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Cambridge, MA 02139  
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[www.citysprouts.org](http://www.citysprouts.org)

## A LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Winter's first cold snap recently hit. Freezing rain, snow, and bitter wind finally convinced a few crocuses bewildered by the warm November that the growing season was really over. CitySprouts gardens lay fallow across Cambridge, storing nutrients and beginning the rejuvenation process for the next year. But take heart. CitySprouts itself is far from fallow.

With none other than First Lady Michelle Obama creating a school garden at the White House and a growing awareness of the epidemic of childhood obesity and the need for environmental sustainability, the time is right for CitySprouts to become known by leaders, educators, and policymakers beyond Cambridge. We are the only school gardening initiative in the county that is so closely integrated into the daily life, curriculum, and education of schools. In the months and years ahead we aim to serve as a model for other communities interested in inspiring their students to develop a hands-on connection to the food cycle and natural environment.

Please read this Annual Report to learn how CitySprouts is deepening its roots in Cambridge and beginning to spread the message and work to new communities, schools, children, and teachers. Even with winter upon us, CitySprouts is truly entering its growing season.



Ben Lummis  
Board President



*The CitySprouts mission is to develop, implement and maintain beautiful, resource-rich school gardens in collaboration with public school communities. Integrated into the curriculum, CitySprouts gardens inspire teachers, students, and families with a deep, hands-on connection to the food cycle, sustainable agriculture, and the natural environment.*

## CITYSPROUTS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CitySprouts is a nonprofit organization working in partnership with Cambridge Public Schools to provide school gardens to elementary/middle schools, and to systematically integrate these gardens as learning resources into the curricula district-wide. We provide each school with a part-time CitySprouts Garden Coordinator who maintains the garden and supports teachers in using the garden as a teaching tool. In addition, Garden Coordinators lead valuable garden-based educational programming at each school through weekly afterschool drop-ins and our summer internship program for middle school students.



*Photo by Megan George*

Our program serves an economically and ethnically diverse population: 45% of Cambridge Public School students qualify for the free or reduced lunch program.

The city is 36% African American, 11% Asian, 18% Hispanic 36% Caucasian, and 30% of residents speak a first language other than English. This diverse population of students benefits from the opportunity to expand their learning beyond the classroom walls and into CitySprouts gardens. This is particularly important for the urban children we serve who often don't have adequate opportunities for outdoor exploration. These gardens not only enrich students' learning experiences of required subjects like science, math or social studies, but they also provide a much-needed opportunity to learn about subjects that are not generally taught in the standard curriculum: healthy eating habits, how to grow food, and the impact of our food choices on the natural environment.

This year represented a milestone for CitySprouts as we became a **district-wide** program in the Cambridge Public Schools. With the addition of the Kennedy-Longfellow and Tobin Schools in the 2008-2009 school year, and the Baldwin and Cambridgeport Schools in the 2009-2010 school year, CitySprouts is now serving students in 12 public schools with our unique program. Not only will every public school child in Cambridge have access to these resource-rich school gardens, but with the integration of CitySprouts gardens into the district science curriculum, **every** child will get the opportunity to learn science in an outdoor, hands-on setting.

## NEW OUTDOOR CLASSROOM GARDENS

Construction of the new gardens at the Kennedy-Longfellow and Tobin Schools was completed in time for the start of the 2009 growing season. With Garden Coordinators Caitlin Rogers and Louise Forrest overseeing the new gardens, CitySprouts weekly afterschool drop-ins began for the first time at each school in April 2009. Both schools benefited from a full complement of summer youth interns who helped care for the new gardens while school was not in session.

Two late summer workdays with MIT students and Baldwin families and teachers resulted in a new garden at the Baldwin School for the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year. Afterschool groups have already begun putting the garden to good use, and this spring the CitySprouts program will be in full swing with afterschool drop-ins and a new Garden Coordinator. Garden construction at the Cambridgeport School proved slightly more complicated due to a common urban garden design challenge: lack of available asphalt-free space. However, the Cambridge DPW broke ground at the garden site this fall, and a group of dedicated Cambridgeport parents and teachers will meet over the winter to help design a garden that will be ready for students and the community at the start of the 2010 growing season.

