

The Garden Project LDEI-SF Potluck & Shower

An enormous thank you to all the great Dames that attended the May 7, 2016 Garden Project picnic...and although the inclement weather dampened the soil in the fields around us, it didn't affect anyone's spirits as we met with The Garden Project team, kids from the program, Sheriff's staff and the wonderful San Francisco Sheriff, Vicki Hennessy (who oversees our city/county prisons). We tucked into the wonderful feast followed by a guided visit to the fields and greenhouse that are located at the San Francisco City/County jail just off Skyline Boulevard near Pacifica.

[Click Here to View Photos](#)

Thank you to the Dames for an amazing array of dishes, thank you to Fran Gage, Mary Gassen, Suzette Gresham, Barbara Haimes, Leslie Jonath, Peggy Knickerbocker, Helen Roberts, Renee Shepherd, Eileen Spitalny and daughter Bebe, Margo True, Kathleen Weber who were at the picnic. Tina Salter and Jerry Di Vecchio coordinated the action. And thank you to those who contributed but couldn't make it: Linda Anusasananan, Eleanor Bertino, Laura Branin-Rodriguez, Dolores Cakebread, Linda Carucci, Sue Conley, Elaine Corn, Ann Evans, Janet Griggs, Amina Harris, Sandy Hu, Roberta Klugman, Sue Yung Li, Emily Luchetti, Karen McKenzie, Hannah Rahill, Tannis Reinhertz, Carolyn Wente, Penni Wisner.

With so many delicious dishes filling the table, we wanted to share with you the appreciation felt by everyone and to inform you as to where all of the leftovers went.

Firstly the balance of the Swiss Chard/Kale with New Garlic and the Fresh Collard with Chives dishes (greens grown the Garden Project fields) and packable food were mostly donated to the after school program in the Mission. Cathrine Sneed, Dame and Garden Project Founder, says that she got feedback that the kids especially loved the pasta salad with the baby artichokes. Food that would keep went into the Garden Project kitchen for lunches that are provided to kids and others who work in the garden.

The Garden Project kids at the event also packed up food for their families and for the residents of Valencia Gardens.

We heard a lot of questions from Dames and other attendees at the picnic and wanted to share information about the Garden Project. The answers below are from Cathrine Sneed Founder, The Garden Project

1. Who is working in the gardens each season? We've met some of the young people who are here in the summer that come to you from at-risk conditions, but garden is year round.

We work with three different groups.

- Adult immigrants and ex-offenders who work year round
- College students also work year round
- High school students work during the summer and during the school year on occasional projects.

All participants are paid for their work.

2. How are those working in garden chosen.

- Adult immigrants and ex-offenders either apply or are referred to us.
- College students apply to work with us.
- High school students apply to work with us through a process that involves their local schools and the SF Police Department.

3. Cathrine mentioned that she is now funded by the PUC (Public Utilities Commission). Are there other sources to help pay for running gardens, paying workers?

- We are an employment and training program. We are funded through contracts to perform work. These projects are also educational opportunities for our participants and the core of our training program.

The Garden Project has contracts with the:

- SF Public Utilities Commission
- SF Sheriff's Department
- Special guests included Sheriff Vicki Hennessy, members of her staff, and other community activists
- SF Police Department

We are a non-profit, and we also receive small grants and donations.

4. Originally Cathrine was working with the inmates. Are inmates still able to participate in anyway?

The program did originally include working with inmates. However, in 1992 when I began the Garden Project, I thought it was more important to impact recidivism and to prevent people from going to jail, and thus the program began to focus on ex-offenders. This commitment expanded to include low income college and high school age students because of their risk for criminal activity due to lack of employment and underemployment.

5. Do you help newly released paroles find work related to gardening etc, and if so where do they work?

Just to clarify again, we do not work with inmates. We don't do job placement, but many have gone to work with such city departments as the Department of Public Works, the SFPUC, the SFPD and more.

NOW TO THE BEST PART...How can Dames help?

- **Teach classes**
- **Mentor**
- **Donations** - computers, household supplies, office supplies, staples for cooking, kitchen supplies, gardening equipment and tools

Donations

Call one of the numbers below for someone to come to pick up a donation or you can drop off you donation to a location in

- San Francisco: Jerry Di Vecchio, 415 722 8589
- Marin: Tina Salter, 415 860 5088
- East Bay: call Tina Salter until we have a volunteer to help us in EB
- South Bay: call Tina Salter until we have a volunteer to help in the SB

Sponsors

Do you have a contact or can you let us know of a possible sponsor to donate MONEY, kitchen equipment, garden tools, fleece jackets, gardening gloves, farm machinery etc.

Media contacts

Help connect us with media so we can educate the public further on our model.

Find more work

Help us expand our community and contract network.

We seek more landscaping/environmental/environmental restoration contracts to offer our participants expanded learning experiences and to support our work.

If any Dames have contacts with wilderness agencies, PGE, etc., that would be helpful.

You may have other ideas... we would like to hear them so please contact Jerry Di Vecchio or Tina Salter to share... this can be the beginning of our Green Tables project.

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