate) to give online or mail in.



**VOLUNTEER.** We've streamlined the volunteer application. Visit [backyardgrower.org/volunteer-with-us](https://backyardgrower.org/volunteer-with-us) to learn more and apply.



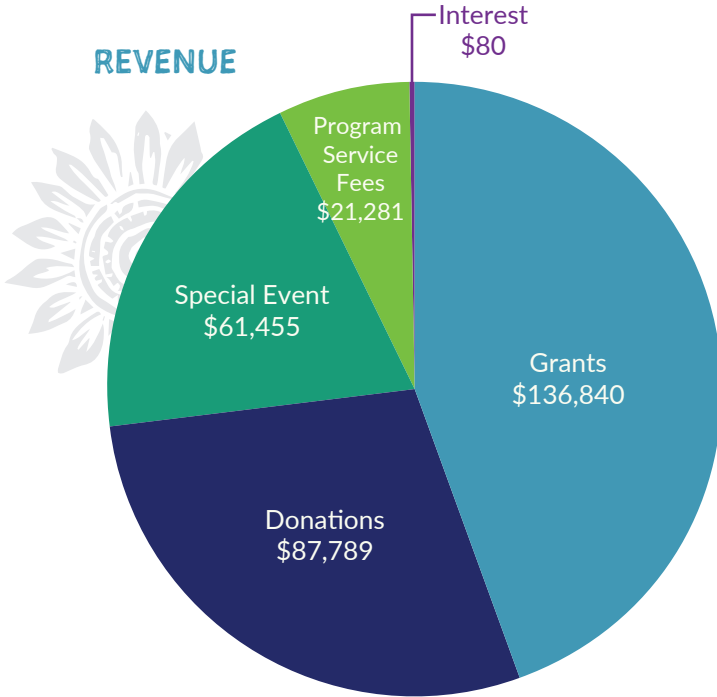
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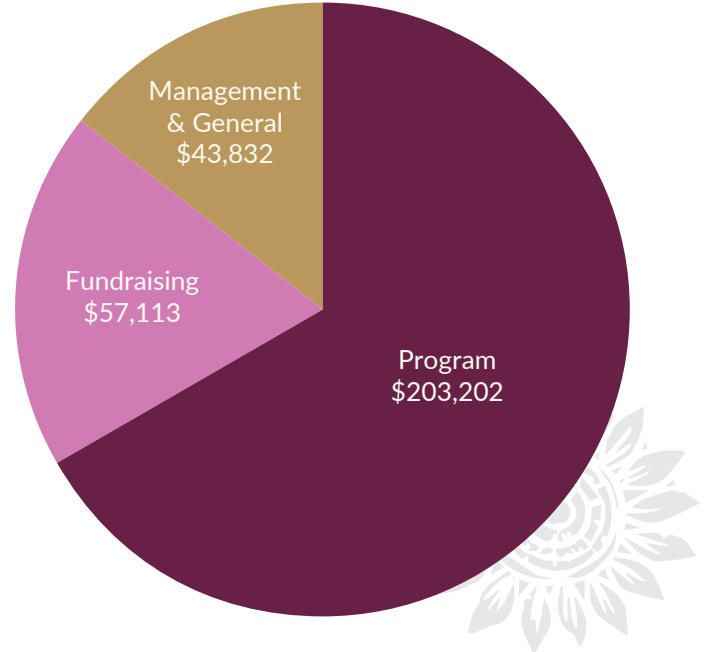
# 2019 REVENUE & EXPENSES

## REVENUE



**Total: \$307,445**

## EXPENSES



**Total: \$304,147**



[backyardgrowers.org](https://backyardgrowers.org)

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[info@backyardgrowers.org](mailto:info@backyardgrowers.org)

 BackyardGrowersProgram

 @backyardgrowers

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