



Huerta del Valle
jardín comunitario

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

July 1 2020 - June 30 2021

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2020-2021

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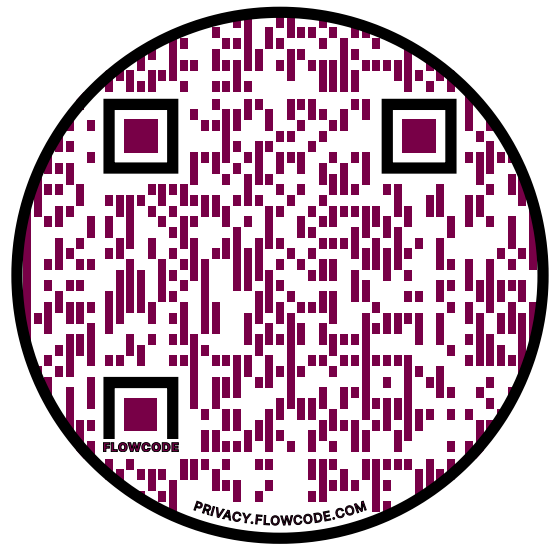
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Latest News

for up to date news and info scan the code below:



Cover Photo

NECILS LOPEZ/Office for Collective Architecture

INDEX

2020-2021

INDEX.....	PAGE 03
ANNUAL REFLECTION.....	PAGE 04
MISSION.....	PAGE 05
THE NEED IN THE IE.....	PAGE 07
PROGRAMS REVIEW.....	PAGE 10
COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE.....	PAGE 11
AGRICULTORES DEL VALLE.....	PAGE 12
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING.....	PAGE 14
ONTARIO.....	PAGE 17
JURUPA VALLEY.....	PAGE 18
SAN BERNARDINO.....	PAGE 19
CRESTMORE.....	PAGE 20
JENSEN ALVARADO.....	PAGE 21
LOUIS RUBIDOUX.....	PAGE 22
TCC CARBON FARM.....	PAGE 22
EDUCATION CENTER.....	PAGE 23
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	PAGE 26
FUNDERS.....	PAGE 27
2021 HDV TEAM.....	PAGE 28
VOLUNTEERS.....	PAGE 29
REFERENCES.....	PAGE 30

REFLECTING ON 2021

executive summary

¡Bienvenidos!

This year Covid -19 has affected our communities greatly with many losses of our loved ones; their absence is felt hugely as this was the first year where their seats are empty at our tables during annual gatherings, as well as our hearts.

However during this time, Huerta del Valle is able to bring the community strength, compassion, and unity during these difficult times where many have felt alone and isolated. We are dedicated more than ever to continue to serve the most vulnerable communities which continue to be affected by the impacts of the pandemic, and be a place of safety, support, and healing to those that need it.

HDV is a resource to all through our gardens and programs to find personal growth, peace, and love in all aspects of life.

With love, HDV will continue to educate and raise awareness in the communities that we serve in our region.



Maria Alonso
CEO - Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Maria Alonso.



OUR MISSION

one garden every mile

Our Mission

Our mission is to cultivate an organization of community members to grow our own organic crops. Through growing our food we work toward sustainable community empowerment and health: creating meaningful work, building lasting skills and developing strong relationships within the region. "Growing change in the Inland Valley."

Our Vision

We envision one garden every mile in our region. We envision a city where all people can eat delicious, nutritious, fresh, local, sustainably produced, and just food through farming, healthy food access, nutrition education, sustainable production and distribution, and economic development.

Our Approach

We work toward community empowerment and health through growing food: creating meaningful work, building lasting skills, and developing strong relationships within the region.

