Development Retrospective 2020

January 2020

Table of Contents

Year-in-Review

Introduction

In 2020, Each Green Corner (EGC) experienced unanticipated growth due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we strove to meet the needs of the community, EGC established its first site in Q1, expanded its programs and onboarded its first interns in Q2, diversified its funding in Q3, and participated in its first ever campaign—GivingTuesday— in Q4.

This document will evaluate EGC's growth over FY2020 and identify successes, challenges, and solutions. With EGC's 2021 Strategic Plan in mind, this retrospective will ask the following questions:

1. What strategies were effective?
2. What strategies inhibited performance?
3. What can EGC implement to optimize efficiency?

The Year-in-Review section will cover: 1) the trajectory of EGC's 2020 programs, organizing the projects by financial quarter; 2) EGC's actual revenue and total costs in FY2020; 3) EGC's harvest total and social media metrics; and 4) a long-form narrative of the year. After, the document moves into its evaluation section, highlighting challenges, successes, and solutions identified with particular emphasis on the Grant Writing and Development team.

With narrative and financial contexts, the document will translate these findings into actionable items for FY21. The conclusion section will summarize EGC'S FY21 roadmap, providing specific success metrics and pairing them with actionable items. We hope that presenting this information in one document will provide an internal logic to EGC's expansion inFY2021.

2020 Program Progress

SITE NAME	Progress	Program
Arundel Lower Playground Outdoor Classroom	In Progress	LC
Arroyo Wild Zone Classroom	In Progress	LC
Arroyo Garden	In Progress	LC
Tierra Linda Science Breezeway Learning Commons	In Progress	LC
Tierra Linda Portables Outdoor Learning Commons	In Progress	LC
Mariposa Lunch Area Outdoor Classroom	In Progress	LC
San Carlos Charter Garden Classroom	In Progress	LC
Family Connections Redwood City	In Progress	LC
Gloria D Site	In Progress	RG senior
Schmalz Site	In Progress	RG community
Seedling Starter Program	In Progress	SS
Central Theater Outdoor Classroom	In Progress	LC
Family Connections Belle Haven	Next Up	LC
Portola Elementary	Next Up	LC
Dennenbaum Site	Next Up	RG community
O'rion Alternative School	Next Up	LC
Central-Arroyo Joint Filled Classroom	Not Started	LC
San Bruno Park Elementary	Not Started	LC
Arundel Upper Playground Magical Food Forest	Not Started	LC
Heather Elementary	Not Started	LC
John Muir Elementary	Not Started	LC
Los Robles Elementary	Not Started	LC
Costaño Elementary	Not Started	LC
Alice P Site	Completed	RG senior
Jack N Site	Completed	RG senior
Betty T Site	Completed	RG senior
Henry S Site	Completed	RG senior

Revenue Sources

QUARTERLY REVENUE	Grants	Individual Donations
Q1	$0	$400
Q2	$6,000	$5,772.3
Q3	$41,849.29	$1,112.12
Q4	$14,000	$2,847.44
2020 TOTALS:	$61,880	$10,131.86

Figure 1: Table Representing Revenue Sources from FY2020. The information represented in Figure 1 can be found on QuickBooks.

We have chosen to omit in-kind donations and fundraising from revenue sources. Although we have fundraising information from GivingTuesday, it was our only campaign for 2020 and information can be found in the GivingTuesday report. Tracking in-kind donations is a gap in our revenue data and should be accounted for in the FY2021 Retrospective.

2020 Development Projects

This section of the 2020 Development Retrospective will narrate both internal and external improvements made over 2020, including references to strategy points made in the Development Strategic Plan.

Quarter 1

In Q1, EGC's CEO/Founder focused on program management and internal organization efforts. EGC did not onboard any interns and had only one existing site, Arundel Elementary, and on-boarded one new site, Arroyo Upper Elementary. The organization received funding from individual donations and related PTA funding. EGC applied for but did not receive funding from Sequoia Healthcare District.