## SCHOOL GARDENS IN THE SCIENCE CURRICULUM



During the 2008-2009 school year, CitySprouts strengthened its partnership with the Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) Science Department through the creation of Professional Development trainings for teachers on using the school gardens to teach science. As an outgrowth of this collaboration, CPS Science Coordinator Lisa Scolaro and Science Coaches Jamillah Bakr, Marianne Dunn and Dan Monahan began the process of "writing the CitySprouts school gardens" into the science curriculum.

Beginning last winter, the Science Department identified key units and standards from the CPS curriculum and the Massachusetts State Frameworks that could be supported and enriched through the use of the garden. It is important to note that the department is not creating new curriculum. Rather, the goal is to strengthen

the existing curriculum by identifying places where learning would be enhanced by the school garden environment, and then developing garden-based lessons to meet that need. CitySprouts is working with the science department to establish pacing guides and define the role of CitySprouts Garden Coordinators in CPS science instruction in the gardens. In the spring of 2010, the Science Department will lead Professional Development trainings piloting the garden-based units at two schools.

Science Coordinator Lisa Scolaro noted, “By integrating our quality curriculum into the garden we are managing to provide students the opportunities for hands-on experiences in the gardens while meeting state and national standards. This unique approach will allow our students to see science past the classroom walls while building more scientifically literate students.”

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the course of the 2008-2009 school year, Citysprouts’ Program Co-Directors Joe Petner and Frank Meehan designed and implemented a series of professional development workshops for 293 teachers at 10 of the Cambridge Public Schools. Each school principal committed three hours of staff professional development time to these workshops, which were focused on orienting teaching staff to the outdoor classroom gardens and demonstrating how the gardens could be used for teaching the CPS science curriculum.

Some of the outcomes of the workshops included a Curriculum Map of school and district framework documenting alignment of science curriculum with use of the garden; and sample curriculum lessons developed by grade level groups. Many principals noted a marked increase in teachers’ usage and comfort with the garden after the workshops, an observation confirmed by annual survey results showing an increase in usage across all schools. Joe and Frank will continue to lead CitySprouts workshops for teachers in Cambridge schools in 2009-2010.

## EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES

Every year CitySprouts asks teachers about their garden usage to evaluate student access to the outdoor classroom gardens and to find out what subject areas teachers are teaching in the garden. Results show that most students are in the school garden as part of their classroom learning. During the 2008-2009 school year, **152 classroom teachers, or 73% of all classroom teachers in the 10 schools CitySprouts served last year, reported using the garden at least once as part of their teaching.** This is an increase from 64% of teachers (or 106 teachers in 8 schools) who reported using their school garden during the 2007-2008 school year.

Not only are more teachers using the gardens, but they’re also using their gardens more frequently. At each school where CitySprouts had a presence for two consecutive years, the total number of teacher visits from Spring 2008 to Spring 2009 has more than doubled from 305 visits to 663 visits.

Of teachers who visited their CitySprouts school garden, **82% reported using the garden to teach science.** Teachers from all grades found new and interesting ways to teach required science units in the garden. Some examples of garden units taught include: Grade 1 - Living vs. Non-living things; Grade 2 - Life cycle of plants and butterflies; Grade 3 - Microhabitats; Grade 4 - Testing natural materials as electrical conductors; Grade 5 - the Water Cycle; Grade 6,7,8 - Ecosystems and Genetics.

In addition, 76% of teachers who used the garden also reported teaching a subject area we call “Food and the Environment.” Typical lessons in this area include planting seeds, cooking with garden ingredients, pressing cider, or studying the environmental impact of different food systems.

## IN 2010...

With CitySprouts’ newly expanded role in Cambridge, we are preparing to expand some of our services to Boston-area schools and communities. We plan to introduce a series of workshops and consulting services in 2010 to support other schools (outside of Cambridge) who are either implementing school garden programs on the CitySprouts’ model or strengthening existing programs. We are pleased to welcome Francey (Hart) Slater in a new position within CitySprouts as Outreach & Education Coordinator. With a Masters in Education and Master Urban Gardener certification, Francey’s brings a balance of experience to this new position that reflects CitySprouts’ direction. Francey will be working with Joe Petner and Frank Meehan, who begin 2010 in the role of Education Consultants, in supporting teachers’ use of the garden for academic as well as food and nutrition education.



## SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM



The CitySprouts Summer Intern program aims to foster leadership skills and teach urban youth about food production, local food systems and the natural environment. Interns meet in small groups at their school garden four mornings a week, where they are mentored by one of CitySprouts' experienced Garden Coordinators. Over the course of the four-week program, youth gain an understanding of the environmental context for urban agriculture and local food sources through their work in the school garden and through field trips to local farms and nonprofit organizations that make food accessible to people in need.

This year the CitySprouts Summer Internship Program grew not only in numbers but also in the scope of the program. Over the winter and spring, CitySprouts staff worked collectively to redesign the Summer

Internship Program based on feedback from 2008. Program changes were significant and included an increase in the number of **hours** interns spend in the program by 100% (from 24 hours to 48 hours); development of a **curriculum** common to all sites that balances food education, environmental science and food production skills; and establishment of an element of **community service** for the youth interns related to food production. We anticipated that these changes would help our youth interns learn more, form deeper relationships with their peers and empower them as gardeners, healthy food advocates and more active members of their community.

This year, 42 youth ages 11-14 participated in the summer program at 10 school gardens. The interns' day typically began with the group gathering to check-in and outline the events of the morning, then moved to garden maintenance, a short activity in one of the focus areas, and cooking a healthy snack from the produce harvested from the garden. Once a week interns met with **Urban Ecology Institute (UEI)** staff to work on an environmental science project. Topics ranged from measuring variations in temperature & light density in the garden, to testing soil quality and studying pollination.

In addition to our partnership with UEI, several CitySprouts gardens partnered with other local organizations. At the King Open, interns worked with students from **Breakthrough Cambridge** to train them in garden maintenance so that Breakthrough students could tend the garden once the CitySprouts internship was over. M.L. King and Amigos interns planted and tended a small herb garden at **OM Restaurant**. In return, Chef Michael Madden taught students how to make chimichurri sauce and sweet-sour pickles from garden produce in the OM kitchen. Tobin, Haggerty, Amigos and M.L. King interns also participated in a series of Culinary Workshops led by Alice Gugelmann in which they learned how to make tsatsiki, pesto and herb tea using garden ingredients.

*“Almost every day I take home fresh vegetables and my parents mix it into our food at dinner. Or we just eat them raw.”*

### In their own words...

CitySprouts interns' words are captured in a 6 minute video made this summer by Ryan Tebo and college interns Juliet Silberstein and Kate Sokol, entitled “CitySprouts: Growing Healthy Minds and Bodies.” See it on YouTube or on our website: [www.citysprouts.org](http://www.citysprouts.org).

*This project was funded by the Regional Center for Healthy Communities.*

Our 2009 interns went on 3 different field trips over the course of the program. At **The Food Project's Urban Learning Farm** in Dorchester, interns worked side-by-side with The Food Project's high school-age interns to maintain the garden and harvest produce. The Food Project interns also led CitySprouts interns in some educational activities exploring the local food web, processed vs. fresh foods, and reading nutritional labeling.

Interns also enjoyed a field trip to **Gaining Ground** Farm in Concord. While there, interns helped weed, mulch and plant vegetables that were later to be donated to local hunger relief agencies. They also learned about the power of many volunteers working toward a common goal. As one intern noted, *“At Gaining Ground we weeded plants and helped dig up woodchips for the soil. These helped save the workers there a lot of time and effort. We also saved them from four days of work.”*



## CITYSPROUTS INTERNS IN 2009

*Amigos:* Rebecca Bonilla (2nd year), Jose Cepeda, Emma Ramsdell

*Fletcher-Maynard:* Anderson Cenescar, Shane Cipriano (2nd year), Doneshia Collins, Keberon Habtegiorgis, Tia Malan

*Graham & Parks:* Isaiah Carpenter-Winch, Emilcare Charles, Alessandra Fix (2nd year), Evens St. Pierre, Jianxiao Shi, Sanne Wright

*Haggerty:* Juan Sebastian Arevalo, Caspian Harding, Shahera Zallum

*Kennedy-Longfellow:* Hannah Correia, Diana Depina Barbosa, Nathan Harbison, Ivan Norman, Tommy Ward