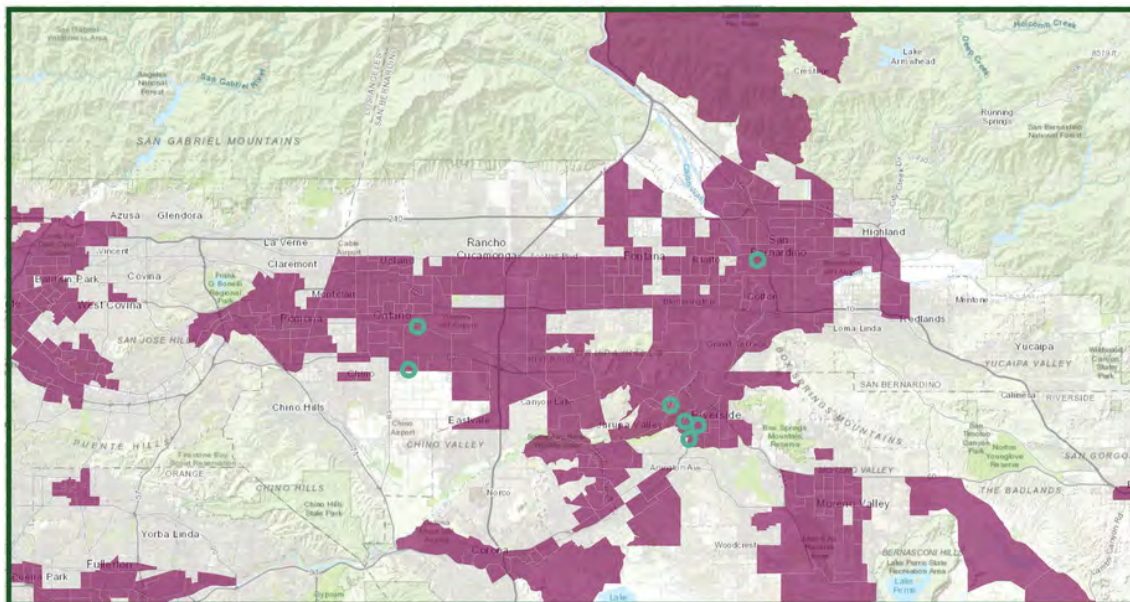
Our Methods

- Create and operate community gardens and urban farms
- Provide access to affordable "beyond organic" produce for all to access locally through open markets at our sites
- Teach community about ecology, sustainability, and nutrition through agricultural education programs
- Compost local food waste
- Localize our food system through increasing urban agriculture, especially through new farmer training and land access in incubation
- Create agricultural careers and leadership opportunities for adults and youth
- Develop replicable local practices for economic and environmental justice

OUR MISSION

one garden every mile

SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities



September 9, 2020

Map of socially disadvantaged communities in the inland region

○ Huerta del Valle's planned project sites

1:288,895
0 3 6 12 mi
0 4.75 9.5 19 km
City of Fontana, County of Riverside, San Bernardino County,
Bureau of Land Management, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA,
EPA, USDA, NPS
<https://www.esri.com/pressroom/pressreleases/2017/12/08/2017120801.html>

Through our vision of growing "one garden every mile", we are actively transforming our urban landscape and impacting systemic inequity in the local communities around our projects. We provide affordable access to high-quality foods through sustainable land management, encouraging greener industries and jobs to grow in our area. We want Huerta del Valle and our projects to serve as an innovative model of sustainable environmental justice. We are proud to highlight our seven sites, all creating community impact and growth. Each year our vision is becoming more of our reality.

1. Ontario - Funding Community Garden
2. Jurupa Valley - Second Community Garden
3. TCC - Carbon Farm Project Composting Project
4. Jensen Alvarado Ranch - Incubator space and CSA Farm
5. Crestmore Manor - Incubation Farm & Pilot Farm
6. Louis Rubidoux Nature Center - a 40-acre partnership
7. San Bernardino Community Garden - Jardin de la Salud - Loma Linda

THE NEED IN OUR REGION

2020-2021

The Inland Empire (IE) is a Southern California region inland of L.A. County comprising Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Communities here face interconnected economic, environmental, and health issues which HdV seeks to address.

Poverty

- Over 16% of IE residents live in poverty.
- In 2019, more than half of IE families did not earn enough to “make ends meet”.
- California’s SB 535 designates most areas in which HdV operates as “disadvantaged communities.”

Pollution

- The tall mountains surrounding the IE trap toxic air pushed inland by onshore winds, putting every area HdV serves into the top percentile for pollution; our flagship site zip code (91761) is ranked one of the five most polluted in SoCal.
- The major industry in the IE is the logistics industry, which is a huge contributor to air pollution in the region because of diesel trucks.

The Consequences

Poverty and pollution in the IE contribute to chronic illnesses such as depression, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Other contributing factors include poor nutrition and pervasive food insecurity.



THE NEED

2020-2021



Food Insecurity

Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Food Desert

- An area, usually low-income, in which many residents cannot easily get to stores that sell affordable, healthful foods.
- A geographic area where:
 - a. the poverty rate is 20% or greater, or a median family's income is less than or equal to 80% of the statewide median family income,
 - and b. at least 33% of the population resides more than one mile from a supermarket or grocery store within urban areas, or 10 miles in rural areas.

The Inland Empire

- Nearly 1 in 10 residents struggle with some form of food insecurity.
- 8.6% of census tracts in San Bernardino County have been identified as High Poverty/Low Access Food Deserts: low-access tracts where 50% or more of the population earns less than 185% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened these issues for many. In Riverside County, applications to the CalFresh food assistance program more than doubled from February to April 2020. As of March 2021, these numbers still have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Health Consequences

- Food insecure children are more likely to develop behavioral problems, depression, stress, and other psychological issues.
- Food insecure families are more likely to opt for cheaper, less healthy foods, leading to increased rates of heart disease, hyperglycemia, hypoglycemia, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.



"We just have to convince other people that they have power. This is what they can do by participating to make change, not only in their community, but many times changing in their own lives. Once they participate, they get their sense of power."

- Dolores Huerta

LEARNING AT HUERTA DEL VALLE

growing together

Education

We believe education is an essential part of understanding our place in a powerful and connected world. HdV continues to strive to cultivate awareness about our community, environment, and selves; and how we can work together to make positive impacts in our region.

Strategy

Our strategy involves all ages; children, adolescents, and adults - analyzing critical problems and engaging them in active problem-solving. HdV aims to achieve this by facilitating classes, internships, training, field trips, and workshops through our various programs.

