

From Seed to Success

Justice Creation Fellowship Story
Summer 2025 UCM Greater Houston

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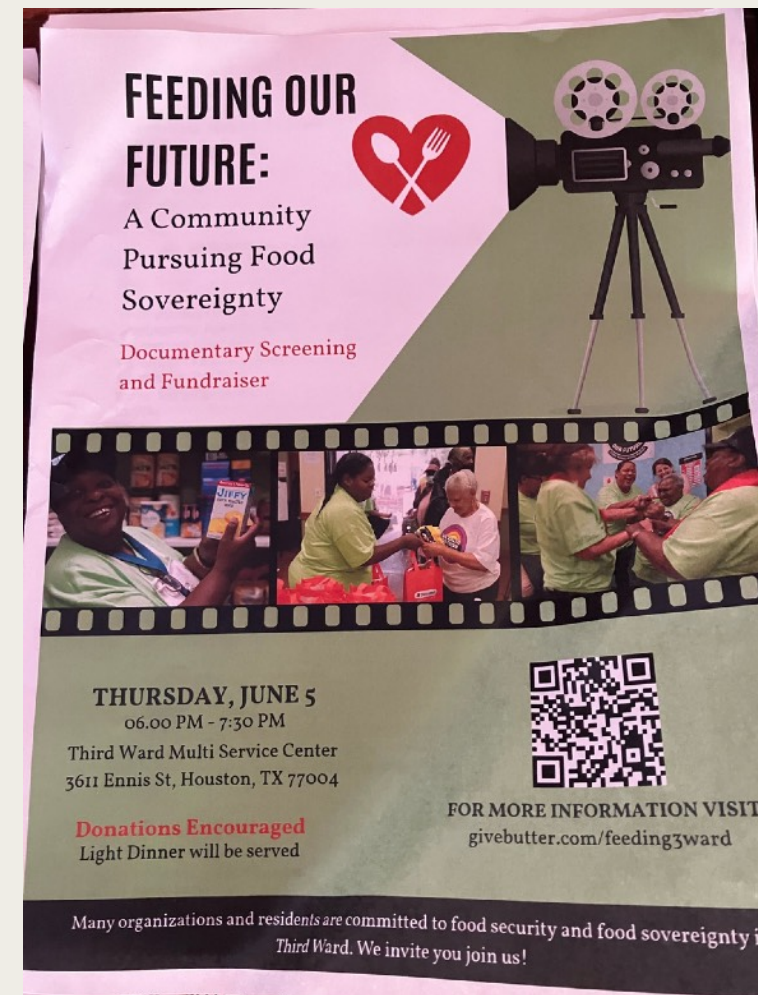


*Enjoy the
Little Things*

The needs of Third Ward....

○ Food Desert

A food desert can be described as an area where residents lack access to nutritious food due to limited transportation and a lack of functional grocery stores.

