Grow Dat Youth Farm
New Orleans, Louisiana

Submitted by John Coyle

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DATA

RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

PROJECT DATA

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Project Name: Grow Dat Youth Farm | Location | City: New Orleans | State: LA

Owner: CEA between New Orleans City Park and Tulane University

Project Use(s): Urban Farm, Youth Education Facility

Project Size: 6,000sf | Total Development Cost: 264,000

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate): 717,000

Date Initiated: 2010 | Percent Completed by December 1, 2014: 100%

Project Completion Date (if appropriate): October, 2013 | Project Website (if appropriate): growdatyouthfarm.org

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:

Name: John Coyle | Title: Americorps VISTA

Organization: Tulane City Center

Address: 1725 Baronne Street | City/State/Zip: New Orleans, LA 70115

Telephone: (631) 805-3665 | Fax: ( )

E-mail: jcoyle@tulane.edu | Website (if appropriate): tulanecitycenter.org

Perspective Sheets:

	Organization	Name	E-mail
Public Agencies	New Orleans City Park	John Hopper	jhopper@nocp.org
Architect/Designer	Tulane School of Architecture	Scott Bernhard	sbernhard@tulane.edu
Developer	Tulane City Center	Dan Etheridge	danetheridge77@gmail.com
Professional Consultant			
Community Group	Grow Dat Youth Farm	Johanna Gilligan	johanna@growdatyouthfarm.org
Other	Graduate of Grow Dat program	Timothy Dubuclet	timothy.dubuclet@goodeggs.com

Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

- ☐ Direct Mailing
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- ☐ Previous Selection Committee member
- ☐ Professional Organization
- ☐ Bruner/Loeb Forum
- ☑ Other (please specify) Maurice Cox

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Signature: John Coyle

Digitally signed by John Coyle
DN: cn=John Coyle, o=Tulane City Center, ou, email=jcoyle@tulane.edu, c=US
Date: 2014.12.09 18:07:28 -06'00'

Date: 12/09/14

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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This sheet, the Project Data sheet, and the representative photo will be sent to the Committee in advance as the *Project Overview*.

Project Name: Grow Dat Youth Farm

Address: 150 Zachary Taylor Dr City/State/ZIP: New Orleans, LA 70124

1. Give a brief overview of the project. Approximately 500 words.

The Grow Dat Youth Farm is a 4-acre urban agriculture and youth education facility in New Orleans' City Park. The mission of Grow Dat is to nurture a diverse group of young leaders through the meaningful work of growing food. Annually, the facility provides 40 high school students from diverse neighborhoods with the opportunity to work together on the farm and to learn agricultural, business management, and leadership skills.

Grow Dat Youth Farm grew out of a strong partnership between the Tulane City Center and the New Orleans Food and Farm Network. The project was a truly cross disciplinary endeavor, which engaged expertise from the Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, several schools within Tulane University including the School of Architecture, Freeman School of Business, Levy-Rosenblum Institute for Entrepreneurship, Office of Community Affairs and Health Policy at the School of Medicine, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, School of Social Work, the Center for Public Service, and New Orleans' City Park.

Tulane City Center led the design and construction of the facility through a series of design/build courses at Tulane School of Architecture. The structure and site plan create an iconic space for the program's activities through the thoughtful use of humble materials. The project uses seven recycled shipping containers joined by recycled steel trusses to form a large covered outdoor classroom flanked by supporting administrative and storage spaces. The structure was woven around preserved native trees and reinforces the delicate relationship to the environment.

Youth from neighborhoods across New Orleans are paid to work on the farm and learn about every aspect of the food system from the farming process to selling at market, along with leadership training. 40% of the produce is donated to the community or brought home by the youth in the program. Many of the youth employed on the farm come from neighborhoods with scarce access to fresh food. Grow Dat also provides cooking and nutritional classes to equip youth to be changemakers in their own neighborhoods.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.) Approximately 500 words.

The Grow Dat Youth Farm was developed as the result of collaboration between several public and private organizations, most notably the Tulane City Center, New Orleans Food and Farm Network, and New Orleans City Park. This project was a unique opportunity to design both an innovative program, alongside the design of the built environment required to sustain it.

The design of this project was conceived through community input and a design-build studio as part of the Tulane School of Architecture. All elements were designed and built by Tulane University students. The project involved design of a working farm, classroom and support facilities, with market and event spaces. It is located in a large urban park on four acres of a former golf course. Many progressive agricultural techniques are used; water is managed on-site, crop irrigation and water sequestration are integrated with building design, waste water is treated on-site (including composting toilets) as well as the extensive use of biofilters and bioremediating landscape elements/techniques.

The design uses seven recycled shipping containers and recycled steel trusses to create a large, covered outdoor classroom and supporting spaces as well as a food processing and storage facility associated with the agricultural production. The containers create a buffer to a nearby highway and shelter the program spaces from solar exposure. The shipping containers require only point loaded foundations at their corners, making long, efficient spans and sparing the adjacent cypress tree roots from disruptive excavation. Extensive sun shading is created with a vine covered shade screen facade to the south and rain screen protection for each exposed shipping container.

Grow Dat is part of the movement of bringing food back into cities and understanding our food systems, food deserts, and different levels of access to fresh food. Grow Dat's program goes beyond typical urban farm initiatives by engaging a population that is typically discriminated against within the food system: young people and young people of color. Grow Dat employs youth who bring the food to sell at market but it doesn't end there; the goal is to work with young people to develop their leadership skills so they can become ongoing changemakers in their urban environment. Through Grow Dat, youth learn to grow food, but they are not trained to become farmers. The program is more about providing youth with a strong lens into the city, particularly with regards to food systems and development practices, issues of equity and how to change things by staying involved. In addition to having an immediate impact in time and space in City Park, Grow Dat draws people from schools across the city and has a big impact in their lives and their futures.

2015
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, signifcant trade-offs were required to implement the project? Approximately 500 words.

Youth development through education is one of the most important values of this project. The Grow Dat Youth Farm accomplishes multiple goals by offering a safe, diverse and nurturing environment for youth to work and learn. The program fosters youth leaders from diverse neighborhoods across New Orleans, paying them for meaningful work, teaching them how to grow food in a sustainable way, how to live healthy lives, and how to be leaders of change in their own communities. The program intentionally hires students from different backgrounds to broaden their sense of community and responsibility.

Community engagement is another core value of this project. Poverty and limited access to fresh food are real concerns that many communities in New Orleans face. Grow Dat is committed to providing fresh, sustainable food to community members who don't always have access to it. They donate 40% of all their produce to community members who couldn't otherwise afford it. The value of community input was critical to the design process, and Tulane City Center facilitated multiple design charrettes with community members, including Grow Dat staff and youth of the program, as well as City Park representatives in order to determine what the campus would look like, based on everyone's needs.

Social and environmental sustainability also drive the mission of the Grow Dat Youth Farm. The facility was designed to promote sustainable farming practices through managing water on site, with integrated crop irrigation and water sequestration, on-site waste water treatment including composting toilets and biofilters and bioremediating landscape strategies. The design also promotes sustainability through the use of seven recycled shipping containers which contain all of the indoor programmed spaces.

As a former golf course on City Park property, the site presented key challenges. Careful site planning prioritized the best agricultural land for cultivation. This required the facility to be fit within an area of old growth indigenous trees. The design carefully engages the natural environment, using this design challenge as an opportunity for environmental stewardship.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project? Approximately 500 words.

The project is situated on four acres of a former golf course in New Orleans' City Park, the 6th largest and 7th most visited urban public park in the United States. City Park is a central location, in a city of 73 neighborhoods, where youth from diverse backgrounds can share a common ground. Many of the youth are from low income families and from communities within food deserts. The Grow Dat Youth Farm produced 10,000 pounds of fresh produce last year, 40% of which was donated to these communities.

The program is structured upon existing K-8th grade food education programs in New Orleans, including the Edible Schoolyard, and offers meaningful job opportunities for high school students with an education component. The farm creates a healthy and supportive working and learning environment for high-school aged youth who face limited job opportunities. With a focus on developing a sense of responsibility, community, environmental stewardship, and service among participants, the farm enhances leadership and teamwork abilities through the collaborative work of growing food.

The farm works with high schools and youth organizations throughout New Orleans to recruit a diverse and committed group of youth who develop leadership and life skills during their intensive, hands-on work experience. Through a structured application process, Grow Dat conscientiously recruits a mix of students: 20% of whom have already demonstrated leadership skills inside or outside of school, 20% of whom are at risk of poor performance at school, and 60% of whom are students that are neither excelling nor failing at school.

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate. Approximately 400 words.

The project was piloted at Hollygrove Farm and Market, another project of the Tulane City Center, in partnership with Food and Farm Network to gain input on both farming and community interaction. Early in the development process Grow Dat staff visited two nationally recognized youth farm models, The Food Project in Boston and Urban Roots in Austin, in order to learn from their programmatic structure. Grow Dat worked with New Orleans Outreach and Science and Math Charter School to recruit applicants for 14 paid positions. After the pilot year, Grow Dat has been able to hire 50 youth for paid positions to work and learn on the farm campus, from several high schools across the city.