Quarter 2

EGC established a partnership with the County Office of Sustainability to begin expansion into other school sites, and initiated a partnership with the County Office of Education to

identify school site partners. Thanks to our county partnerships, EGC secured agreements with seven (7) additional school locations. EGC applied for its first grant through the County Office of Sustainability and was awarded a total of **$57,000** to be used at Arundel Elementary, Arroyo Elementary, Central Middle School, San Carlos Charter Learning Center, Family Connections Redwood City, Family Connections Belle Haven, Mariposa Upper Elementary, and Tierra Linda Middle School. EGC distributed **$41,880** in 2020 and used the remaining **$15,120** in 2021. Additionally, EGC applied for a grant from the Community Foundation of San Carlos, resulting in **$6,000** of additional funding for both Arroyo Elementary and Arundel Elementary.

Meanwhile, Villages of San Mateo County partnered with EGC to establish its Residential Gardens Program. EGC established the Alice P., Henry S., Jack N., and Betty T. sites, fully inaugurating our Senior Garden Steward Program into its scope of programs. EGC also created the COVID-19 Home Garden Care Packages program, a one time service that provided households with supplies to grow their own food at home.

In May 2020, EGC hired its first Grant Writing and Development Intern, spurring increased grant writing capacity. This highlighted a need for established internal processes and an overall development strategy, marking an integral turning point in EGC's overall development capacity.

Quarter 3

In July 2020, EGC hired two (2) additional Grant Writing and Development interns, significantly increasing the Development team's capacity. In Q3 alone, grant writing interns submitted eight (8) total grant applications: Sand Hill Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Packard Foundation, Atkinson Foundation, Mountain Rose Herbs, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, Sunlight Giving, and the Community Foundation of San Carlos.

Simultaneously, EGC created the organization's first comprehensive [Strategic Development Plan](), an important cornerstone for the Development Team's processes, fundraising strategy, and future goals. The team identified key areas of strategy to explore, and planned to focus our Q4 and Q1 2021 efforts in these areas. These strategies included:

1. Develop and implement strong giving campaigns.
2. Develop EGC's database of common grant support materials.
3. Develop a spreadsheet of ongoing EGC projects and their funding needs.

4. Prioritize the recognition of volunteer contributions in communication and outreach efforts.

Quarter 4

Q3 efforts resulted in two accepted proposals in Q4: Community Foundation of San Carlos awarded EGC **$4,000** and the Atkinson Foundation awarded EGC **$10,000**. The Grant Writing team submitted an additional three (3) grant applications in Q4, all of which were denied.

Grant application rejections gave the Development Team an opportunity to discuss new funding avenues. We realized that to qualify for regional and national grants, the Development Team would need to prioritize data collection efforts, which would further establish EGC as a serious nonprofit. In the meantime, the team decided to focus our efforts on local and capacity building grants.

Subsequently, the Grant Writing and Development Team onboarded an additional intern for October 2020. In an effort to further integrate the intern-sector and volunteer-sector of the organization, interns attended our first Work Day in the San Mateo area.

Capacity largely shifted away from grant writing towards individual fundraising goals. EGC launched its first ever fundraising campaign, GivingTuesday, which required inter-team collaboration and implementation of fundraising strategies. This campaign raised over **$2,000** in individual donations and resulted in more social media engagement across platforms. This process forced us to create internal processes for campaign organization and allowed us to evaluate efficiency, optimization, and areas of opportunity organization-wide. A more detailed reflection of Giving Tuesday 2020 can be found in the [Giving Tuesday 2020 Report and Guide](#).