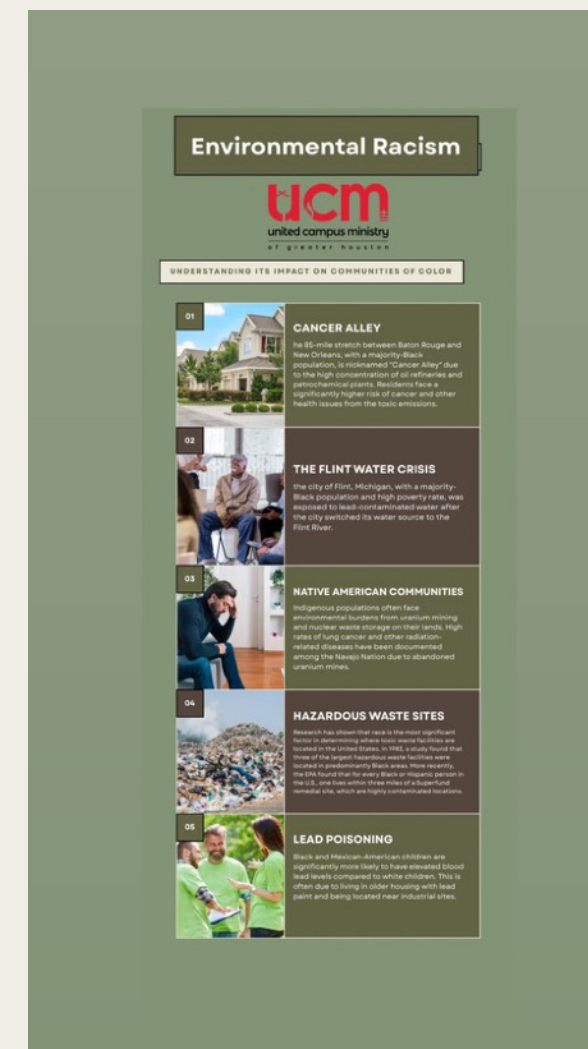


○ Community

According to the Healthy Minds Study's national data report for the 2023–24 academic year, a significant number of college students experience mental health challenges. The report reveals that a sizable portion of students struggle with emotional distress—highlighting the importance of community support systems and accessible well-being resources.

Where UCM comes in!

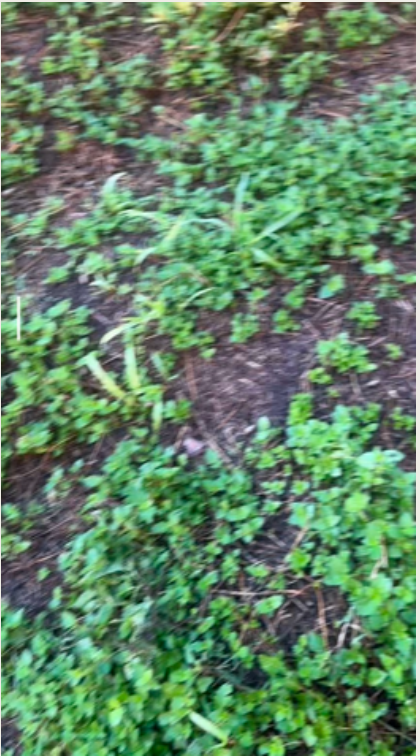
UCM saw how students in the Third Ward community lacked access to proper nutrition, education, and a sense of community. UCM decided to address this issue by creating a community garden, where students and staff can participate in a hands-on project that provides fresh produce and strengthens community connections.



Our Ministry in Action

Community Garden

UCM saw how students in the Third Ward community lacked access to proper nutrition, education, and a sense of community. To address this, UCM created a community garden where students and staff can participate in a hands-on project built with the community. The garden not only provides fresh herbs and vegetables for students but also creates a space for learning, collaboration, and connection, helping to foster a stronger sense of community on campus.



ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

- People of color are more likely to live near polluters and breathe polluted air
- Fenceline communities of color have higher rates of serious health problems
- Extreme weather events are more dangerous for marginalized communities



Many students don't fully understand environmental racism, including how the color of their skin can affect the way they are treated and the health outcomes they may experience. UCM wanted to change that by raising awareness and educating students about these issues. At the same time, we aimed to teach students about the nutritional value of vegetables, healthy eating, and the resources available to them in their community, helping them make informed choices and take better care of their health.

What our students saw

Over the past few weeks, we've shared eye-opening facts on environmental racism, nutrition, and gardening to spark awareness and inspire action.

A collage highlighting the hidden toll of waste sites and pollution on the health of marginalized communities.

Showing students that they can germinate seeds on their own.

Teaching students easy ways to regrow vegetables from kitchen scraps.

Different soil types and what they are good for.

an infographic of different benefits you can get from green vegetables you can grow yourself



HEALTHY EATING Facts & Benefits

Green Onions

- High in vitamins A and C
- Good source of antioxidants, including quercetin
- Supports digestion and immune health



Celery

- High in fiber
- Contains antioxidants
- May reduce inflammation



Asparagus

- Rich in folate
- Provides vitamins A, C, and K
- Supports heart and bone health



Leeks

- High in prebiotics
- Contains kaempferol, an antioxidant
- May protect brain and heart health



Collaborators



TSU

Students and staff supported the garden's development through hands-on help and shared resources.



COMMUNITY

Alumni, family, and friends generously gave their time and effort on Garden Day, contributing to a project that benefits students and the wider community.