City Park offered a location accessible to diverse neighborhoods by public transit, and the Farm's mission aligned well with City Park's mission of providing space for healthy lifestyles. Public interests also steered the development of this project, as the community defined what kind of programming they wanted to see in the park. Community input in City Park's masterplan revealed that there was a greater need for an urban farm rather than another golf course, so City Park agreed to convert one of their golf courses into the Grow Dat Youth Farm.

Tulane City Center developed the project from preliminary design through construction, and held community charrettes to determine the final design. Feedback from the community, including the youth enrolled in the program was critical to create a place that was functional, empowering, and sustainable. Certain programmatic needs were identified through these charrettes, such as giving the youth their own space with lockers, and keeping the messy parts of the program separate. Construction was completed by Tulane School of Architecture students over the course of two design-build semesters and a detailing seminar.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable. Approximately 400 words.

The project was primarily financed through generous donations and small grants from foundations. An alumnus of the Tulane School of Architecture, was inspired by the project and its mission, and provided support as well as introductions to other significant donors. The construction costs were kept low through the innovative use of modest materials and an entirely volunteer construction team of Tulane School of Architecture students.

Building Area: (sf)
6000 sf. total
4800 covered outdoor
880 sf. enclosed
320 sf. air conditioned
Cost per Square Foot:
$45-$55
Construction Cost
$264,000

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings? Approximately 400 words.

Grow Dat is unique in how it developed as a strategic partnership between The Food and Farm Network, Tulane University, and City Park, t This collaborative development process involved several departments of Tulane University, with the Tulane School of Architecture leading the process. The youth program was developed simultaneously with the Architecture and Infrastructure, with input from all organizations involved, especially the youth in the community. Grow Dat continues to support the missions of each institution in the partnership.

Grow Dat addresses issues of equality, food access, health and wellness, youth education, and community engagement. Within the lens of the national urban agriculture movement, the Grow Dat Youth Farm is a model because of its focus on youth empowerment. They work collaboratively at the farm to produce healthy food for local residents. The youth and adults who spend time at Grow Dat are inspired to create personal, social and environmental change in their own communities. Grow Dat is a place where people from different backgrounds and disciplines come together in research and practice to support public health, local economies and a sustainable food system in South Louisiana.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE **PERSPECTIVE**

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COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name Johanna Gilligan

Title Founder and Executive Director

Organization Grow Dat Youth Farm

Telephone (504) 377-8395

Address 150 Zachary Taylor Drive

City/State/ZIP New Orleans, LA 70124

Fax ( )

E-mail johanna@growdatyouthfarm.org

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Date 12/05/14

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? Approximately 400 words.

In 2003, I had been working as a teacher in New Orleans and realized that a lot of my students were working in the fast food industry. I was getting involved in gardening and spent some time with farmers in other countries and began to see the connection between small scale farmers and they way their livelihood was being impacted by the rapidly globalizing food system. Working in New Orleans with young people, I realized how little access they had to fresh food within their neighborhoods. I wanted to connect young adults with the opportunity to grow their own food. As a teacher, realizing how many of my students were employed by the fast food industry, I also began thinking that there has to be market demand for local produce in the city because at this time pre-Katrina there was a lot less local food available. It was during this time that I got excited about the idea of starting a farm that hired teenagers to grow food.

After Katrina, I was working with the New Orleans Food and Farm Network, helping design community based food projects, cooking classes in high schools and gardening programs that distributed seeds and ran workshops for backyard gardeners. We partnered with Tulane City Center (TCC) on the design components of these small scale projects. Working with Dan Etheridge, associate director of TCC, Scott Cowen, president of Tulane, and Stephanie Barksdale, from the office of Social Innovation at Tulane, we became very interested in the idea of the University supporting a food education program akin to the edible schoolyard. Scott had met with Alice Waters and became very inspired by that model and prompted Tulane City Center to explore how to create a complimentary project. We started our research by visiting a program called Urban Roots in Austin, which became one of our programmatic models. I began working on the project as a consultant, working under TCC guiding the development of the program, until I received a fellowship called the Urban Innovation Challenge Fellowship for the first year of launching the organization before Grow Dat became an independent 501c3.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? Approximately 400 words.

Thinking of this from the perspective of the young adults in the community we are working with, our mission is to nurture a diverse group of young leaders through the meaningful work of growing food. We have an intentional goal of bringing young people who are different from one another to work together. Part of my concern in a city that is very neighborhood centric is that I wanted the farm to be a place that belonged to everybody. City Park was the greatest potential space for us to operate in because it is a huge park inside a city that is so neighborhood based;it is one of the few places that really feels like a shared space for each neighborhood. in addition to that, it is on 1,300 acres which allows for so many lessons about nature, birds, alligators, plants and other wildlife. These larger issues of being in a wild environment inside of a city enhances our curriculum in a lot of ways. We needed to find a place that people could share and City Park seemed like that place.

The issue was creating a place that young people could have a sense of ownership.

We were very thoughtful in terms of our partnership with the university because theres a long standing history of the university being involved in the community while still remaining in this "ivory tower", as a wealthy university situated uptown inside a very prominently low income city. We were able to successfully navigate the political, historical, racial class dimensions of a partnership that resulted in young people feeling true ownership over something and the university bringing incredible technical capacity, expertise and a lot of learning opportunity for university students, without any of those groups having to compromise. We are thoughtfully engaging young folks from all around the city and college students from around the country. Part of our theory of change was that high school age students are forming not only their identity but a community identity and so Grow Dat is formed in a lot of ways to allow young people, who in this city still do not intersect across race or class because they often still attend de facto segregated schools. There are not a lot of shared spaces or opportunities for relationship development. What's great about farming is that it becomes a really great equalizer for young folks who are different from one another to come together and learn new skills and develop relationships.

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how? Approximately 400 words.

I hear often from alumni of the Grow Dat program that it has really transformed the way they think about things and changed their lives in critical ways. When you consider places to work, specifically for young adults in the city, specifically poor young adults, there is a 42% unemployment rate for black teenagers nationally. For those who find jobs, they are usually limited to minimum wage job opportunities where there is not a lot of skill building or support. Research that shows that meaningful employment can be very beneficial for teenagers, whilst the opposite is true and dead-end employment often derails young adults from achieving other things such as reaching their full potential or going to college. Primarily we have created a better job opportunity for young adults to be involved in the food system in a different way than they normally are, as producers and vendors of healthy food. We have created an intentional workspace where people who are different from another have real and honest conversations and learn how to work together and learn from one another. This has affected not just young people but anyone who has come to the farm, including staff, volunteers from the university and from elsewhere. It is humbling to hear lot of people say that working at Grow Dat in a volunteer capacity has changed their lives.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through? Approximately 400 words.

I would build us a bigger space. I am not the kind of person who looks back, although I am very self reflective and we are a self reflective organization. We do not spend a lot of time looking backwards as much as we look forwards. We have and continue to have an incredibly successful partnership with the university as our primary partner and we have been able to model ourselves after existing organizations such as The Food Project in a way that really fast tracked our growth. We are only entering our 5th year as an organization but have been able to achieve a lot in a short time because we built on a lot of ideas from people who have come before us and have done good work. A lot of our work has been through collaboration, which has been very successful. There are a lot of ways we could have done this differently, we could have formed this as a co-op rather than a non-profit, which would have been a very different model, with different benefits, but I feel really good about where we are and all the learning processes that have occurred along the way have all been really useful and taught us a lot of lessons through our challenges.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PUBLIC AGENCY **PERSPECTIVE**

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PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

John Hopper

Name John Hopper New Orleans City Park | Title Chief Development Officer + Public Affairs Director

Organization New Orleans City Park | Telephone (504) 259-1509

Address 1 Palm Drive | City/State/ZIP New Orleans, LA, 70124

Fax ( ) | E-mail jhopper@nocp.org

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Signature [signature] | Date 12-5-15

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). Approximately 400 words.

Approximately 400 words.

City Park has had a relationship with Tulane for a number of years and it was really solidified after Katrina; they said we are here, we want to help, and we know you need help. We had a few different charrettes at the university with multitudes of different departments represented and it resulted in two prongs. One, since Tulane has a community service component, we take a lot of their sweat-equity with volunteers coming to the park, and there are still volunteers coming to the park ten years later. Secondly, we tapped into the intellect of Tulane, which we have done with a number of departments, most notably with Tulane City Center and have worked with them on both Grow Dat, and more recently a shade structure on the ropes course.

Quite frankly the partnership was a perfect fit. It really has been a win-win because we had the land and Grow Dat certainly fits within our mission. City Park would be the first to tell you, that although we are a huge park and do a lot of things, we are a little light on the programming end of things. Anytime we have an opportunity to partner with someone else, in this case Tulane University and Grow Dat, because we know there is going to be programming involved, we like to give it serious consideration.

One of the nice things about the park is that we are own entity and don't have to worry about getting things rezoned, it has to fit within our master plan, and be approved by the board. The land was previously a golf course. Through our public input, our master plan was developed in March of 2005 and has been updated several times. One of the things the public said pretty loud and clear, even people who like golf, was that too much of the park was dedicated to golf. So we listened to them and went from 4 golf courses to 2. By shrinking the footprint of golf we have freed up a lot of other land for other purposes within the park.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

Approximately 400 words.