Key Development and Social Media Metrics

2020 Development Metrics

Metric	FY 2020 Total
Harvest Total	1,180 lbs
Cost per pound of food	$44.84
Cost per meal of food	$37.67
Grant Application Success Rate	30.77%
Program Efficiency	86.9%

Figure 2.1: Table Representing Key Performance Indicators from FY20. The above are EGC's current KPIs. Harvest totals are calculated using Google Sheets using totals reported by our volunteers at the Living Campus and Residential Garden sites. Cost per pound of food and cost per meal of food are calculations using averages of our total harvests amounts. For example, if a pound of swiss chard costs $X.XX and we harvest Ylbs of swiss chard, then our cost per pound of food will be $X.XX \div Ylb$. Grant application success rate is calculated by dividing number of accepted applications over total applications:
$Accepted\ Applications \div Total\ applications$. Finally, program efficiency measures $program\ expenses \div total\ expenses$. The total expenses included storage, insurance, software fees, et cetera.

Per the 2021 Strategic Plan, the Development team hopes to develop EGC's data architecture for specificity. This is a major opportunity area for EGC and is a priority for the Development team.

Data Visualizations of 2020 Social Media Analytics

Metric	FY 2020 Total
Instagram Engagement Rate	35.38%
Facebook Engagement Rate	21.16%

Figure 1.2: Table comparing Facebook and Instagram engagement rates over FY20. Google Analytics provided these metrics. and measure $Total\ Number\ of\ Interactions\ \div\ Total\ Number\ of\ Followers$. Engagement is defined as likes, shares, comments, or reactions. EGC implemented Google Analytics in October 2020, shortly before our GivingTuesday campaign. This chat represents only a small segment of FY2020.
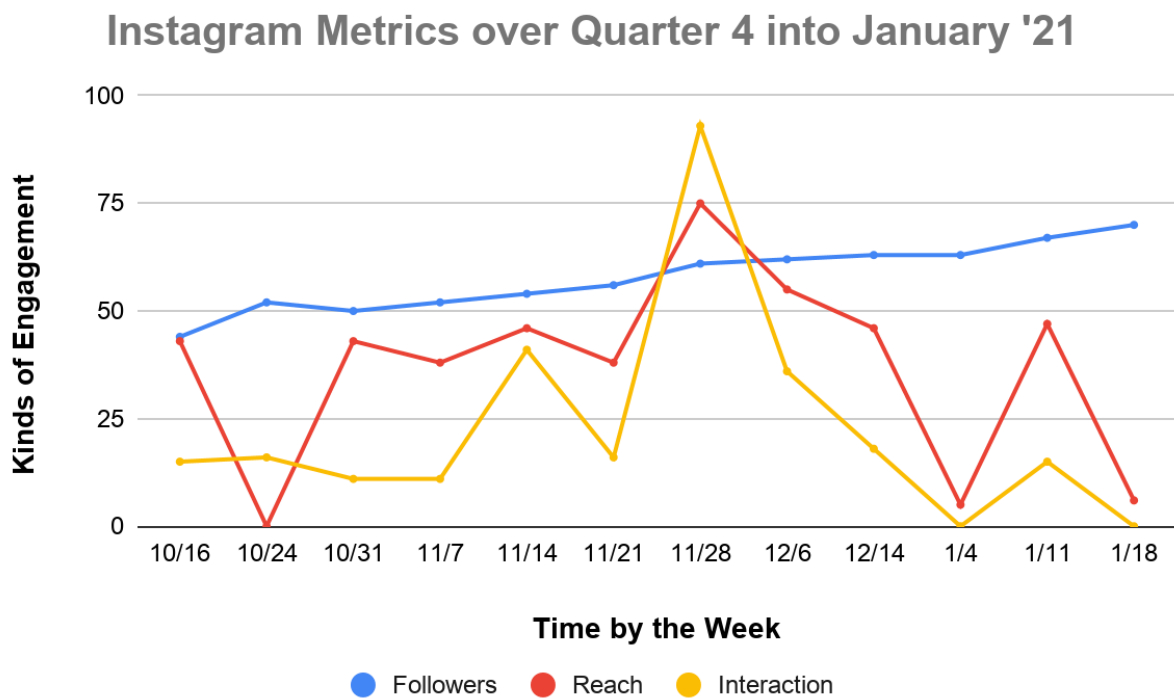

Figure 1.3 Instagram Line Chart Comparing Kinds of Engagement over Time. Google Analytics provided these metrics. EGC implemented Google Analytics in October 2020, shortly before our GivingTuesday campaign. This chat represents only a small segment of FY2020.

