

2023

# THE PILOT GARDEN: CAIRO'S FOOD DONATION GARDEN

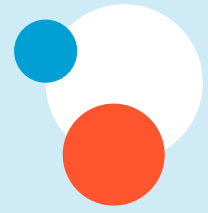
Annual Report



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

# ABOUT US

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The Pilot Garden: Cairo's Food Donation Garden is a partnership between University of Illinois Extension, Daystar Community Programs, and Southern 7 Health Department. Established in 2021, the garden has received over \$35,000 in donations and grant funding. Community volunteers have given over 1,000 hours of time to planting, tending, and harvesting produce. To date we've grown over 2,900 pounds of produce, all donated to Daystar Community Programs.

## 2023 Highlights

Pounds grown: 969  
Volunteer hours given: 407

Our garden was featured on WILL-TV. Garden volunteer Bishop Derek Eurales, Garden Manager Erin Garrett, and SNAP-Ed Program Coordinator Lacey Barnhill were featured.

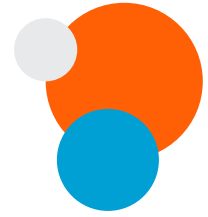
Donation funds came in at the end of the year! Jeffrey Isbell with Meridian Healthcare provided almost \$5,000 worth of funds to help us expand and improve the garden next season. Stay tuned for our expansion!

## Our Volunteers

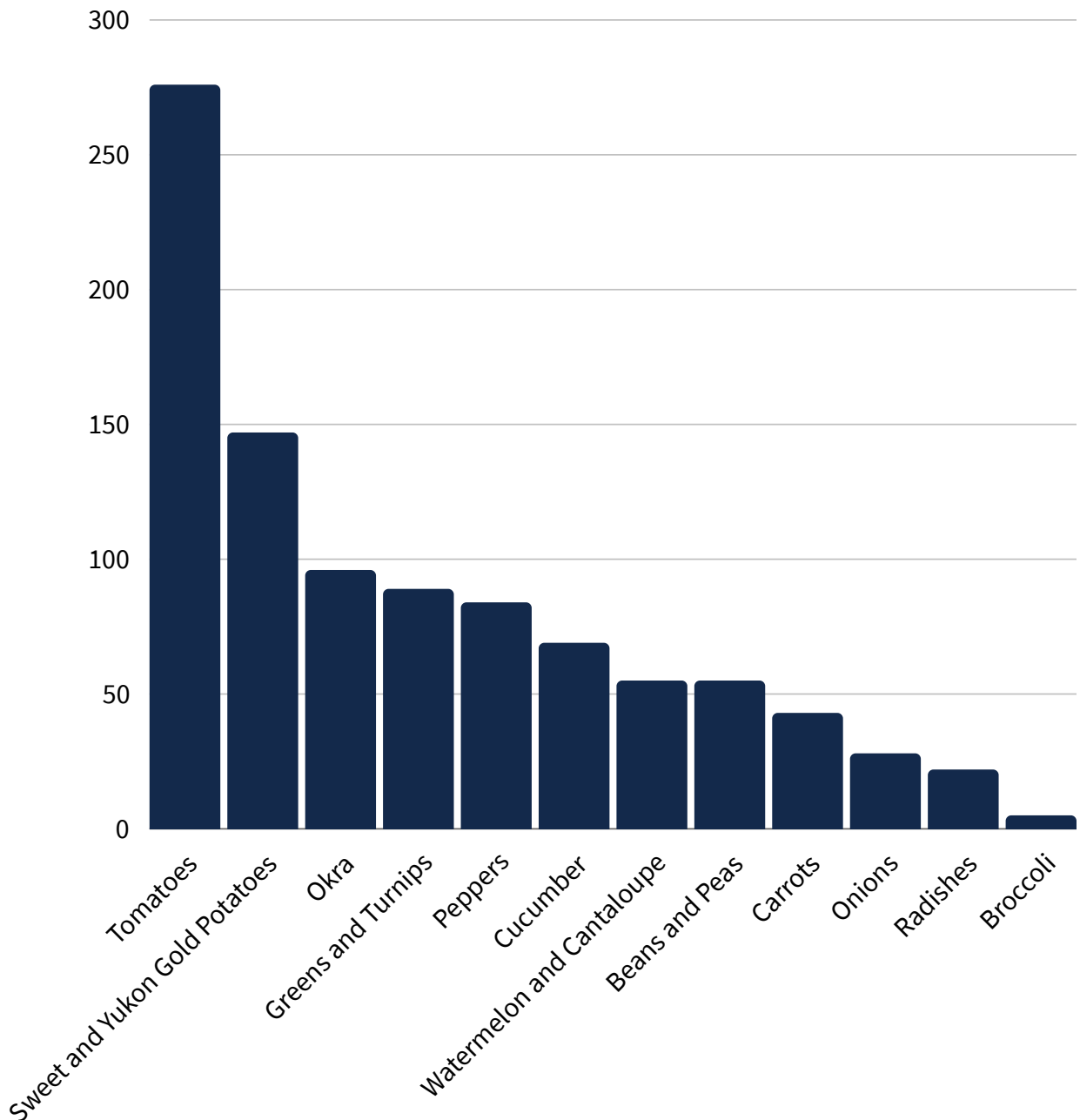
We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers who gave of their time to plant and tend the garden! Our volunteers who adopt a week, those that help at Open House events, and Cairo Elementary students that help once a month ALL work to make this garden a success.

Thank you to the organizations that support the garden, including NAACP, Lions Club of Mounds, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Loyola Academy, Mighty Rivers Worship Center, Autism Society of Southern Illinois, and Illinois American Water.

# BY THE NUMBERS



This year, the garden produced 969 pounds of produce, all of which was donated to Daystar Community Programs. Red and green tomatoes were the top producer, with 275 pounds grown! We added snap and snow peas and mustard greens this year, and had our first successful onion crop.



# GARDEN TALES

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During Garden Tales, our monthly garden program for students at Cairo Elementary, students come to the garden to learn about a different nature-themed topic, listen to a story, and then complete a craft or help work in the garden.

We reached 75-145 students each month.



# OUR VOLUNTEERS

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# SNAP ED

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Nutrition Education provided by SNAP Ed staff was delivered at both garden and pantry sites, teaching our neighbors new and easy ways to prepare and store the harvested produce.

Neighbors were provided take home recipes and even had opportunities to taste test a recipe featuring ingredients from the garden.

Fun new signage was also added this year to showcase the fruits and veggies and to provide some additional education.

SNAP Ed staff continued to make environmental changes at the pantry donation site, Daystar, including connecting the site with funds for a new cooler to store the fresh produce.



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