We are a huge park, 1,300 acres in the middle of this urban city. There is no shortage of people who have great ideas that they think would be a perfect fit for the park. and many times they are great ideas, and just as often they are people looking for land. We have had all sorts of people propose things that might have been good. The trade off is that certainly there is opportunity cost of these decisions, the acres we gave to Grow Dat could have been used for something else. When we looked at our mission and looked at the programming, and since one of the key tenants of the park is healthier living, anything we can do to encourage healthy living we take into consideration, and Grow Dat has exceeded our expectations.

There was not a lot of red tape involved-it made sense to us and was a good use of our land, and it is hard to argue with a program that brings kids in, teaches them how to farm and eat better, and hopefully the tangential component is affecting the people in their lives and improving those eating behaviors. The icing on the cake was our partnership with Tulane City Center in building the actual campus and the infrastructure, which has won several awards. I think it looks beautiful, it is a great adaptive reuse of shipping containers, it looks right, fits the environment. The architecture students worked really hard, and volunteers from the university and the general public continue to support Grow Dat's success.

Approximately 400 words.

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

The positive impact of Grow Dat is incremental, while a majority of the city might not know about Grow Dat, that doesn't mean it isn't working. It is reaching out to kids, and in the long term one of the signature pieces of it, is that Grow Dat is not just a field trip to a farm, they work with these kids for months and sometimes years, which is how Real Change comes about. Grow dat is chipping away at the issues of healthy living and eating, food access, equity and teaching kids how to farm, about nutrition and healthy eating.

More and more people are becoming aware of the food stand, the market at Grow Dat, they're in the park on Saturdays and come and buy their arugula or kale or whatever is in season. Now they are even offering the public a package that you can order for the season, and it has been very successful. But most of their produce is actually donated, and the kids who work there can take as much as they want for their families. They have more crop this season than they have ever had before and will be able to reach even more people in this city.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400 words.

Approximately 400 words.

Considering the fact that Tulane is a private university and City Park is public, there are certainly benefits to this partnership. This project entails both the intellect of Tulane students, including architecture students from Tulane City Center who designed the project and built it, as well as volunteer hours that both Tulane students have invested throughout the years. The park gained an asset, because the infrastructure is now ours. If we had paid for this im sure the costs would have been enormous, but because of our partnership with Tulane City Center, we didn't pay a penny. In that aspect it was incredibly beneficial to the park, but more so than bricks and mortar was the fact that there is something happening there that really benefits the kids of New Orleans and their families.

Every park has the same dilemma whether they are 20 acres or 20,000, the trade off between what fits. The Grow Dat model is certainly applicable for any parks who are looking to advance healthy living and healthy eating, if they have a few acres they can dedicate, parks should be looking at that model.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

Approximately 400 words.

I think the most successful aspect is that over time this project will truly change the eating behaviors of a percentage of kids and their families. It also provides healthy, locally grown, non-genetically modified seeds and non-herbicided greens and vegetables for the public. It has been positive for the park to gain this valuable asset that also helps us fulfill our mission.

Some of the maintenance of the non-agricultural area has been difficult for Grow Dat to keep up with, and City Park has had to assist. As they grow and become more successful, our Cooperative Endeavour has them responsible for this. They're doing a great job on the land they cultivate and grow, and I believe as they continue to grow as an organization, they will be more successful in maintaining the land.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD DEVELOPER **PERSPECTIVE**

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DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be completed by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Dan Etheridge

Name Dan Etheridge Title Deputy Director

Tulane City Center

Organization Tulane City Center Telephone (713) 5045619

Address 6823 Saint Charles Ave City/State/ZIP New Orleans, LA, 70118

danetheridge77@gmail.com

Fax ( ) E-mail danetheridge77@gmail.com

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Signature ? Date December 5th, 2014

Approximately 400 words.

1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement. Approximately 400 words.

Tulane University is a founding partner of Grow Dat, so we were involved in early concept development, and all physical site development. The critical piece of this development process was the partnership with City Park. City Park was very supportive of the project and the mission from day one. We were able to get such prime real estate because they wanted to go into a partnership with Tulane University. It didn't all happen in a linear way but we had all the agreements signed between Tulane University and City Park and Tulane and Grow Dat, and those two agreements referenced each other. My role in the development of this project was facilitating this process. Those documents were not completely executed until the project was built but there was a lot of good faith and letters of support between the leaders of City Park and Tulane to make this happen. As co-founder, Tulane used our capacity and institutional reputation to make this happen, in many ways because Tulane has enough insurance and money to cover the liability for City Park. We used this to form the partnership between City Park, Grow Dat and Tulane University that was required to execute the project.

Approximately 400 words.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project? Approximately 400 words.

We didn't get to choose what piece of land we got in City Park. We were offered land that was not ideal and we did some preliminary design work on that until they offered us another one that had some elements that were better and some that were worse. Quite a lot of the site is not suitable for farming so we developed the parts of the site we could for the core mission. Right now Grow Dat as an organization is developing more of an environmental education component of the programming to maximize the other kinds of land available which is more bottomland hardwood forests that are being restored and managed.

We really wanted to be at City Park because there is plenty of space, it is in the middle of the city, public transit is available, and it is also pretty much a crossroads in class; people feel comfortable there which is not true of all New Orleans neighborhoods. City Park represented this place where we felt we could get maximum comfort levels and buy-in from teenagers and families, and where we could get a continuous piece of land, so this was worth the compromise.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used? Approximately 400 words.

It was financed exclusively through donations, grants and some small contracts. Early in the development we started to view the project in two very specific parts, one being the real estate development project, i.e. the development of the site and buildings, and the other part was the development of the program itself. The program launched before we even broke ground. It launched temporarily at the Hollygrove Market and Farm for one year, with just 12 youth involved. It was no less work for the staff of Grow Dat, doing it from the ground up with significantly less land and less youth involved as the pilot year while we began site development. The program continues to be funded mostly through grants and gifts and contracts although we are in the middle of a strategic planning process right now and set a goal to generate enough income to cover 50% of the program costs. We sell produce and people think that is enough to cover the program costs, but in reality that covers 8-10% at best. If we wanted to make money selling produce we would hire two farmers rather than the 50 teenagers in the program, but the point of the project is to educate young leaders.

The real estate component was mostly financed through cash gifts from alumni of the university who were very supportive of the program and particularly the concept of the university incorporating this into its mission of research, education and outreach. There was one alumni of the architecture school who brought on board a colleague of his with ties to New Orleans that had not attended Tulane, but had greater capacity to fund this project. This is an example of an alumni being proud of something the university was supporting, putting some of his own money on the table and using this start to bring in a bigger donor. With that push we were able to get enough interest to receive gifts from other alumni and donors. It was very difficult to get grants for the site development so it was mostly through the generosity of alumni, leveraging the university's network of resources.

The only costs we needed to raise were material costs and subcontracting for electrical and plumbing. For the most part the labor was free because we were able to tap into the curriculum of the school and how design-build has been built into the pedagogy there. Students designed and built components of the part over an 8 month process and received academic credit. We have won awards for this model as an educational experience.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project? Approximately 400 words.

The project was incredibly successful and the execution of this ambitious design-build was very successful. Typically design-build projects at universities are one semester and stuck at a scale that is much more conservative. We were able to work within the curriculum over a couple of design-build semesters plus some seminars on detailing, getting students in and sincerely making sure they had a first class educational experience and getting done what needed to be done. I know this was successful from the students point of view because graduates have contacted us and said they have found jobs because Grow Dat was part of their portfolio.

The way we had to incorporate shipping containers into the design as a request of one of the funders was also done successfully. The way we deployed them, the lack of conditioned spaces, letting boxes be boxes, and to create covered outdoor spaces was a challenging design. We struggled to transform what was once a golf course into an urban farm and that has taken some time, but they've done a great job with limited resources.

Another success was how we grew this out of a small program in the architecture school, which is itself a small school within the university, into a program that is always mentioned in the speeches of the President of the University, who became personally involved in this project, along with the Freeman Business School, School of Social Work, Public Health, and Medical School by demonstrating the value of these kind of partnerships within the University. Most importantly is the impact of the program itself. Over 200 alumni of the program are teenagers in the city that have been paid to work on the farm, grow local food, and have the parallel education component leadership development around communication, finance, and learning about the food system and becoming leaders in their communities.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER **PERSPECTIVE**

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ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name Scott Bernhard

Title Jean and Saul A. Mintz Associate Professor, AIA

Organization Tulane School of Architecture / Tulane City Center

Telephone (504) 495-3004

Address 6823 Saint Charles Ave. Tulane University, School of Architecture

City/State/ZIP New Orleans, LA 70118

Fax (504) 862-8798

E-mail sbernhard@tulane.edu

Signature ?

Date December 8th, 2014

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc. Approximately 400 words.

Approximately 400 words.