Pandemic

COVID-19 continues to be a challenge we are adapting to. While it has prevented us from running our programs as we normally would like to, we continue to be creative and find ways to transform and shift our programming to meet the times. This challenge has actually opened up the opportunity to expand our reach through online classes, and we've been able to maintain connection in new ways.

Amidst everything, our gardens are a blessing because they continue to provide safe beautiful outdoor green space where communities can continue to interact and enjoy and escape the isolation of the pandemic. To continue to offer this space while reducing risks during this time, we continue to provide all of our sites with gloves, hand sanitizer, masks, safe distancing, and disinfecting gardening equipment after use.



CSA PROGRAM

Community Supported Agriculture

During 2021, we are grateful to continue providing essential services and support for many during the pandemic that is greatly impacting our communities.

Our mutual aid efforts in 2020 inspired us to expand our CSA program to include mutual food aid partnerships with local organizations, helping us to increase our overall impact and reach to those that need it the most in a more sustained way. So we now offer a 20% discount on produce boxes for community organizations buying CSA boxes in bulk for mutual aid.

Through this new collaborative model we feel we can continue to grow mutual food aid in the region. Our partnerships this year include: Feed Black Futures, the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ), Loma Linda University Hospital, Youth Mentoring Action Network, People of South Gate. In total, we distributed over 900 produce boxes through these partnerships this past year where our quality produce supported: families affected by COVID-19, unemployment, incarceration, and other life stressors.

Mutual aid continues to be vital during this time where through donation or partnerships we can continue to provide fresh high quality nutrient dense local produce which can help to sustain health, wellness, and resiliency to our communities.

In our regular individual CSA memberships, individuals can pay for individual boxes or can sign up and pay for the entire season upfront for \$5 off per box. On top of this, we continue to offer discounted options for members paying with EBT/SNAP, to make our program even more accessible to those in need.

Autumn Yanez-Jacobo is our CSA and Market Manager and we are grateful for her to helping us grow our CSA program to what it is today.



Summer CSA Box



CSA Boxes ready for delivery!

FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM

Agricultores Del Valle (ADV)

Agricultores del Valle (ADV), is our innovative and comprehensive farmer training program that debuted in May 2019 and graduated 20 farmers in the first cohort, with 14 in incubation. Our program is a 6 month program that was co-developed with community members, local experts, and our staff to feature various topics including: community building and critical agriculture, agroecological theory, organizational and financial management, and farm management and production. Learning styles include: classroom lectures, hands on workshops, field trips, and panels. We prioritize local BIPOC (black indigenous people of color) students as well as instructors in our programming and we also offer scholarships to increase accessibility.

This was our second year of running the program and we faced the unexpected challenge of adapting this program to implement Covid-19 health guidelines. Our farmer training program coordinator, Tracey Kimura was able to quickly pivot the program to feature both online and in person outdoor instruction. Online learning presented technical challenges for our community, but also helped the collective to obtain new skillsets. Being able to continue this program was a respite from the isolation of the pandemic for most. Despite the challenges, we were able to still graduate 14 new farmers from our program, and our expecting to double this amount next year.

We had a lot of great collaborations in this years program and this year we worked with LA Coop Lab to implement Cooperative Business Curriculum as a way to encourage more coops and provide basic business training. Within the program we also got to visit some incredible farms including: Tanaka Farms, Amy's Farm, and Lopez Urban Farm. We had incredible instructors share classes for our programming, and some were even alumni from previous years!

Our program is also unique as it provides essential land access to graduates who can apply to access ¼ acre of land at one of three locations. The lease can be renewed up to five years to help graduates start up their own agricultural business. This program is the first of its kind in the Inland Valley and represents our long-term effort to increase access to land for disadvantaged farmers while also helping to grow our local food system.

We provide an excellent program, and at the moment we are running solely from the tuition of students, as we have not yet received any support from grants. In the future we hope to acquire funding so that we can continue to enhance this offering by providing more scholarships, micro-grants, apprenticeships, and career fairs for our students and graduates. Each year our program continues to evolve and improve with the help of new partners and additional funding support.

FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM

Agricultores Del Valle (ADV)



2020 Seeding Trays



2020 Irrigation



2020 Planting Class



2020 Amy's Farm Field Trip



2020 Seeding Trays



2020 Harvest and Processing



2020 Fruit Pruning Workshop



2020 Planting Garlic



2020 Beekeeping



2020 ADV Graduation



2020 Farmer Self Defense

GOING VIRTUAL

online food preservation workshops

This year, we partnered heavily with our partner organizations, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District and UC Cooperative Extension Master Food Preservers to bring the following food preservation workshops to our community members completely free of charge.

We centered around the theme of food preservation in the effort to raise awareness on sustainability issues such as food waste, regenerative and ethical farming, and shopping/eating local.

Throughout these workshops we sought to address some of the most crucial barriers to access local residents may experience: time, cost, knowledge, language, and opportunity. We narrowed this gap by purchasing all required materials: vegetables and fruits from local organic farmers including HdV, spices and jars; modifying our content into concise yet easy to understand material for the participant watching at home, provided live Spanish interpretation and utilized diversified marketing streams to engage people from all over the Inland Empire.

