



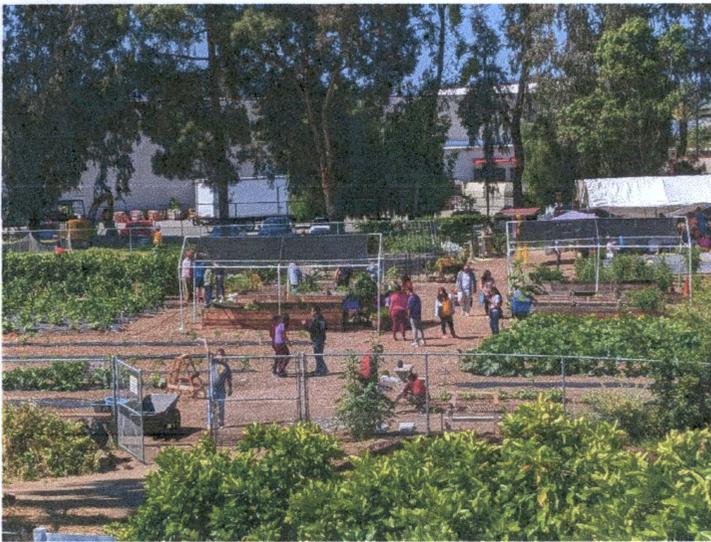
# Cultivating Inclusion News

Jan-Jun 2023



**History:** Cultivating Inclusion Farm is the brainchild of four dedicated women with special needs children. With a vision of helping young adults with special needs develop practical skills in a garden setting, they started this project in Fall 2015 with the support of the City of Murrieta. The garden became a 501(c)(3) non-profit with public charity status in June of 2018.

**Mission:** To provide garden space for special needs adults to connect with nature and have agricultural experience by growing and caring for produce which in turn is donated to local food banks.



Everyone at the farm has been busy with the spring growing season. The total number of volunteers grew to almost 20 people, not counting members from the Christian Vines, Latter-day Saints and Orchard Church, Boy and Girl Scouts, and students from Murrieta and Temecula unified that volunteer here occasionally. The farm continues to serve special needs adults from Care-Rite and Toward Maximum Independence. Although the number varies each day, on average we get about 50-60 participants each week.

With generous donation of money and time from our local supporters and the \$5,000 award from the City of Murrieta's Community Development Block Grant, 2022/23 fiscal year, Cultivating Inclusion has been able to continue to operate and grow. Moreover, Cultivating Inclusion was recently awarded \$3,900 from the Santa Rosa Plateau Nature Education Foundation for 2023/24. We are so thankful for all the support and proud to be an urban garden/farm that provides space for everyone in local communities to come together to promote inclusion and healthy living.



Come to visit our garden. We are open weekdays from 9-11 a.m. 39775 Alta Murrieta Dr, Murrieta. For a tour or to volunteer, call Mary Ann Tams (951) 296-7756.

Fun activities with our special needs visitors during this period include picking and making pink lemonade, growing and cooking fava beans, sugar snap peas, broccolini, zucchini, bell pepper and carrots. They enjoyed harvesting and tasting fresh strawberries, learning about worm composting and drilling holes for worm boxes, and walking through the groves and observing bees. Summer crops are growing nicely and we look forward to harvesting tomatoes, tomatillo, okra, corn, cucumbers, eggplants, pumpkins, watermelons and grapes later this year.



2603 pounds of produce donated in the past six months

Two new additions at the farm are the bee boxes in the orchard and a butterfly trail being built. We are seeking donation of native plants.



Murrieta and Menifee City Council Members Lori Stone, Ron Holliday & Lesa Sobek visited our garden in May. Members from the Temecula Valley Women's Club Environmental Committee and California Native Plant Network also visited our farm in June. We appreciate their support!

The master gardeners from the University of California Cooperative Extension have been instrumental in helping to revitalize the orchards. They provided pruning lessons for our volunteers and cataloged all the trees in both groves. Of the 188 fruit trees, we have lost 20 trees due to neglect. A problem with fire blight wiped out all of the apple trees. But the rest of the citrus, peach and plum trees are now being taken care of by a team of volunteers and paid interns with disabilities from Highpointe Care. Excel Landscape has helped with weed control and we hired a company to help with gophers. Plans are underway to replace the lost trees next year and we look forward to more fruitful harvests in the future.