The scope of this design project is vast. It is a farm facility for high-school age students to learn about agriculture, business management and leadership skills and is located in a large urban park on four acres of a former golf course. Many progressive agricultural techniques are used; water is managed on-site, crop irrigation and water sequestration are integrated with building design, waste water is treated on-site (including composting toilets) and bio-filters, and bio-remediating landscape elements/techniques are used extensively.

The design intentions were correspondingly broad. The facility needed to accommodate a substantial range of activities – educational functions, agricultural production, revenue-generating events, green markets, celebratory occasions, and the elements of a working, organic farm. The building functions as a bio-remediating device with a minimal impact on its urban park setting. The elements of the scheme produce a screen-like edge facing the "public side" of the site by orienting 40' long shipping containers parallel to the street edge. The "farm-side" of the project uses 20' long containers turned 90 degrees to create a "filter-zone" between the classroom/courtyard spaces and the working side of the agricultural facility. The filter-zone contains the restrooms, locker rooms, and service areas visited by students as they move from classroom to field and back again. This configuration also allows students to switch between "tidy" and "messy" activities. Thus, the scheme presents a series of layers between the public face and the farm beyond, ensuring that gateway functions and filtering zones allow an appropriate porousness through the built areas of the site.

The project uses seven recycled shipping containers and recycled steel trusses to create a large, covered outdoor classroom and supporting spaces as well a food processing and storage facility associated with agricultural production. The containers create a buffer to a nearby highway and shelter the program spaces from solar exposure. The shipping containers require only point loaded foundations at their corners, making long, efficient spans and sparing the adjacent cypress tree roots from disruptive excavation. Extensive sun shading is created with a vine covered shade screen façade to the south and rain screen protection for each exposed shipping container. The low cost of containers (readily available in a port city) made the creation and spatial definition of large, covered outdoor spaces possible despite the limited resources of the project.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design. Approximately 400 words.

Approximately 400 words.

Though architecture can sometimes be a cumbersome mechanism with which to address social problems, the design and construction of this urban agriculture facility truly became an instance of design as a tool for positive and measurable social change in a struggling city. The entire facility is designed to support the mission of "nurturing a diverse group of young leaders through the meaningful work of growing healthy food."

The problems of many young adults in New Orleans are myriad. Two of the most conspicuous problems—those of poor health and chronic unemployment—are interrelated. Thus, a simultaneous address to both of these problems produces results measured in range of metrics—from improvements in long-term health and personal agency to the essential skills and sensibilities that support meaningful employment. The following statistics offer a window into some of the substantial problems facing young adults in New Orleans;

- In 2011, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported a 42.1% rate of unemployment among African American teenagers between 16 and 19.
- Of the adults in New Orleans' African American community, 70% are overweight or obese
- According to the Trust for America's Health, 33.5% of high-school students in New Orleans are overweight or obese.
- Food access studies confirm that New Orleans is one of the largest urban food deserts in the US with 10 supermarkets serving 340,000 people.

As these statistics indicate, New Orleans presents very few job opportunities for teenagers and most of what is available is in the fast-food industry. There is woefully inadequate access to food, particularly healthy food. Many of the working families in the city rely on teenage members to prepare food for the whole family since adults are often overwhelmed with work in several low-paying jobs. High-school age students are seldom experienced in the preparation of healthy food and often rely on fast-food options to address daily meals. This phenomenon and others contribute to startling statistics for chronic health problems such as diabetes and obesity among a large proportion of the urban community.

The architecture of the project creates a flexible environment that engages the students, facilitates revenue generation with public events and gatherings, and supports environmentally responsible stewardship of a public site. The students work as interns and are paid for their work. Students sell 60% of what they grow and donate the remaining 40% - with the sales proceeds supporting the compensation each student receives.

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project. Approximately 400 words.

There were many challenges in building this project. The nature of the site, situated between an elevated highway and an abandoned golf course, was challenging. With little adjacent infrastructure, the project had to function in a nearly self-sustaining way. No sanitary drainage or storm-water sewers were available on this odd urban/park site and composting toilets were used as well as bio-filtering systems, bio-swales and rain gardens to manage gray water and rainwater on site. The virtue of this challenge is the clear demonstration of passive and ecologically progressive techniques for cooling the buildings, managing rainfall and filtering runoff and gray-water. This demonstration of systems is rare in the surrounding city and the park provided an ideal setting to showcase the techniques.

The project has grid-based power, but the operating budget of the program does not support extensive mechanical cooling in this subtropical area. Thus, the facility abounds with covered outdoor spaces formed by the recycled shipping containers.

Another challenge in the project design was the creation of a facility accommodating a wide range of semi-enclosed activities. The open-air classroom serves many purposes over the course of a day and a season and is host to demonstration cooking, musical events, weddings, small group meetings and fundraising events as well as the normal compliment of more traditional classes in agriculture. The covered outdoor spaces of the project are at once urban spaces with the common adjacencies of civic use, and "room-like" in their capacity to contain activity and allow focus on the events of the day. It was a challenge to create spaces on the border between open, plaza like areas for farming activity and urban courtyard spaces for markets and events. Likewise, the degrees of enclosure and cover had to negotiate with the need for passive cooling and fluid access to adjacent exterior areas.

Finally, the challenge of creating a "place" in a broad area of park with little built context and no precedent for space making in the area was a welcome challenge. The elements of the project were organized to form a broad array of well-defined, shaded outdoor spaces such as the classroom, the courtyard, the food processing area, the "changing zone" and the farming equipment zones. The relationships developed between the enclosed and outdoor spaces imply a fluid engagement with the benign aspects of the subtropical climate and point to the virtue of active, well-defined spaces for a wide range of activities.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context. Approximately 400 words.

This project is hybrid in its relation to site—it is, at once, urban and park-like in its setting. It is located in a large urban park close to a bisecting, raised highway. The portion of the park now occupied by the farm was a golf course that is now being converted to new uses. The raised highway made the surrounding portion of the park undesirable for recreational activities and thus the urban agriculture facility does not occupy land desired for other purposes. In terms of the immediate context, the facility is not conspicuously urban since adjacent park buildings are several hundred yards distant.

But the park itself is in the midst of an urban context and it serves as a rare break in the continuous, though modest, density of a surrounding urban area under reconstruction. The park also functions as a "neutral territory" in the urban community since it is not "owned" by any single neighborhood or user group due to its size and extent. For instance, all local high-school football games are played in stadia in the park since no urban high-schools have space or budget for their own stadia. The park is an extraordinary example of shared space in a very fundamental sense. User groups in the park vary greatly in age, race, socio-economic background and interest. The urbanity of the site is derived from its diverse contact and engagement with the city more than an obvious link to the dense neighborhoods that surround it.

The project does negotiate with its context however. Native tree species on the site were left in-situ. These trees help to cool the air moving across the site – adding substantially to the passive cooling of the project and allowing the facility to function year-round without mechanically conditioned spaces. Point-loaded foundations below the four corners of each shipping container support all structural loads. Native tree roots are thus undisturbed by linear foundations and trees can grow very close to the covered and enclosed spaces. Building in an urban park offered the possibility of demonstrating passive cooling at its most lyrical. The logic of water management is also made manifest in the project. Visitors pass over bio-swales and water sequestering areas, viewing low-maintenance native plant gardens. Bio-filtering zones are also visible from the bathroom and kitchen spaces showing, in a direct way, how water is filtered naturally outside the sanitary drainage system. As design elements, these water management and filtering areas became garden elements in the design in addition to their function as ecologically sound program elements.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD OTHER **PERSPECTIVE**

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Name Timothy S. Dubuclet Title Jr.

Organization Telephone (504 236-7249

Address 6046 Dorothea St. City/State/ZIP New Orleans, LA, 70124

Fax ( ) E-mail Timothy.Dubuclet@goodeggsco

Approximately 400 words.

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Signature Date Dec. 5, 2014

1. What role did you play in the development of this project? Approximately 400 words.

When I was a senior in high school, I was inspired by one my teachers, Leo Gorman, to start working at Grow Dat. Leo was also the farm manager at Grow Dat, and knew it would be a positive place for me to be after school, to earn some money, learn new skills and meet new people. It wasn't just about farming, we would spend about half the day learning about growing, but the other half we would spend talking and really building our self worth as individuals, and becoming comfortable with each other to work together. We all got together to brainstorm ideas for the design of the farm, we wanted to have the most eco-friendly design we could think of. That was the original game plan, to keep it as eco friendly as possible.

Initially the farm was a golf course and the ground was all oyster shells, so for the first couple months the main project was taking care of that, we couldn't start farming until later. We had to prepare the soil, breaking up the dirt and getting rid of the rocks and shells. After the land was ready we could start farming, the first step was washing the seedlings, and they started off slowly giving us demos on how to do everything.

Approximately 400 words.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

I live in New Orleans East, and there is no farming going on over there at all. In my neighborhood no one was even thinking about it. So that is part of what I learned from Grow Dat. I was an urban kid so I never got a chance to experience growing my own food. I had never even thought of it, not once, I was just like McDonalds, McDonalds McDonalds...I had really bad eating habits and weighed 300 pounds. Once I learned about healthy eating from Grow Dat, it encouraged me to bring that back to my neighborhood and basically teach others. I started bringing the seedlings home from the farm and started my own garden at my house. There was one neighbor in particular, my next door neighbor, who I worked with to start a garden in his yard. We started off growing watermelon, and then he kept it going by growing other vegetables. It was a big deal because once I started growing my own food it really inspired me to continue and it just felt right.