How to Pickle Safely at Home -- this workshop was focused on preserving any excess vegetables one might have lying around the kitchen and shed light on America's 30-40% food waste rate per capita which has gone up since the pandemic. Master Food Preserver Dee Denton taught us all how to safely pickle carrots, zucchini, jalapeños, onions, cucumbers and garlic using vinegar.

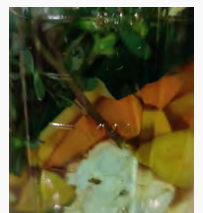
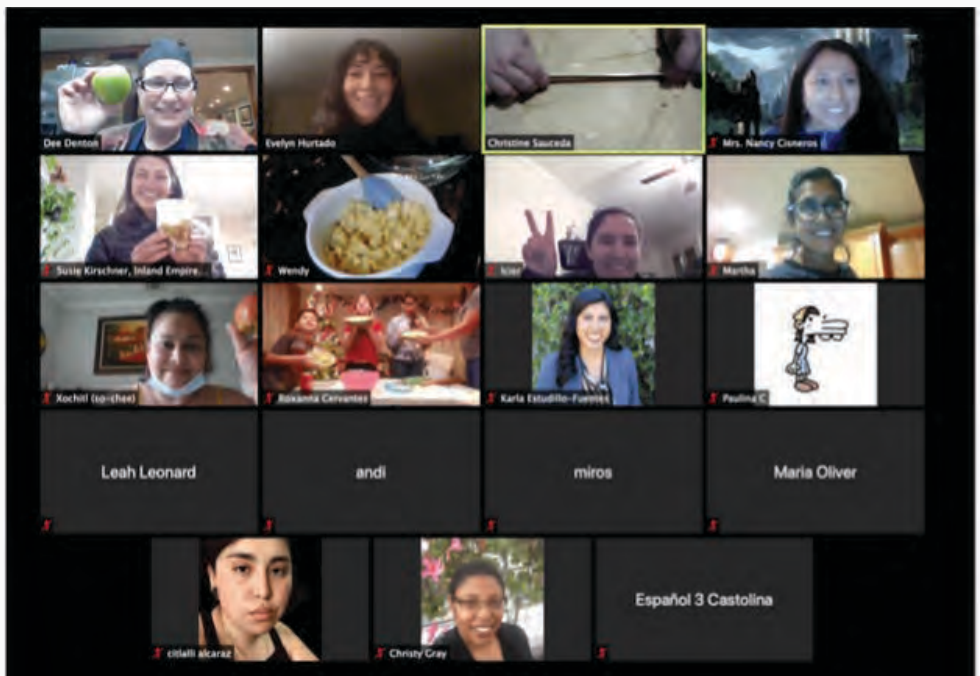
How to Pickle Safely at Home #2 -- this workshop was presented to students at Cal State San Bernardino, in partnership with CSUSB ASI Sustainability. Master Food Preserver Dee Denton taught us all how to safely pickle white turnip, watermelon radish, mexican squash, onion, garlic, and chile serranos using vinegar.

Make Apple Pie Filling... At Home! -- this workshop focused on making apple pie filling from scratch with organic apples sourced locally from Los Rios Rancho and Mom's Country Orchard in Oak Glen. We listened to Master Food Preserver Dee Denton as she guided us through a live demonstration as we followed along at home.

Grow-Your-Own-Salsa Kits! -- In celebration of Latino Advocacy Week, we hosted a 'Munch and Learn' event where participants received free grow-your-own-salsa kits consisting of tomato seedlings (for future tomatoes), jalapeños, onions, and cilantro. Event participants were encouraged to learn about the many local advocacy organizations in the San Bernardino County as they picked up their kits. We saw them again virtually as we showed them how to make salsa at home and tend to their new tomato plants.

GOING VIRTUAL

online food preservation workshops



***“Education does not change the world.
Education changes people.
People change the world.”
-Paulo Friere***



OUR FIRST GARDEN

Ontario - Huerta's Origin

Huerta del Valle Community Garden

Coined as "Huerta" by community members and staff, our Ontario site is our flagship location where it all began! We are modeling any new gardens from this site's development.

Highlights:

Huerta offers affordable community garden plots, where members can produce food to supplement nutrition, offset grocery costs, and engage with nature and other members in a beautiful and safe outdoor space.

Our Ontario site is home to many activities including community gardening, farm production, open markets, classes, trainings, events, field trips, and volunteering. Currently we are working to install a new irrigation system with the help of NRCS to improve our production on site.

We are now combining HDV Ontario's anniversary event with Earth day in April, as a large celebration for our community to come together to celebrate our garden and Mother Earth, we had a blast with this year at our event that featured local vendors, performers, and even a pony ride for the kids!

Andres Vicario is our staff farmer that oversees production at Ontario which is featured in our CSA program and open market on site and at our other garden sites. Our Ontario site is currently the largest composting producing site, which helps to divert thousands of pounds of food waste on an annual basis and transforms it into vital and nutrient dense natural fertilizer for our crop production.



