



Urban Harvest



**ANNUAL REPORT
2016-2017**

FARMERS MARKET PROGRAM

The Saturday Farmers Market at Eastside supports small local farms and businesses.



of vendors operate with fewer than 10 employees.



1 in 5 vendors derive over 50% of their income from Eastside Farmers Market sales.

98% of vendors indicate that their farm/business is better off due to their participation in the farmers market.

Locally-owned retailers such as our farmers market vendors return more than

3x

as much of their sales to the local economy than chain competitors do.

YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

Urban Harvest's Youth Education Program reached



5,600 students

with hands-on garden education. Children in school garden programs try new fruits and vegetables, eat healthier, and are more active.

Our programs support over **5,130 acres** of growing space in diversified production.



of farmers have sustainable or organic growing practices.

Malk Organics

PRODUCT: Nut Milks made from Almonds, Cashews and Texas Pecans

START: 2014

FOUNDERS: August Vega, Justin Broadnax, Joel Canada

AT FARMERS MARKET: 2014-2015

IN-STORES: Whole Foods, Central Market, Target, Kroger, Sprouts, HEB



"Urban Harvest is where it all started for MALK. We consistently sold out of our products, and it really validated all of the hard work and effort our team was putting in the idea of making the cleanest nut milks on the market. We are now the first company to launch pecan milk, a delicious beverage that is now sold nationwide. Urban Harvest provided the perfect outlet to launch our company."

- August Vega

The Saturday Farmers Market generates an economic impact of over

\$2.9 million

for Houston's local economy and food system.

COMMUNITY GARDENS PROGRAM

This year, Urban Harvest distributed free plant starts, seeds, fertilizer, and educational materials to our affiliate gardens, creating a potential for over

104,000



pounds of organic, locally grown produce for Houston communities.

Urban Harvest supported 108 gardens in 2017. Over

60,000

pounds of fruits and vegetables from these gardens were donated to shelters, food pantries, corner stores and soup kitchens around the city.

YOUR DONATION AT WORK

In 2017, the Hubs distributed 4,282 plant starts to reach 66 gardens across Houston. That's over 104,000 pounds of food!

Feeding Houston, one garden at a time

Our affiliate garden network accounts for nearly five acres of diversified, organic growing space throughout the greater Houston area. If these gardens grow at their full capacity, collectively they can grow 303,000 pounds of food – or 252,000 meals – annually!

In 2017, Urban Harvest focused on providing the resources to empower our gardens to become productive and sustainable, ensuring that Houston growers are equipped with the tools and education needed to become well-established and to provide our city with the food and meals that nourish us.

One strategy we devised to support gardens on their path to sustainability was our new Hub Distribution program. The Hub Distributions were launched to connect affiliate gardens in neighboring communities with one another, as a way to share ideas and resources.

The distributions offer seasonal transplants, seeds, and organic fertilizer, along with education on proper planting, maintenance, and additional gardening advice, to our affiliate gardens three times per year. Plant distributions include tomatoes and peppers in March, sweet potato slips in May, and brassica varieties in October. In 2017, we supported 108 affiliate community gardens.

Hubs are now spread across five sites throughout the city: Alabama Gardens is located in the Third Ward, Palm Center Community Garden in Southeast Houston, Westbury Community Garden in Southwest Houston, Gregory Lincoln Education Center in the Montrose, and Wilchester Elementary School in West Houston. In 2018, Gregory Lincoln Education Center replaced Christ The Good Shepherd as a Hub.





Farmers Market Increases Reach Through SNAP program

In 2017, Urban Harvest partnered with Wholesome Wave and Memorial Hermann to launch the FVRx program at the Saturday Farmers Market at Eastside. The FVRx program provided fruit and vegetable “prescriptions” for those suffering from diet-related illnesses. The program was a win-win for food-insecure families and area farmers.



The success of the pilot paved the way for us to begin accepting SNAP benefits at our farmers market in November. Since the program’s launch, our market has transformed into the leading farmers market for SNAP sales in the city of Houston. The market has seen over \$2,100 in SNAP transactions. 46 out of our 50 eligible vendors have received sales from these transactions, meaning that 92% have directly benefited from the program.

Over two-thirds of these sales – upwards of \$1,400 – have been put toward fresh agricultural products, including produce, meats, eggs, and dairy.

At the same time, SNAP at the market creates a new customer base for our vendors, providing additional income at a time when wages and incomes among farmers and farm laborers are historically low (FAO). The SNAP program promotes food security that makes the local Houston food system more sustainable, more equitable, and more accessible.

We are now eagerly looking for opportunities to offer additional benefits like FVRx and SNAP that increase farmer income and expand access to healthy, fresh foods to customers and families who need it.



The program has opened up new pathways for low-income Houstonians to get to know their farmer and access fresh, healthy, and local products, directly from their source.