I wouldn't say I was a bad kid, but I was troubled and never had anything to dedicate myself to, so once I started farming it was really inspirational to me. Ever since then it just took me on a different path as well, encouraged me to start cooking for my family. I was bringing them a lot of healthy vegetables, so it was no longer just red meat, red meat, red meat...now there are a lot of vegetables in the household. Once I started losing weight, my family started losing weight, so Grow Dat has helped my family become healthy. They brought chefs and personal trainers to the farm to teach us about being healthy. Because of Grow Dat I went from weighing 300 pounds to 225 in a couple of months.

To further the community impact, once kids at my school started seeing how cool it was, they started doing their own thing. I was just telling kids about it and they started their own gardens at home. These kids had never even thought about growing before, we were just thinking about video games, and no one was really going outside anymore. So now I have a couple of friends with their own private gardens growing a ton of food, and I even encouraged one friend to go into botany, and she is taking that up at college right now.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

We all got together for brainstorming sessions to think about what the farm would look like, and what would make it a better place to work and hang out. They used a lot of our ideas in the design, especially for the locker room. We were also thinking about recyclable water systems, we decided to build a stream around the campus and it was supposed to have a wheel to use the water to generate electricity when it rained. We had to choose where to put certain funding and what was important and weigh it out. It gets real expensive, the more eco-friendly you make things. These things weren't forgotten about, we just planned on revisiting them later.

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

The most successful part was me becoming a healthier person. I was a troubled kid, so I blamed my trouble on me just not being happy physically, but I never came to the conclusion that I wasn't happy physically because I had never thought of that before Grow Dat. Once I started becoming a healthier person, my attitude started changing. Even the way I treated homeless people, we had opportunity to cook and feed the homeless, which was really an eye opener for me because I realized you know they are people too and we shouldn't just ignore them. Whenever you get a chance just have a conversation with them because they might tell you something that might be a little inspirational, might just help you push on.

Another really beneficial thing that Grow Dat brought as a whole was just helping the youth get out of a lot of trouble. My graduating class was a lot of troubled kids and my story wasn't the worst. I had this friend that lost everything, his mother and father, and Grow Dat managed to give him the courage to push forward. It was the little things that Grow Dat did like helping him go to court, helping with lawyers and other things that really helped him prosper and become a better man.


GROW
DAT
YOUTH FARM

A. Campus
B. Main Entry
C. Market Area
D. Rain Garden
E. Greenhouses (670 SF)
F. Orchard (14 trees)
G. Compost
H. Water Tower
J. Fencing (403')
K. Live Oak Gathering Area
L. Rest Areas
M. Parking (9 spaces)
O. Phase I Road
P. Phase II Road

This four-acre urban agriculture and youth education facility is located near an interstate highway on the site of an older, now abandoned golf course.

Approximate site boundaries including the brackish lagoon adjacent to the site. The lagoon creates a natural barrier to “agricultural pests”

These areas are under cultivation and produce about 25,000 pounds or produce, grown by high-school aged students, each season.

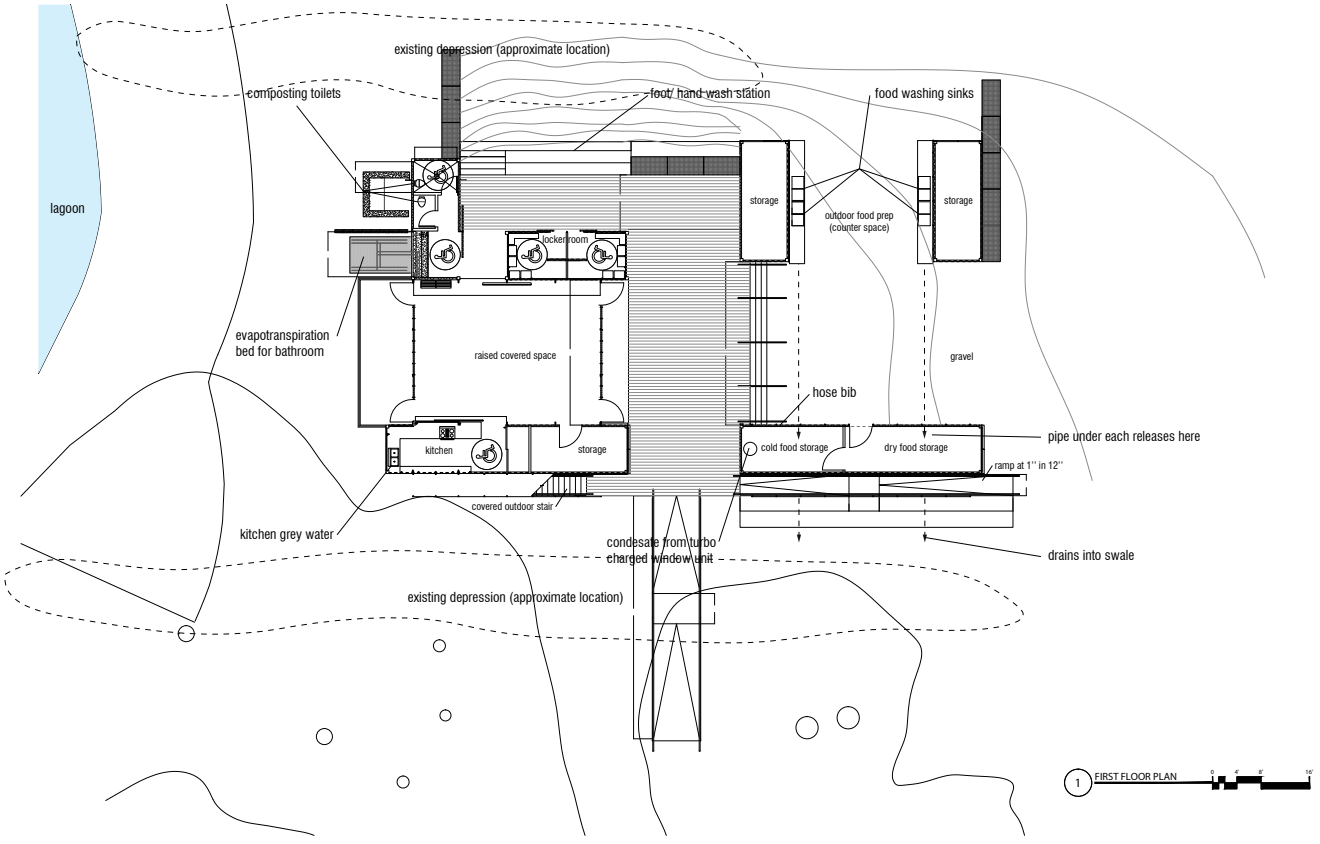
The area depicted with the dotted line is shown in detail on the next image slide. This is the farm facility itself and it is located on the site of a former “infestation” of an invasive tree species that was removed to protect the native trees in the area.

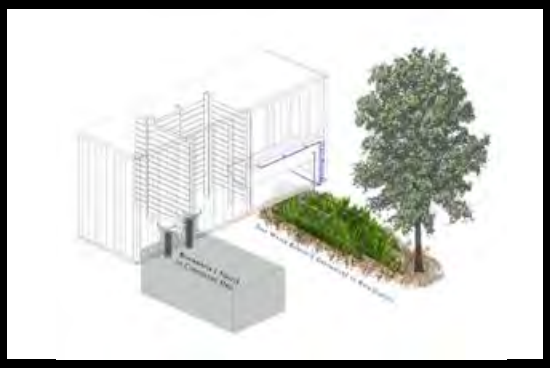
All storm water run-off is sequestered on the site and used in the agricultural processes. In extreme rain events, water is stored in a bio-swale where it is purified through natural processes.

The road at left runs through a large urban park and provides access and power for the site.

The interstate highway has made this portion of the large urban park undesirable for recreational activities and thus the urban agriculture facility does not occupy land desired for other purposes.

An old rail line passes through the area as well.





The bathroom facility uses a composting toilet for black-water and a bio-remediating swale to filter grey-water from a large lavatory.

Gray-water passes through the bio-remediating swale into the surrounding wooded area – helping to nourish the tree canopy which acts as a primary cooling system for western light.

The use of composting toilets and gray-water filtration is rare in the metropolitan area surrounding the youth farm – but has been done legally in this instance. The facility therefore serves as a demonstration project for the use of these water and energy conserving practices.

The project also seeks to disprove some of the myths that surround gray-water treatment and presents the ecologically sound practice without any of the imagined odor or unpleasant appearances formerly associated with the practice.