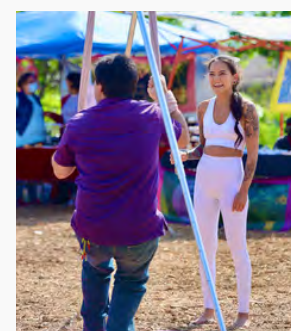
Andres Vicario, HDV Staff Farmer



Madre Tierra Event April 2021



Pony Ride at Madre Tierra Event



Lyra Performer at Madre Tierra

OUR SECOND GARDEN

Jurupa Valley

We began developing this site in December 2017 and was able to open April 2019, our second site, HdV Jurupa Valley, opened right next to Glen Avon Heritage Park. We modeled this site after our Ontario location, and we are working to make it just as successful!

Despite setbacks with the pandemic, we have still been able to grow community in the Jurupa Garden. Our Executive Director, Maria Alonso, hosts regular garden meetings on-site. A variety of events in partnership with IERCD has also allowed our community to continue to learn. At monthly meetings, we had active participation of 14 to 20 active members. Our goal is to have 45 families gardening at Huerta del Valle Jurupa.

There are more than 150 fruit trees on the premises, many donated by Dave Wilson Nursery. To date, we've successfully distributed tons of mulch and of compost throughout the site, allowing us to greatly improve and regenerate the soil.

Nicolas Reza, is our HdV farmer that oversees production at our Jurupa and Crestmore sites. Produce grown and harvested, is also used in our distribution in CSA's and open markets.

We are also excited to announce that we are working with graduates of our farmer training program to maintain bees at Jurupa. Three of our students Carlos, Benjamin, and Gonzalo have come together to form their beekeeping collective 'Del Valle Apiarian Farm' and maintain more than 20 hives at the site!

Additionally, we are continuing to host open markets at the Jurupa Valley site with increased production and community involvement!



Farmer Nicolas Reza



ADV 2019 Alumni and beekeepers at Jurupa



Lasagna mulching at Jurupa



Mulching at Jurupa

SAN BERNARDINO COMMUNITY GARDEN

Jardin de la Salud

We were granted access to our San Bernardino site in November 2019, and officially broke ground on January 2020. Our access to this land is thanks to our partnership with Loma Linda University who helped acquire and kickstart the funding to get this project going. We are so excited to continue growing our connections and community in San Bernardino.

We also experienced setbacks in development of the site, due to the pandemic, but with the support of our partners at IERCD, Loma Linda University, and the support of Maria Elena Bastian (SB Garden Coordinator) and Jorge Heredia (HDV Board Member and ED of Garcia Center for the Arts) we have been able to still grow and activate community in our new garden. So, despite challenges, we have 29 actively engaged members who built a strong community. Additionally, with the support of Loma Linda community who actively buy our produce, we continue to have the highest CSA sales at this site!

We have increased our farm production efforts at this site, and now feature this produce in our markets. As the farming production, we also expect that the garden will continue to expand and flourish and eventually fill up the 55 community garden plots available. We are excited to see this growth unfold!



Community Planting



SB Garden Sign



Final mural - community members come together to paint a beautiful and vibrant mural at the San Bernardino site

CRESTMORE

Incubator Farm

The Huerta del Valle Crestmore Site hosts our farmer Incubation program, for graduates of our farmer training program, Agricultores Del Valle (ADV). At this site, newly trained farmers can access affordable land to start their farming dreams. The goal is to get new farmers to jumpstart a sustainable urban farming community in the Inland Empire. The site has 17 incubator plots available. In addition to hosting incubators, the site is a part of the CDFA Healthy Soils Program where compost will be applied annually with the help of incubator farmers. During the pandemic, we've only permitted limited students and staff to access this site, but in the future the site will be also available to the public for more events and educational programming!



Seed Saving and Propagation Class



HDV Farmer Nicolas, teaching students how to plant garlic



Planting Class



Planting Class



Irrigation class

JENSEN ALVARADO

Food Garden & Incubation Farm

Jensen Alvarado Historic Ranch is a historical ranch and museum in the network of Riverside County Parks. The farm is a multi-use space shared with the larger community. HdV has committed to taking on about 17 acres of the total land. This will be for the use of three significant programs: farmer incubation, large-scale production for our markets, and an animal husbandry program. In addition, we are also able to steward and care for 5 acres of citrus trees that have historically been this region's most successful crop.

Jensen Alvarado had a successful and bountiful Orange harvest this year. We hope this site allows us to begin our journey with animal husbandry in the coming years. Here we have also included this site as one of the beneficiaries of CDFA's healthy soil program.