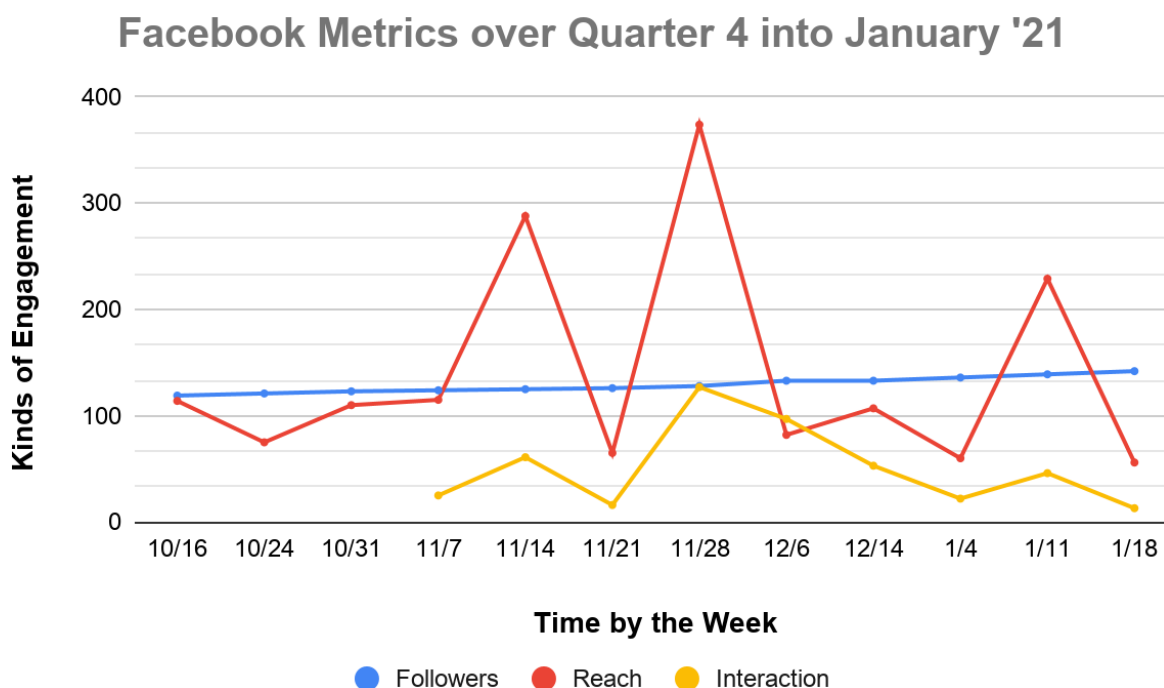**Data Visualizations of 2020 Social Media Analytics cont.**

Facebook Metrics over Quarter 4 into January '21

Figure 1.4: Facebook Line Chart Comparing Kinds of Engagement over Time. Google Analytics provided these metrics. EGC implemented Google Analytics in October 2020, shortly before our GivingTuesday campaign. This chat represents only a small segment of FY2020.

We chose to omit a LinkedIn graph that similarly measured kinds of engagement over time, given that our LinkedIn data covered only a two week period in January 2021. In the 2021 Retrospective, the Development team should include LinkedIn information.

The table and two graphs show a positive relationship between posting frequency and engagement, in part motivated by the GivingTuesday campaign. In 2021, the Development team recommends more frequent weekly posting across all social media platforms, including analysis on kinds of audiences for LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. Rather than posting uniform content across all three platforms, EGC should curate the kinds of content posted across platforms after performing more focused research on engagement. What kinds of posts generate more engagement on each platform? How can we systematize the posting calendar? Refer to the GivingTuesday report for more information.