TULANE UNIVERSITY
tulane city center
NEW ORLEANS
CITY PARK
ROUSES
Capital One Bank
WHOLE FOODS
GROW DAT YOUTH FARM
The BARMAN'S FUND
GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION
ConAgra
EPNO
HarboGAEA
AND YOU!!!
Individual Donors


DAT
YOUTH FARM


DAT
YOUTH FARM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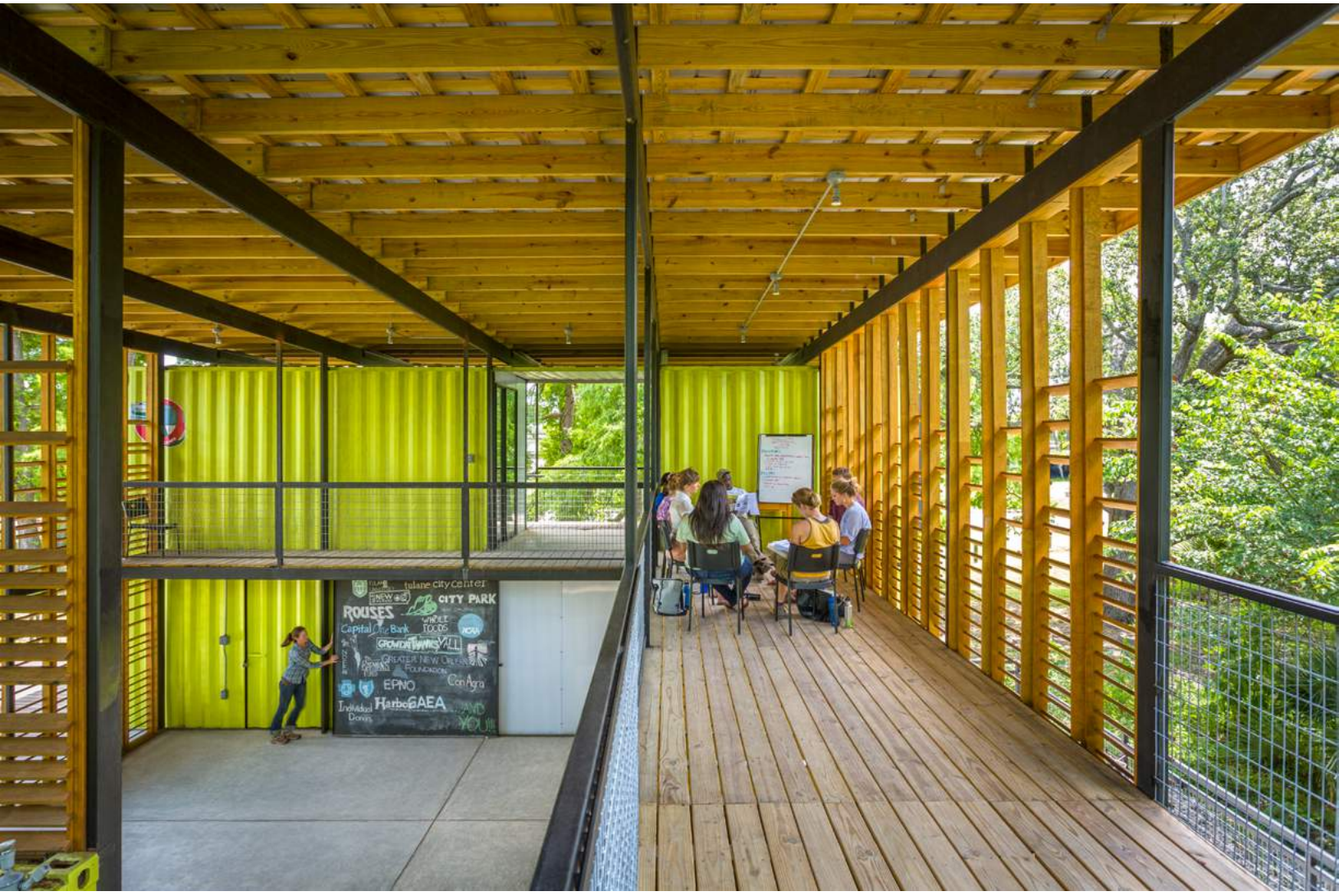
GROW
DAT


tulane city center
CITY PARK
WHOLE FOODS
NOAA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ROUSES
WHOLE FOODS
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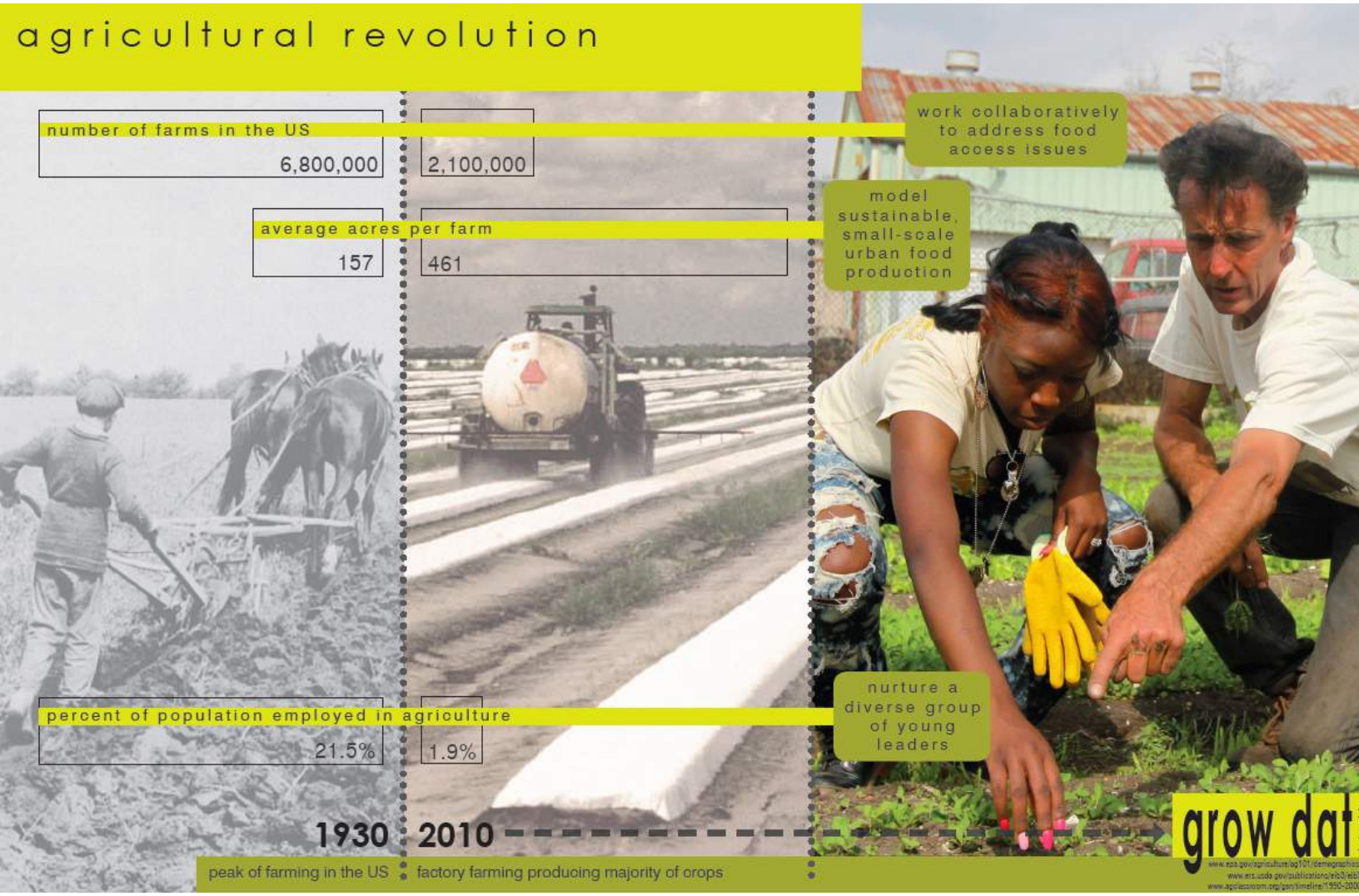
agricultural revolution



	1930	2010
number of farms in the US	6,800,000	2,100,000
average acres per farm	157	461
percent of population employed in agriculture	21.5%	1.9%

work collaboratively to address food access issues

model sustainable, small-scale urban food production

nurture a diverse group of young leaders

1930 2010

peak of farming in the US

factory farming produoing majority of orops

grow dat

GROW DAT YOUTH FACTS

100%

of Grow Dat youth report that they either have the desire to build a garden or have already started a garden of their own since participating in Grow Dat.

81%

of youth report an increase in their ability to maintain focus on projects, and two thirds report that they are less distracted from their projects since they joined Grow Dat.

100%

of youth surveyed report that they have added at least 2-5 new fruits and/or vegetables to their diet as a result of their participation in Grow Dat.

71%

of students report that they have more friends from different backgrounds since joining Grow Dat than they had had before participating.