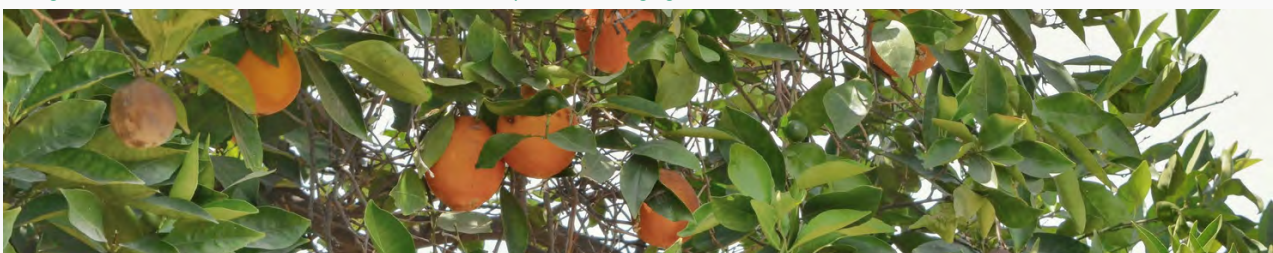
This project is also an opportunity to understand how to solve a regional issue of water supply in the Jurupa Ditch. We received \$50k through Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) for research in regards to understanding how to increase the water in the ditch to be able to provide more water for sites that use this water resource, which now only holds about 50% of the supply it needs to water all sites effectively. This problem affects 10 shareholders that rely on this source to water crops and natural habitats in the region. Working with various stakeholders, including Inland Empire Conservation District, Riverside County Parks, Orange County Water District, Sunshine Haven Animal Rescue and Wildlife Rehabilitation, and San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District; this project aims to provide a solution to a very complex and large issue that will provide great benefits to the community and ecologies that relies on this water source.



Orange harvest from Jensen Alvarado



Recently trimmed orange grove at Jensen Alvarado



Oranges from Jensen Alvarado

NEW PROJECT SITES

Coming SOON!

Through partnerships, Huerta del Valle has gained access to significant land resources to replicate and scale our work and create more land access for new farmers and existing communities. These projects are still underway!



Google satellite view of Carbon Farm



Google street view prior to acquiring site

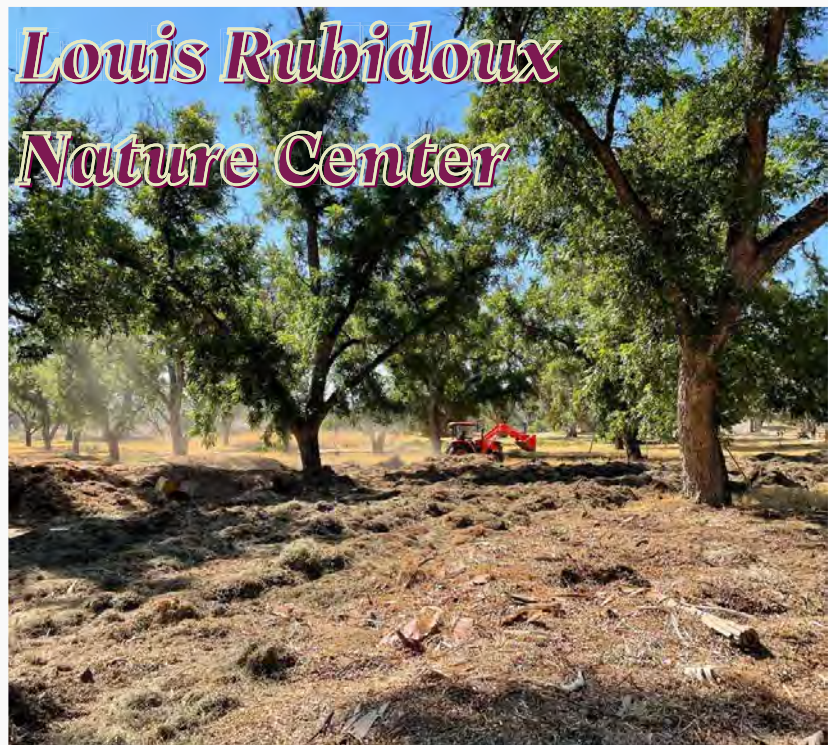


Street View of Carbon Farm leveled out

Ontario Carbon Farm



Spreading mulch at LRNC



Spreading mulch at LRNC

Louis Rubidoux Nature Center



Google satellite view of LRNC

NEW PROJECT SITES

Coming SOON!

EDUCATIONAL CENTER



The Huerta del Valle Educational Center

On January 20, 2021, the City of Ontario voted to approve the Huerta del Valle educational center project for entitlements. What started as a pro-bono student project by then Cal Poly Pomona architect students Kirill Volchinskiy and Necils Lopez is now a real possibility for the communities at Huerta del Valle.

This building serves to remind us of the role that architecture can have. Participatory design can empower communities and advance organizations working towards social change.

Since the first sketch was drawn back in 2015 to now, the Education Center has successfully had its parcels merged, zone changed, and has received entitlement (permission to build)!

Thank you to Councilman Ruben Valencia for assisting with the project at a key moment, and to Fausto Reyes for being our champion at the City. Thank you to Jerry Burke and Cash Sutton for countless hours of engineering work and Engineers Without Borders for sticking with this project for years. Thank you to Chuck Mercier, Cathy Wahlstrom, and Rudy Zeledon of Ontario Planning.