CHURCHES

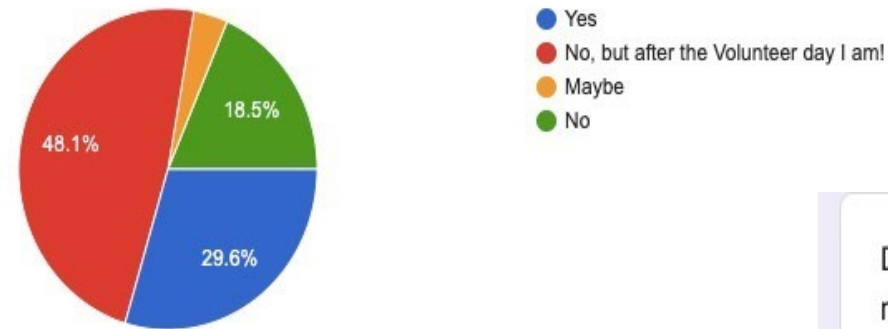
University Christian Church invited UCM to share our mission, helping increase engagement and community involvement.

The influence and reach of our project

Are you familiar with Urban Gardens a farmers market that runs a large weekly farmers' market in Houston and actively works to support local farmers and increase representation of minority vendors?

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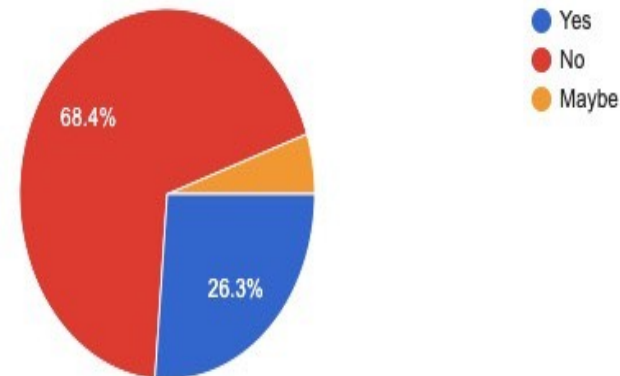
27 responses



Did you know that third ward is considered a "Food Desert" by the USDA, meaning there's limited access to affordable and nutritious food. Community gardens like this one are vital to addressing that issue.

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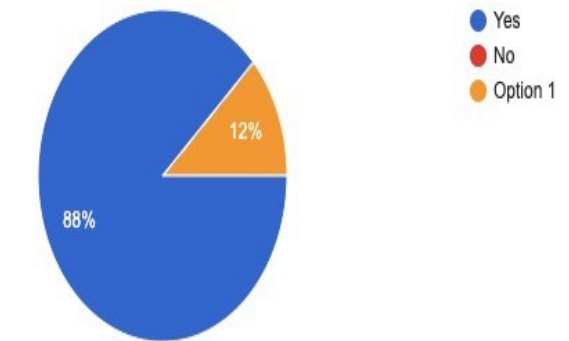
19 responses



Do you feel better connected to the community after this event?

Copy chart

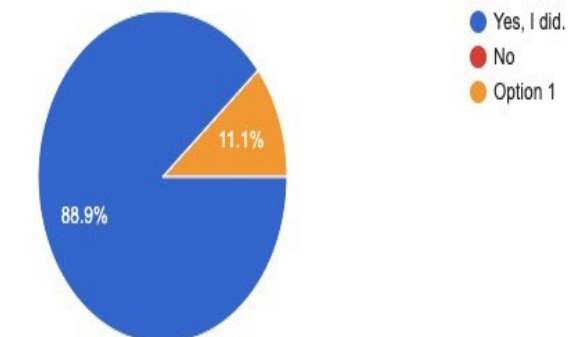
25 responses



Did you learn any new fun facts about gardening, or third ward today?

Copy chart

27 responses



After surveying TSU students, faculty, and staff, we were able to educate many students about the challenges of food access in the Third Ward. Among garden participants, 85% reported feeling more connected to the community, 88.9% said they learned more about gardening, and 48.1% gained knowledge about how to shop locally for affordable produce. This project not only raised awareness but also provided practical skills for healthy eating and community engagement.

God's presence

Determination

Though it was challenging, God strengthened me or Even in difficulty, God gave me strength to keep going.