20%

of all food and beverage serving and related workers were 16 to 19 years old in 2008—about six times the proportion for all workers.[1]

Justin Park
Grow Dat Infographic

[1] Bureau of Labor - http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos162.htm#addinfo

AWARDS
2014 AIA Louisiana Honor Award
2014 AIA Louisiana Members Choice
2012 SEED Award, People's Choice at the Structures for Inclusion Conference

PUBLICATIONS
Plans Move Ahead for Grow Dat Youth Farm, February 18, 2011, Kathryn Hobgood Ray
Grist. Dirty South: Youth farms keep New Orleans teens in school gardens., 16 Dec 2011. Tracie McMillan
The New Orleans Times Picayune. Grow Dat Youth Farm Will Reap City Park Land Bounty. Feb 28, 2011. John Pope
The New Orleans Times Picayune. Grow Dat Youth Farm nurtures young leaders amid planting. June 9, 2011. Judy Walker
WWNO Community Impact Series: Grow Dat Youth Farm. Story by Ian McNulty. Aired June 26th, 2012. WWNO - 89.9FM New Orleans
ArchDaily - The Grow Dat Youth Farm & SEEDocs: Mini-Documentaries on the Power of Public-Interest Design. by Vanessa Quirk. Posted June 22, 2012. http://www.archdaily.com
SEED Docs - a documentary film by The SEED Network and Project Uptake. June 2012. http://www.seedocs.org/
New Orleans Magazine 'Best New Architecture; 5 Blueprints to Success', by John Klingman, March 2013
SEED People's Choice Award 2012, Structures For Inclusion. March 2012.
SEED Award of Honor 2012, Structures for Inclusion Conference. March 2012
'An Urban Farm puts New Orleans Teens to Work'. Kaid Benfield. Atlantic Cities. 2012
'Grow Dat Youth Farm Nurtures Leaders'. Story by Eve Abrams. Aired Dec 11th, 2012. WWNO - 89.9FM New Orleans
"Quiet Heroes Build Farm in the Heart of the City' WWL Channel 4
Urban Reinvestments, Architect Magazine, by Nate Berg, January 2013
'Urban Oases: Projects from mobile markets to full-on farms are greening America's food deserts'. Architectural Record, by Lamar Anderson, July 2013
'Farm to Class: 'Grow Dat Youth Farm - The urban farm provides work for high school students and teaches them about sustainable farming'. Green Building and Design magazine by Benjamin van Loon
'Grow Dat Youth Farm at City Park teaches leadership through growing', Times-Picayune, Judy Walker, April 7th 2014.
'Hurricane recovery gave New Orleans reason to band together to offer more healthful food', The Washington Post, June 24, 2014. By Della Hasselle
Grow Dat's City Park farm yields an Unexpected Crop; Good Jobs for Youth, Op Ed in the Lens, by Johanna Gilligan. June 17, 2014 www.thelensnola.org
'Out of Desert Dust, a Miracle on a Shoestring', The New York Times, By Patricia Leigh Brown, June 15, 2014

according to the Trust for Americas Health:

33.5%
of high school students are either overweight or obese

New Orleans is one of the America's largest urban food deserts

10
supermarkets serve a population of 340,000

in short: *in New Orleans there are few jobs for teens, inadequate access to food, and poor eating and lifestyle habits resulting in chronic diseases*

In 2011 the Bureau of Labor reported a:

42.1%
unemployment rate among black teenagers

of the adults in New Orleans' African American Community:

7 of 10
are overweight

and are twice as likely as whites to be diagnosed with chronic diseases such as diabetes

Key to understanding this project is the somewhat unusual program aimed at addressing societal problems with a "social entrepreneurship" venture. The program calls for a facility carefully connected to the program of youth-employment through the meaningful work of growing food.

Thus the project is a farm and a classroom – a learning/working environment intended to operate without substantial external aid. The work of the students produces a marketable commodity and introduces them to healthy living and eating choices. For many students of the youth farm, the farm develops leadership skills as well as responsible habits.

The architecture of the project is tuned to the dual nature of the activity, allowing a flexible environment which engages the students, facilitates revenue generation with public events and gatherings, and supports environmentally responsible stewardship of a public site.

Land Use

Grow Dat's City Park farm yields an unexpected crop: good jobs for youth

OPINION By Johanna Gilligan, Contributing opinion writer June 17, 2014 7:25am

Grow Dat

Grow Dat Youth Farm works two acres in City Park and has harvested 20,000 pounds of fresh food.

Ten years ago, Grow Dat Youth Farm was only a kernel of an idea my mind, awaiting the right moment to sprout. Working as a high school teacher at the time, I looked out over the food landscape of New Orleans and saw a need to create an alternative first job for my students, so many of whom were employed in the fast food industry.

I was confident that engaging young adults in the work of growing food for their communities could be a transformative experience for them, maybe even for the city. I knew that learning to work together to grow, sell and share fresh produce would require them to develop leadership and communication skills that we couldn't devote as much time to in the classroom.

What I didn't imagine was that urban farming experience might also prepare them for food-sector employment that could provide a decent hourly wage, benefits, and opportunities to advance. Fast forward 10 years, and I see a new kind of food sector job emerging—not just late-night minimum-wage jobs in a fast food restaurant or earning $2.13/hour waiting tables, but opportunities to work with businesses who are growing, selling, and preparing local food.

Food is not a luxury item, a fact that makes me very proud to work as someone producing it. As a friend says: "There's no such thing as a food bubble." That lesson was reinforced during the 2008-9 economic free fall and in the years that followed.

> **We have no choice but to see the links between our economic and environmental challenges and to address them as one.**

It was a time for reflection. We are rapidly reaching the end of our ability to limitlessly produce and purchase plastic toys in a collapsing global ecosphere. (Thank you, peak oil.) So what's next? What's the basis of our future economy going to be?

Food is becoming a focal point as we rebuild our local economies around the nation, and post-Katrina New Orleans is an interesting example. There are more restaurants in New Orleans today than before Hurricane Katrina, and many of them showcase fresh, local produce (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/03/business/rebuilding-new-orleans-one-meal-at-a-time.html?_r=1&) . Farmers' markets, online retail stores, and even chain grocery stores are also responding to consumer demand for local produce.

Add to that picture student-led demand for schools to offer local produce in the cafeteria. Universities alone spend $6 billion each year on food, and, thanks to skilled organizing by groups like Real Food Challenge, students around the country have pressured their schools to make commitments (http://www.realfoodchallenge.org/press-and-success) to buy up to 40 percent of that food locally. It's a move that makes for healthier students and it strengthens rural communities and family farms as well as emerging urban agricultural projects like Grow Dat.

At Grow Dat, our mission is to nurture a diverse group of young leaders through the meaningful work of growing food on our two-acre farm in City Park. Since Grow Dat's inception in 2011, we've engaged roughly 100 youth from different schools and backgrounds in our five-month leadership program. Working with our staff, they've grown, sold and shared 20,000 pounds of food. (We make a commitment to sell 60% and donate 40% of everything we grow to youth, their families and our Shared Harvest partners, including the Youth Empowerment Project and Congress of Day Laborers.)

We've also grown careers. More than a dozen youth from our program have graduated into tiered leadership roles at the farm. We hire them to return as interns, assistant crew leaders and crew leaders who help select and train the next group of youth while running the farm.

Over the past four years we have also developed a network of for-profit and nonprofit partners eager to hire our graduates. Last year Grow Dat alumni were hired by the New Orleans Food Co-op, the online retailer Good Eggs, Rouses, and Eco Urban landscapers. Other job openings have been sent to us from Whole Foods, Hollygrove Market and Farm, and Edible Schoolyard. These jobs, by and large, pay above the $10.10-an-hour minimum wage that President Obama now requires of federal contractors. Some even provide health insurance and paid days off. And all of these businesses are eager to hire our graduates because of the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm they bring from their training at Grow Dat.

Andy Cook / Grow Dat

Gilligan, second from left, and members of the Grow Dat team stress the importance of communication skills in the job market.

We are at a fascinating, volatile, and critical juncture. The waiting game is over. We don't just anticipate the disruptive climate changes that scientists have been warning about; we're living them. Meanwhile, income inequality has reached oligarchic proportions, with disparities so severe they threaten to undermine what is — or once was — America's greatest achievement: our democracy (http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/apr/21/americas-oligarchy-not-democracy-or-republic-unive/) .

Teenagers and young adults are unemployed or underemployed at the highest rates since World War II. People work full-time jobs and still can't break above the federal poverty line, while the chief executives of the companies they work for make millions — sometimes tens of millions — a year.

A strong stock market will do us no good if its foundation is an economy that further degrades the basis of the planet's true wealth — its biodiversity, its water, air and soil. We have no choice but to see the links between our economic and environmental challenges and to address them as one.

That's why I am so excited about jobs grounded in localizing the production of our food, our energy, and the products we need to live. (I don't believe that this alone will make the dramatic change needed to slow climate change, but it's a start.) I applaud the businesses we partner with for seeking out Grow Dat graduates, giving groups historically excluded from full participation in our economy the opportunity to bring their untapped skills and energy to the table.

To build toward a more promising future we need to teach young adults not only how to do "green jobs" but also model for the next generation how to work across differences, and how to think of success as bigger than our individual gain. We need to teach youth (and learn ourselves) how to be self-reliant *and* interdependent, and at Grow Dat we see our small part in all this as continuing to engage young people in the meaningful work of growing food.

Founding director of Grow Dat Youth Farm, Johanna Gilligan is a native of Santa Fe who has lived in New Orleans since 1999.