NEW PROJECT SITES

Continued



Where We Are

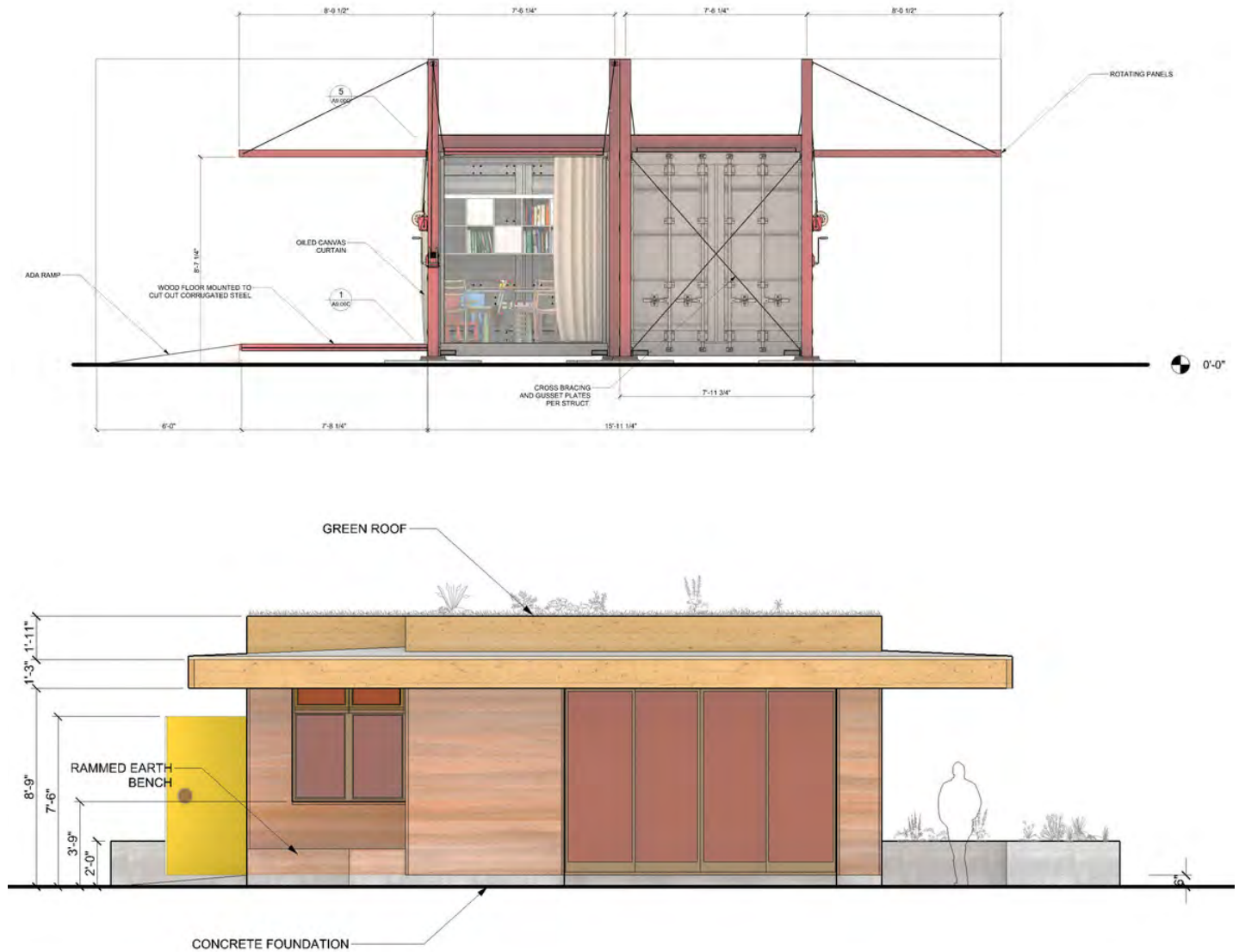


The Huerta del Valle Educational Center

- Constructed from recycled steel, the communal kitchen will host our popular nutrition and cooking classes.
- The rammed earth classroom will host all of our other educational programming, plus an administrative desk to increase our community engagement capacity.
- Meetings and events will be hosted in the amphitheater.
- The shade structure will provide much-needed shade from the hot sun while its solar panels generate energy for the rest of the center.
- Design of the educational center was led by the community
- The land has been rezoned to support the proposed uses
- Project has been approved by the City of Ontario in February
- Shovel Ready Project

NEW PROJECT SITES

Continued



Designed from regenerative principles, the center will stand to provide the community benefits for many generations. Where we've previously had to host classes and meetings off site in external community centers, we will now be able to host them on site for the foreseeable future.

This not only reduces long term overhead costs of renting external spaces for classes and staff meetings, but also creates more opportunities for the community to connect with one another and the farm, deepening social relationships and creating ritual habits that impact long term behavior.

A vibrant community garden path decorated with colorful paper flags and streamers. The path is lined with trees and plants, and several people, including children and adults, are walking through it. The scene is bright and festive, with a clear blue sky visible through the branches.

thank you

YOUR SUPPORT ALLOWS US TO REIMAGINE
WHAT COMMUNITY GARDENS LOOKS LIKE IN
THE INLAND EMPIRE.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

We love you all!!!