Lessons

COVID-19 and Food Insecurity

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States experienced unprecedented levels of food insecurity, affecting nearly 23% of households.[1] According to the Brookings Institute, nearly 27.5% of households with children were food insecure, meaning nearly 13.9million children lived in households with uncertain access to food.[2]

Meanwhile, hunger in California doubled.[3] Lauren Lathan Reid, Communications Directors of the Association of Food Banks, identified Marin, Mono, Napa, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties as the areas that experienced a tripling of food insecurity since the start of the pandemic. [4] The LA Times reported that in the first three weeks of April, 265,000 people applied for food assistance, doubling the number from last year.[5]

Successes

Due to increased need caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, EGC has entered into an exciting phase of growth and scaling. We have expanded its programs, leveraged the support of its volunteers to install, maintain, and harvest garden sites, and solicited a diverse team of community partners eager to support its community projects, and onboarded 31 new interns.

Operational Successes

- Onboarded 31 Interns and 139 number of volunteers
- Expanded project sites from 1 to 18

---

[1] Diane Schanzenbach and Abigail Pitts, "How Much Has Food Insecurity Risen? Evidence from the Census Household Pulse Survey," IPR Rapid Research Report, (Chicago: Northwestern Institute for Policy Research, 2020). https://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/documents/reports/ipr-rapid-research-reports-pulse-hh-data-10-june-2020.pdf

[2] Lauren Bauer, "About 14 million children in the US are not getting enough to eat," Brookings.edu, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2020). https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/07/09/about-14-million-children-in-the-us-are-not-getting-enough-to-eat/

[3] Linda Mumma, "California Hunger Doubles During COVID-19 As a New Climate Law Directs Surplus Food to Families," California Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery, (Sacramento: CalRecycle, 2020). https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/blogs/in-the-loop/in-the-loop/2020/07/07/CalRecycle-food-grants-help-fight-hunger-during-covid-19

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

- ○ Living Campus: 10
- ○ Residential Gardens: 7
    - ■ Senior Gardens: 5
    - ■ Community Gardens: 2
    - ■ Low Income Gardens: 0
- Participated in 209 number of work days, totalling 1,715.5 volunteer hours with approximately 139 volunteers
- Harvested 1,180 pounds of produce, equating to approximately 992 meals.
- Increased partnerships from 2 to 13

Development Successes

- Applied to 13 grants, receiving four (4) grants for a total $61,880.00
- Established standard grant management processes to regulate the application process.
- Implemented new peer review and editing protocols to streamline grant submission processes.
- Created volunteer interview and survey templates to systematize data collection.
- Collected Letters of Support from our institutional partnerships (schools, county government, other nonprofits).
- Created better internal organization standards and team processes.
- Participated in EGC's first campaign, GivingTuesday.
    - ○ Raised $2,003.00 over the course of November.
    - ○ Increased social media metrics (see above graphs) during the month of november.
    - ○ Collaborated in tandem with the Communications Team.
- Fostered a more collaborative environment between EGC's discrete teams.

EGC launched as a nonprofit during a time of uncertainty and unprecedented crisis, speaking to its capacity for continued growth and expansion. In addition to the material successes of FY2020, EGC boasts an eager, passionate team of volunteers and interns, all who believe in EGC's mission and show up, adapt, and act when confronted with a challenge. This passion, while not quantifiable, should be noted as one of FY20's important successes.

Challenges

Per the 2021 Strategic Plan, EGC identified areas of opportunity to address the challenges posed by 2020. While the previous section separated organizational successes from Development Team-specific successes, we feel that the challenges experienced at large by the organization are similarly experienced by the Development Team.

- Lack of organizational clarity that inhibits organizational efficiency (e.g., multiple people working on the same or similar project; unwieldy GoogleDrive).
- Poor communication that causes information bottlenecks, posing a significant barrier to timely project completion (e.g., grant application submissions contingent on inaccessible finance information).
- Loss of institutional knowledge caused by unwritten processes, over reliance on individual knowledge (e.g., uncertainty on which projects need funding, lack of direction on "next steps").
- An absence of established systems (e.g., grant submission expectations, lack of delegation with clear deadlines).

