



(Confidential information redacted)

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**Organization mission statement (required)**

Sustainable Community Gardens is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the renewal of local, sustainable food systems throughout Silicon Valley. Our mission is to reconnect our community--especially our children--with growing and eating fresh, seasonal, locally grown food in order to effect positive change in not only physical health, but also in mental and spiritual well-being.

**Organization description (required)**

SCG provides affordable access to community-supported, organically grown food, as well as hands-on outdoor education in environmental living, nutrition, farming, and gardening. We reach an ethnically diverse community of all ages and demographics. We are committed to land preservation and nurturing our soil and environment in order to create a sustainable future. Our 300-tree historic orchard is one of the only large-scale fruit orchards to be put back into the "Valley of Heart's Delight" in the last 75 years.

Full Circle Farm provides "farm-fresh" produce to the Santa Clara Unified School District's School lunch program and donates tens of thousands of pounds of produce to local food banks and shelters each year. We provide garden-based learning to junior-high students all school year long. Our programs positively affect academic performance in a number of subjects, especially science and English. Empowering children with the work, rewards, and enjoyment of growing your own food can create a life-long appreciation for fresh, healthy food and meaningful physical work and play. These meaningful experiences will shape our youth of today into the leaders of a sustainable future for tomorrow.

**3.**

**Proposal Information**

**Proposal information**

Full Circle Farm Garden-based Education Program

**Total requested grant amount (required)**

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**Activities description (required)**

Full Circle Farm's Garden-based Education Program allows young teens to experience the empowerment of planting, caring for, harvesting, and eating one's own food. The program brings junior-high life-science students to SCG's Full Circle Farm--a working 11-acre farm in the heart of Silicon Valley--where they get hands-on experience with sustainable agriculture while learning vital life-science lessons.

**Activities purpose (required)**

The Santa Clara Valley has changed greatly from when its main industry was agriculture. Orchards have given way to office parks, and today's Silicon Valley teenagers spend most of their time indoors interacting with electronic devices of one sort or another.

Full Circle Farm's Garden-based Education Program gets

junior-high students back outdoors and in direct contact with the fertile soil of "the Valley of Heart's Delight." The program seeks to engender an appreciation for fresh, healthy food--and for the environment from which it comes. As students learn important life-science concepts, they also learn to value the natural world and all that it offers us, both physically and psychologically.

From plant genetics to human physiology to food security, the Garden-based Education Program aims to change the way that Silicon Valley's young people view the food they eat and the way it's produced. We grow our produce using organic, sustainable methods that nurture the soil and the diverse habitat around us. Our program helps connect children with their food, their planet, and each other.

**Project funds how used  
(required)**

Funds from the Stewardship Council will allow us to expand the reach our garden-based education to include 7th-grade math and elective arts students, and to support the 8th-grade culinary arts curriculum. In order to accomplish this, we will double the size of our Educational Garden and acquire necessary materials and supplies.

**4.**

**Program Intensity and Length**

**Ongoing opportunities for youth (required)**

Our Garden-based Education Program runs throughout the school year, with each student group typically making two visits per month. Because of this ongoing schedule, students get a chance to build a strong relationship with Full Circle Farm and their own garden projects. They tend to the plots from seed to harvest, planting multiple crops throughout the year and seeing their efforts rewarded with organic vegetables, leafy greens, and other produce. As each crop is harvested, they're able to share with their families not only fresh, healthy food, but also their personal stories about working in--and with--nature.

On each visit, students split their time between garden work and hands-on learning activities. Full Circle Farm's educational staff have worked closely with science teachers to ensure that lessons cover key life-science concepts as well as elements of California's curriculum standards. Students also keep garden journals to help them remember important realizations and milestones.

Students participating in the Garden-based Education Program are also encouraged and empowered to help their community improve food security for their neighbors.

**5.**

**Organization Capacity**

**Organization staff upload (required)**

[SCG\\_OrganizationKeyStaff\\_2010CatalystRound2.doc \(505.5 K\)](#)

**Organization cultural relevance  
(required)**

Full Circle Farm grows food from around the world. We highlight varieties from India, Asia, and North and South America to represent the diverse backgrounds of our students, their families, and other community members. Students create food maps that trace plants back to their origin and use those maps at tabling events on the farm.

Our goals for 2010 include establishing a Cultural Diversity Education Garden that will enable young people to grow

traditional foods from their culture, and to share those foods--and the stories behind them--with other students.

## 6.

### Outcomes and Evaluation

<b>Project youth benefits - academic achievement (required)</b>	Yes
<b>Project youth benefits - career development (required)</b>	Yes
<b>Project youth benefits - civic engagement (required)</b>	Yes
<b>Project youth benefits - environmental stewardship (required)</b>	Yes
<b>Project youth benefits - health and wellness (required)</b>	Yes
<b>Project youth benefits - youth development (required)</b>	Yes
<b>Project primary youth outcomes (required)</b>	<p>Research shows that farm and garden programs have a unique ability to help kids unplug, slow down, and reconnect with people, healthy food, and the natural world. In a two-year study of Berkeley's Edible Schoolyard project conducted by the Center for Ecoliteracy, Harvard researchers found that participants had better grades in math and science, felt safer at school, had significantly less stress, and made healthier eating choices of their own accord.</p> <p>The Santa Clara Unified School District has three Title I schools, one in four students classified as obese, a majority of students reporting that they feel stressed most of the time, and a significant achievement gap in math and science for disadvantaged Latino students. So far, more than xxx 7th-grade science students have participated in the Garden-based Education Program. We are heartened by qualitative surveys filled out by students and teachers that report academic improvements in math and science and a greater appreciation of fresh, healthy food. We expect these outcomes to become even stronger as the Garden-based Education Program is refined and expanded.</p>
<b>Project outcome measurement (required)</b>	<p>As mentioned, students and teachers have already reported gratifying results from the Garden-based Education Program in both academic achievement and attitudes toward food. Recently, a grant from the Silicon Valley Health Corps provided us with nine AmeriCorps members for one year. One of their projects was a quantitative survey (pre and post testing) of Garden-based Education Program participants. Data collection was completed in November, 2009. We are hoping to have the data analyzed soon by The Health Trust, the lead local agency of the Health Corps.</p>

## 7.

### Demographic Information

<b>Population served (required)</b>	<p>In the Santa Clara Unified School District, million-dollar homes stand alongside run-down apartment complexes. For those students on the "have not" side of the economic equation, food comes from the supermarket or the drive-thru. Often, they don't even have backyards in which to develop their own gardens.</p> <p>There is a strong connection between how kids relate to food in our culture and their long-term health. The picture for poor urban and suburban youth is not pretty: junk food is marketed in schools, parents are strapped for time and money to create healthy meals, neighborhood markets in poorer areas offer more alcohol than produce, sedentary lifestyles are the norm, and</p>
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nutrition education is, on the whole, a failure.

Farm and garden programs are a shining exception to that grim outlook. By engaging children in the fun of raising their own food, programs such as the one at Full Circle Farm offer a powerful way to reconnect young people--especially disadvantaged kids--with their food, their bodies, and their natural environment.

Full Circle Farm's integrated educational programs put students in charge of the work, responsibilities, and rewards of growing, harvesting, preparing, and eating freshly grown food. This challenging and rewarding experience can create lifelong eating habits that shape the way youth think about not only their food, but the associated choices they can make in creating a sustainable future.