Rathmann Family Foundation
Inland Empire Resource Conservation District
Pitzer College and CASA Pitzer
Scripps College
Claremont McKenna College
UC Agriculture and Natural Resources
Chino Basin Water Conservation District
City of Ontario
Riverside County Parks and Open Space agency
Jurupa Area Parks and Recreation District
CSU San Bernardino
Loma Linda University Health
Inland Empire Health Plan
Offices of Freddie Rodriguez
Offices of Connie Leyva
Strategic Growth Council of CA
NRCS-Redlands (Inland Empire)
USDA-NIFA
CA Department of Food and Agriculture
Cal Recycle

Thank you to so many more who continue to trust in us!

THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR'S HDV TEAM

You make this vision a reality!!!

STAFF

Maria Alonso - Executive Director
Necils Lopez - Projects Director
Evelyn Hurtado - Market Coordinator (IERCD)
Andres Vicario - Farmer (Ontario)
Nicolas Reza - Farmer (Crestmore & Jensen Alvarado)
Maria Elena Batista - SB Site Manager
Tracey (Walters) Kimura - New Farmer Training Coordinator
Autumn Yanez-Jacobo - Market and CSA Coordinator
Berenice Mendoza - Volunteer Coordinator
Xochitl Alejo - Administrative and Office Staff

TEAM

Lucy Ceja - Market Volunteer (IERCD)

BOARD MEMBERS

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Thank you to our staff, who have embarked on new journeys.

Arthur Levine - Former Projects Director

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

The core of all we do here at Huerta!!!



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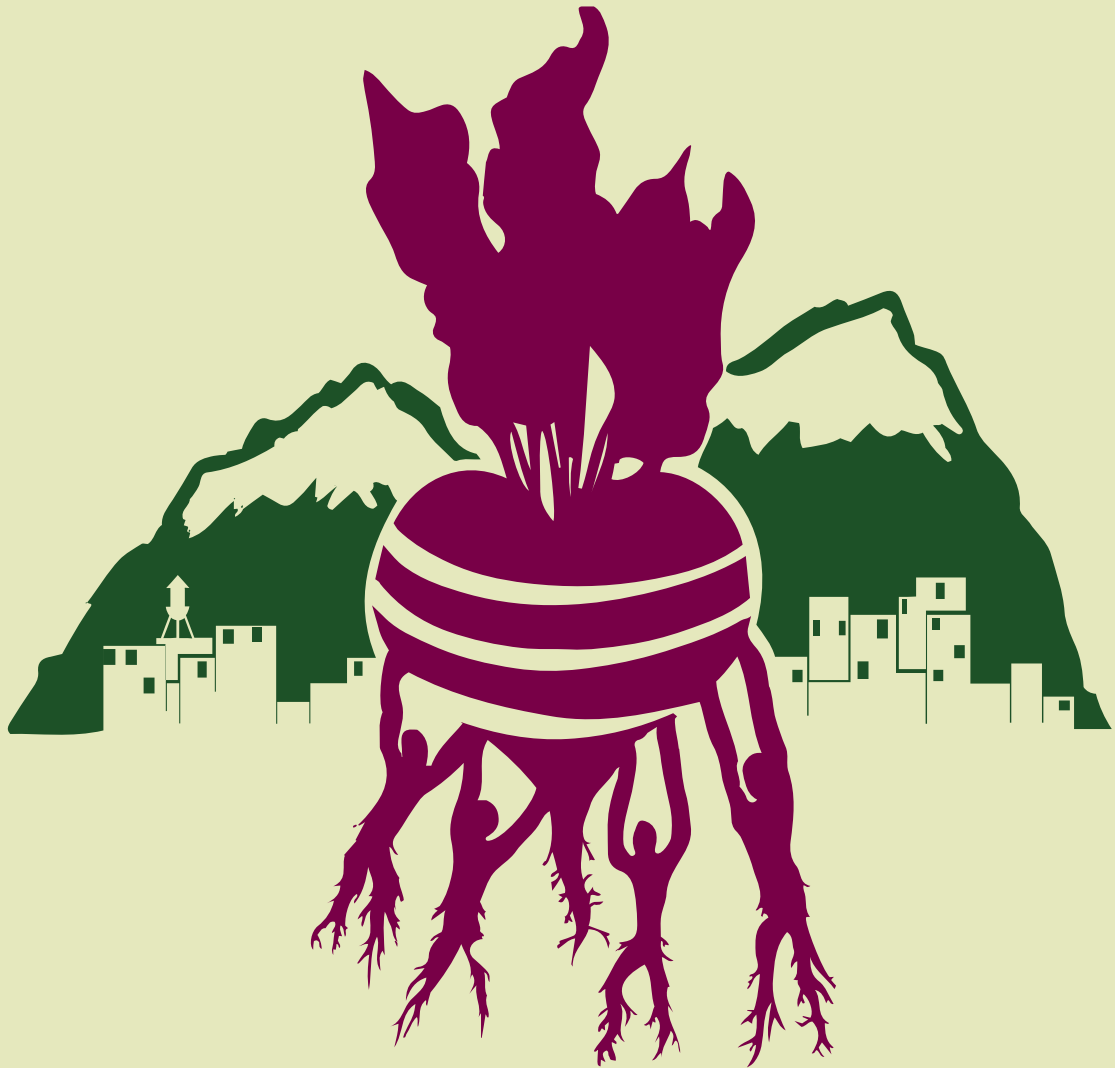
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