Actionable Items

Based on meetings held in December 2020 and January 2021, the Grant Writing and Development Team developed a series of actionable items to alleviate the challenges experienced in 2020. We have separated these action items into two categories: first, items that streamline operational efficiency; second, items to strengthen Development's systems and organization.

Operational Strategies
- Design a hierarchical organization with well-defined roles, responsibilities, and individual targets for success
    - Example 1: Creating structure within EGC Teams by delegating a manager position within teams as first point-of-contact.
    - Example 2: Assigning veteran interns expertise roles, ensuring that information remains transparent.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for high-level communications across various teams and work-groups responsible for special projects and day-to-day operations

- Example 1: Creating and distributing a Contact Sheet with responsibilities for each intern.
- Example 2: Implementing brief slideshow presentations at Admin meetings to field questions and pool information from other interns
- Placing strong emphasis on documentation and written communication; consolidating around core technologies.
  - Example 1: Standardizing team guides and distributing them equally amongst interns regardless of teams
  - Example 2: Reorganizing the GoogleDrive to improve user interface)

Per the Operations Strategic Plan presentation for FY2021-FY2022, EGC will focus on two areas: eliminating information bottlenecks and establishing cross-team collaboration. The above solutions will transform barriers into pathways, increase clarity, facilitate democratic institutional processes, and improve communication. Democratization is central to these solutions. By proliferating institutional knowledge and delegating responsibilities to groups of individuals, EGC will ensure multiple opportunities to receive information needed for important, time-sensitive projects. This will maximize efficiency and facilitate growth for FY2021.

Development Strategies

While Operational Strategies affect the Development Team insofar as its solutions affect the entirety of EGC, the Development Team similarly identified its own team-specific strategies. These strategies focus on expanding EGC's financial capacity through either direct or indirect means. In other words, Development strategies prioritize projects that will establish EGC's reputation (i.e., data collection and donor retention) or diversify EGC's funding sources.

- Initiate a March Campaign in order to act on the lessons of GivingTuesday, leverage individual donor support, and solicit support from corporate sponsors.
- Publish a FY2020 Annual Report in order to increase transparency between EGC and its funders, appeal to new donors and funders, and cultivate public relations through marketing.
- Standardize Grant Writing expectations to avoid periods of inactivity (e.g., dictating expected number of applications to be submitted per internship period).

- Aggregate project site information in a universal document that includes budget, priority, possible funding avenues in order to increase team self-sufficiency.
- Engage with the greater nonprofit community through outreach (e.g., inviting them to speak with Development interns and field questions).
- Improve data collection strategies to create stronger grant applications and create our own research.
  - Quantitative Data: Translating harvest totals into meals of food; tracking impact over time through routine surveys.
  - Qualitative Data: Conducting narrative interviews with volunteers and stewards; better photo archiving practices

2021 Strategic Planning Summary

EGC has identified key strategic plan metrics, all delineated in the Each Green Corner Strategic Planning Guide. The following table will provide actionable items and tasks for the Grant Writing and Development team to meet the associated development goals.

FY 2021 Strategic Planning

FY2021 Success Metrics	Action Items
Build sustainable operations procedures	
Onboard Director of Development (Volunteer).	- Prepare job descriptions and interview potential candidates for a potential start date in June 2021 - Interim Director to assist in the onboarding process of the permanent director to best facilitate a smooth transition
Standardize operational procedures across organization via completed Operations Guides for each team.	- Similar to the existing Grant Management Guide, develop a Development Guide that focuses less on grant processes and more on development/fundraising - Identify any areas outside of grant management and development that may benefit from a detailed guide
Formalize accounting and budgeting procedure and workflow.	Extend Quickbooks access to select operations management and development staff