*King Open:* Amanda Botelho, Marc DaCosta (2nd year), Markus McGuffie, Olivia Scott, Nabi Tall

*M.L. King:* Aayushmaan Chakrabarti, Feldano Francois, Danny Lu, Neverson Nherisson

*Morse:* Alexander Ball, Amy DiPace

*Peabody:* Heather Bildman, Morgan Hites, Leah Killoran, Morning Star Lazic, Tim Traversy (2nd year)

*Tobin:* Farheen Abhura, Yassir Khamis, Mehbooba Tamanna, Ismail Uddin

A new addition to the summer program this year was a field trip to **Community Servings** in Jamaica Plain, a non-profit organization that prepares meals for people with life-threatening illnesses in the Boston area. Prior to the trip, interns harvested herbs from their school garden to donate for use in Community Servings meals. Interns got a chance to hear about the program before beginning the task of decorating bags for children receiving meals.

At the conclusion of their session CitySprouts interns received a \$100 stipend for their participation in the program and were asked to fill out a survey. Interns' responses indicated they had gained a lot of "technical" information about how to garden and had also gained an understanding of food production and local food systems.

One intern wrote of the difference between local and conventional processed foods: *"Let's say you ate some tomato sauce. First, the tomatoes have to be grown at a farm that's probably not anywhere near you. Then the tomatoes are shipped to various storages and processing plants until finally the tomato sauce ends up at your house. It takes a while.... a farmers' market takes a lot shorter."* Many interns also indicated that because of their experience in the garden, they had begun to like new fruits and vegetables. One intern wrote, *"Well, I don't have a favorite vegetable but when Francey passed out tiny orange cherry tomatoes my taste buds exploded. It was a really good tomato."*

One of the most consistent themes expressed by interns through their surveys was the importance of the relationships formed over the course of the internship. As one intern wrote, *"I have to say that the best part is meeting new people-- getting to know them in just one place: the garden."*



*"We learned a lot about how urban gardens are helping people in communities who do not have a lot of nature around them to grow food. We learned about how growing food can help you and also helps people around you."*

# Thanks to all who supported CitySprouts with donations in FY09 (September 2008 - August 2009)

## CitySprouts Partners:

Cambridge Public Schools  
Cambridge School Food Service

## Summer Partners:

Breakthrough Cambridge  
Community Servings  
Gaining Ground  
OM Restaurant  
The Food Project  
Urban Ecology Institute

## Foundation and Corporate Sponsors (\$5,000 or more)

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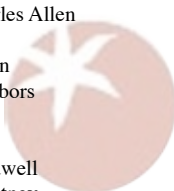
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## Financial Statement for FY09

### Support & Revenue

Grants and contributions	\$ 215,779
Interest	25
Released from restrictions	50,500
Special events	13,380
Service/program fees	<u>58,650</u>
Total support and revenue	338,334

### Operating Expenses

Program expenses	17,947
General and administrative	<u>13,322</u>
Fundraising	323,049
Total expenses	

*Our financial statements were reviewed by Sandberg, Gonzalez & Creeden, P.C. A complete set is available upon request.*



## A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

CitySprouts counts on the help of many volunteers to keep our program running. Volunteers assist with everything from maintaining gardens to organizing events to stuffing envelopes. This year, volunteer groups from **Building Impact, Root Cause, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, BU, Harvard and MIT** also helped us with tackling some long-overdue garden maintenance projects, keeping our Annual School Garden Celebration running without a hitch, and building new gardens. All told, this fiscal year, over **200 volunteers** contributed more than **2,500 hours** of volunteer labor.

In addition to help from community and corporate volunteers, CitySprouts benefited from the help of some stellar college and high school interns: Cyndi Donadio, Emily Richardson, Marie Benkley, Lauren Edmundson, Hannah Firestone, Annabelle Ho, Juliet Silberstein, Kate Sokol, Emily Starck, Liz Cox, Cassie Meltzer and Raina Mesibov. Some of their accomplishments include teaching a gardening elective, designing and leading activities at drop-ins, creating a CitySprouts video for YouTube, assisting Garden Coordinators in running the summer middle school intern program and creating CitySprouts' new Facebook page.



Cambridge, MA 02139

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citysprouts