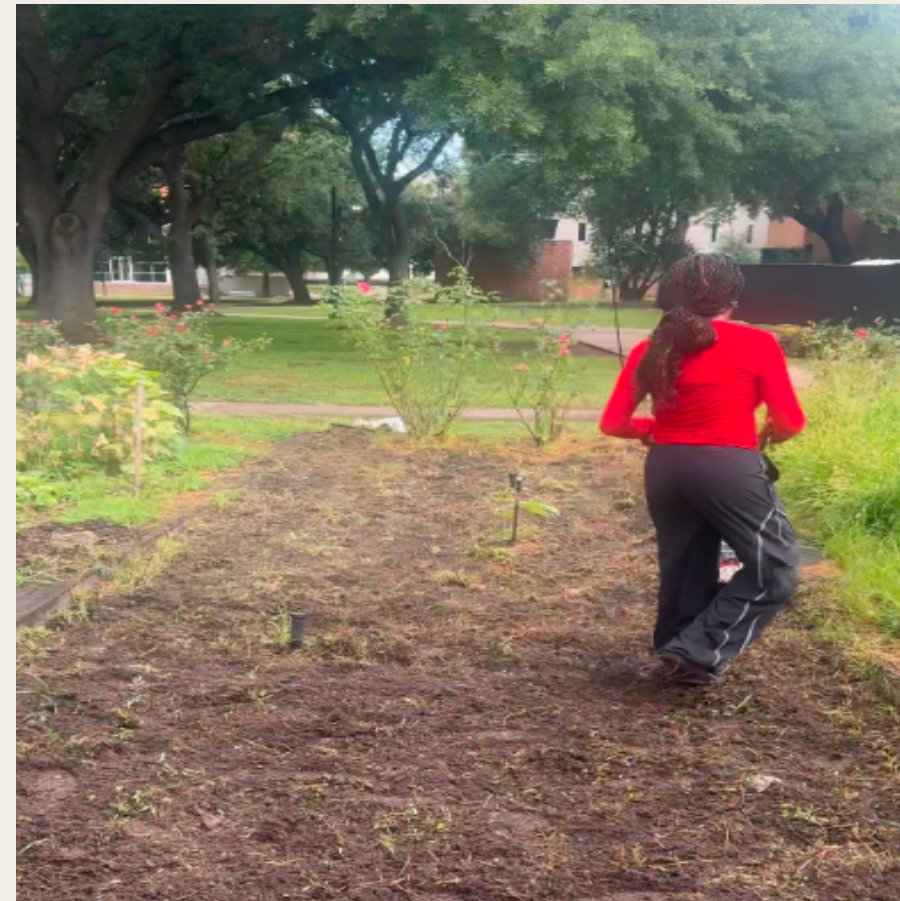


Gratitude for Opportunity

Being chosen for this project reminded me to “give thanks in all circumstances” (Thessalonians 5:18).

Seed to plant

Being able to witness firsthand the journey of a small seed growing into a full, thriving plant made me feel connected to God's creation.



the pictures above show what the garden looked like before we took care of it.

Gratefulness to Serve

This project made me thankful for the chance to give back and share what God has provided.



Cherished Community



Stepping Stone for Growth

This fellowship gave UCM the essential resources, tools, and support to bring our vision to life. Gardening can be costly, and this funding allowed us to purchase proper tools and supplies to build a strong foundation for our garden.

Lasting Impact

From this start, we now have a functioning garden that will soon produce fresh herbs and vegetables for students, creating a sustainable source of nourishment and a space for learning and connection.

Inspiring Future Engagement

Beyond volunteering, this project opens the door for creative events like garden crawls, seed exchanges, farmers market events, and donating produce to our Pocket Pantry.



BECAUSE OF GREEN CHALICE

Gardening isn't free—but thanks to the support from Green Chalice, we were able to bring our garden to life! 🌱✨ With the funds, we purchased a variety of plants, essential gardening tools, and the equipment needed to prepare our land. Every small addition helped create a space where our students can learn, grow, and connect with nature.

ROSELLE



- supports heart health
- aides in digestion,
- boost the immune system,
- promotes healthy skin

LEMON-GRASS



- Reduces stress
- Aids digestion
- Fights bacteria
- Boosts immunity

OKRA



- Supports digestion
- Rich in vitamins
- Boosts immunity
- Good for heart health

Our Garden Day Setup




BEFORE V.S AFTER



**the transformation of
our plot!**

By the end of the fall growing season, our garden will provide fresh produce to an additional 20–30 students each week! We expect to see impressive growth, with a garden full of butternut squash, oregano, peppers, radish, and okra.



“DON’T SPEND YOU R LIFE CHASING
BUTTERFLIES, BUILD A GARDEN AND
BUTTERFLIES WILL COME.”