	- Document and organize EGC's revenue and expenses, either by inputting data into NeonCrRM, creating separate spreadsheets that are accessible within the Google Drive, or a combination of both - On a quarterly basis, review budget information in depth and curate budget tables for the purpose of grant applications
Execute targeted increase of local funding sources	
Grow total funding by 25% (maintaining balance of 70%, institutional donors, 20% individual donors, and 10% in-kind donations)	- Apply to at least 20 grant funds in 2021 - Conduct quarterly individual donations campaigns, beginning with a Spring 2020 campaign - Research and develop standard processes and protocols for cultivating existing funder relationships
Generate 3 new local institutional funding sources, focused on introductions from existing partners and funders.	- Research and develop standard processes and protocols for cultivating existing funder relationships - Continue to collect data that highlights the impact of our programs to share with funders - Utilize the 2020 Annual Report to display organizational successes to funders
Conduct quarterly individual donations campaigns.	- Utilizing the Giving Tuesday 2020 Report and Guide, plan quarterly campaigns months in advance, focusing on unique messaging points, often correlating with season - Spring 2021 campaign meetings beginning in February 2021, collaborating with communications - Research and plan a general fundraising timeline that identifies the most optimal times of year to conduct a fundraising campaign
In-kind donation of materials valued at $5,000.	- Research and develop standard processes and protocols for cultivating existing in-kind partner relationships - Identify potential areas of in-kind donation

	need, and seek out new partner relationships that may accommodate those needs
Implement donor stewardship process to increase donor retention to 25%.	• Consider segmenting donor communications materials • Critically analyze our current donor communication efforts, compare with industry standard, and make process driven amendments to better care for existing individual donor relationships • Consider personalized thank you notes for our most impactful donors
In-kind donation of professional services (landscape design and/or landscape contractor) valued at $5,000.	• Identify high-expenditure corporations through Quickbooks (Home Depot, Amazon, Ace Hardware) • Identify the kinds of products purchased at these areas by looking through individual receipts on QuickBooks • Develop a strategic plan for initiating a relationship for the purpose of leveraging in-kind donations.
Expand EGC's digital presence across all social media platforms	
Grow EGC's aggregate follower count by 20%.	• Increase our own presence online by following more people, liking others posts, and commenting on/sharing relevant posts • Post more frequently across platforms • Utilize quarterly fundraising campaigns to expand our following base • Send an instructional flier to our volunteers about how to follow us on social media
Increase average engagement and click-through rates for all existing and new media content 10% over FY20 average.	• See above
Collect Data for Program Evaluation	
Determine cost per meal provided (overall EGC expenses/(pounds food donated/Second Harvest conversion rate for pounds to meals provided))	• Determine the most efficient way to obtain harvest total information, either by regularly contacting Second Harvest or by better updating harvest total

	spreadsheets. ● Regularly calculate and document EGC's cost per meal provided as a useful metric in analyzing our overall efficiency over time
Complete annual survey of volunteers to measure program impact including seeking impact on knowledge of food insecurity and nutrition as well as perceived impact on stress, emotional health, and quality of life.	● Collaborate with Communications team to best strategize how to increase engagement through online surveys ● Explore alternative methods of survey distribution to increase overall sample size of survey participants
Complete annual survey of Garden Stewards (Site residents or School Site Administrators) to measure program impact, including seeking impact on knowledge of food insecurity and nutrition as well as perceived impact on stress, emotional health, and quality of life.	● Solidify the set of questions being asked to Garden Stewards ● Again, collaborate with Communications team to best strategize how to increase engagement and participation to increase the sample size of participants

Concluding Thoughts

Based on the findings of the 2020 Retrospective, the Development team has identified three key areas of development for FY2021: 1) Data architecture; 2) Internal Communications; 3) Organizational development. These three areas will provide a sturdy foundation for EGC to expand its programs in efficient, high impact ways. The 2021 Retrospective should evaluate the success of FY2021 based on the changes over time in these three areas.

Contributors
Alex Grant-Hudd (Director of Development)
Alexa Kristensen (Grant Writing & Development Intern)