0 comments

Grow Dat Youth Farm nurtures young leaders amid planting

Print (http://blog.nola.com/food_impact/print.html?entry=/2011/06/grow_dat_youth_farm_nurtures_y.html)

(http://connect.nola.com/staff/juwalker/index.html) By Judy Walker, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune (http://connect.nola.com/staff/juwalker/posts.html)

Follow on Twitter (http://twitter.com/JudyWalkerCooks/)

on June 09, 2011 at 5:00 AM

A new kind of New Orleans youth employment program got its name right after the Saints won the 2009 Super Bowl. And as its pilot year ends this month, "Grow Dat" has proven to be a winner, too.

Chris Granger/The Times-Picayune

Brianne Thomas, 16, left, helps set up produce to sell with Grow Dat director Johanna Gilligan, center.

Based on a successful project in Austin, Texas, Grow Dat Youth Farm is a 19-week program that employs high school students to grow and sell fresh produce, but it also grows young leaders and inspires change in the community. During the school year, the teens work after classes on Fridays and on Saturdays, and this month, they work four days a week. In this pilot year, the 10 young people involved, ages 15 to 18 and all from Science and Math Charter School, have been based out of the nearby Hollygrove Farm and Market. Half the group worked in a field crew, and the other half worked on the selling team. They switched roles halfway through the program.

Next year, director Johanna Gilligan says, the program will expand to its own 4-acre site in City Park, and 20 participants will come from a variety of schools.

"One of the key elements is, we're employers, " Gilligan said. "So much of what inspired me is, let's create a high-quality first-job experience for youth in gardening and marketing. What we're doing is high-quality job training, in a program specifically geared to bring different youth together."

Student participant Tyrione Williams, 18, agrees. "I learned responsibility and teamwork. This is a job. In the real world, you're going to have to abide by the rules, and I'm already trained by the rules, " she said.

"Ten years down the road, you'll see a big impact, " Gilligan added.

That's a major difference from what she saw when she came to New Orleans to teach in 2003. "One of the only job opportunities for students was in fast food. That's a terrible option. It's feeding a cycle, and their skills are not improved, " Gilligan said.

Academic skills are involved, too.

Angela Herbert, executive director of New Orleans Outreach, a nonprofit group that provides community resources and extracurricular activities in seven schools and one of Grow Dat's partners, said in a statement, "By planting, nurturing and growing their own food and selling it at local markets, these students learn to utilize math, science and interpersonal skills that cannot be taught in the classroom."

Prett Samra, the outreach program manager at Sci High, said a video montage her group made on all the school's clubs asked Grow Dat students what they got out of the program.

"Most of it had to do with they had no idea what gardening was really about, and how you can provide so much through gardening for your family and yourself. And they learned about all these different plants, and being able to take them home and use these ingredients. This is just out of students' mouths. I had no idea.

"And they're learning how to have a job and have basic skills at such a young age, learning about going in on time, and if you are sick, be sure to talk to your supervisor. They're learning to do something completely out of their element. And they all said they had never grown an actual vegetable ever."

One of Grow Dat's key lessons is giving back to the community, so one of its key goals is to donate food the students have grown. They cooked twice for the homeless and donated 190 pounds of produce, Gilligan said, most of it given to students' families. Next year, the goal is to donate 4,000 pounds.

"It's neat how invested they get in the growing process, " Gilligan said. "They're with us each week on Friday and Saturday, and so they see a lot of changes."

After they planted beans one week, the next week, one of the workers asked her, "'Why did you go in there and plant new plants?' He couldn't believe how the beans had grown."

The physical work is demanding, but everybody worked to the best of their abilities, Gilligan said. Using a behavioral management system called Real Talk, the group meets biweekly with staff for feedback on performances.

"It's an amazing tool for accountability, " Gilligan said. "If you're not working to your best ability, you know you will hear about it later, and from the other youth too."

They learn how to give feedback in a kind way, so everyone is able to hear it.

And they learn to recognize when they've given their best.

One day a few weeks into the program, "We just weren't having a good day, " Gilligan said. "The whole thing requires a lot of organization and forethought, and it was just not up to standard. The Hollygrove staff were saying, "Oh, this is going great." But when we closed for the day for work, I said, 'What do you think?' and one of the students said, 'This is a disaster!' That was really a great moment for me, " because even though the group was meeting expectations of the Hollygrove staff, they knew where improvement was needed.

Chris Granger, The Times-Picayune

Working at Hollygrove Farm in their pilot year, Grow Dat student employee Kevin Perry, left, works on the harvest.

It's a tough time to be bringing a nonprofit group to life, Gilligan said, so they are building as many partnership as possible.

This nonprofit has many collaborators besides New Orleans Food and Farm Network and Hollygrove: City Park, New Orleans Outreach, Whole Foods and others. It's been incubated at several Tulane University departments, including Tulane City Center, the outreach arm of the School of Architecture, and the Tulane Office of Social Entrepreneurship. Also involved are the School of Public Health and the Center for Public Service, among others.

Tulane fifth-year architecture students have designed the buildings and site plan for the new space in City Park that the youth farm will occupy next year.

Gilligan thinks the first phase can be put in with a $75,000 grant from Tulane, as all buildings are being created from retrofitted shipping containers. They will include a small office and storage space with trellised screens, a screened-in outdoor classroom, a locker room and a small kitchen area. There will be space for a weekly market too.

Construction begins early this month on the space near the corner of Zachary Taylor and Henry Thomas Drive, right by Interstate 610 and behind Pan Am Stadium, on a patch of what used to be golf course. City Park has been a great partner, Gilligan said, and the plan is to figure out some way to share revenue with the park.

The plan is to put 1-1/4 acres into vegetables, herbs, flowers and fruit production in January, and the following year, add another 3/4 acre. Cisterns will collect rain water for irrigation.

The annual operating budget of Grow Dat will be $250,000 to $300,00 a year, with each student earning $1,550 during the course of the program. Gillian hopes produce sales can generate 20 percent of the budget, if not more.

"We've got to push the envelope in how we provide services in more of a market context, " she said. The goal for next year is to hire 20 students and grow 10,000 pounds of food.

A project similar to Grow Dat outside Boston, now 20 years old, hired 145 kids and grew 250,000 pounds of vegetables last year.

And City Park is an ideal location.

"From our perspective, there's no place that could be better in the city. We're trying to bring together young people from different neighborhoods. (The park) is for everybody, " Gilligan said.

"Working with urban youth, it's amazing how it feels to build a relationship with nature. And I think that will increase 10 times next year" at the park.

. . . . . .

WHAT THE KIDS HAVE TO SAY

"It's been a good job so far, " Kevin Perry, 16, said earlier this week of his work with Grow Dat. "I've learned how to come out of my shell and speak out more, articulate a little better, and have produced leadership skills. And I've improved my diet. I used to eat fried foods nonstop."

The field work is the tedious part, said Devin Parker, 15, especially in the heat.

"You have to pay attention to every single detail, " he said, "but you do it to get it done." The result, he says, is that he can show he is a committed, trustworthy worker who can handle challenging conditions.

Devin said the biggest surprise for him was the cooking classes.

"We made hot sauce, " he said. "It's funny. I don't know how to cook, but now I can go home and make hot sauce any time I want to."

His favorite part of the program?

"Pretty much everything, " Devin said. "I'm having fun, I get to garden and have something going to help me out in life. And I'm gaining some experience from it."

"This program taught me responsibility, how to keep up with stuff, how to grow things and how to manage money, " said Tyrione Williams, 18. She said she would like to apply for the job again next year.

"We work in the farm and in the market, but we don't do that all the time, " Williams added. "We do other activities. We went canoeing, swimming, cooked at Whole Foods and went rock climbing."

gb&d

July/August 2013

The Youth Farm is sited on a four-acre plot within the 1,300-acre City Park, which is home to mature oak trees aging 600 years or more. Structures on-site include an outdoor classroom, teaching kitchen, administrative offices, and a post-harvest area, all designed in the spirit of public interest design.

Grow Dat Youth Farm

The urban farm provides work for high school students and teaches them about sustainable farming

By Benjamin van Loon

This article is part of gb&d's Green Typologies series, ***Farm to Class****.*

New Orleans – The Grow Dat Youth Farm is a public interest design project that sprung up after the wreckage of Hurricane Katrina. Located on a four-acre plot of land in City Park near some of the areas hit hardest by the storm, the site was designed by students and architects from Tulane City Center at Tulane University's School of Architecture.

Grow Dat began in 2012 and is modeled after similar youth farm projects in Boston (Food Project) and Austin (Urban Roots). As the farm grows, it will provide up to 30 jobs for local high school students, who will be paid to participate in the 19-week revolving programs where they can work one day per week after school and earn up to $50 each week. Of the food grown on-site (40,000 pounds projected by 2014), 60 percent will be sold to local vendors, and the rest will be donated to Shared Harvest and other local food charities.

Dirty South: Youth farms keep New Orleans teens in school gardens

By Tracie McMillan (http://grist.org/author/tracie-mcmillan/) on 16 Dec 2011

Johanna Gilligan packs fava beans with a student from the Grow Dat program in New Orleans. David Schalliol

Smack in the middle of a half-dozen shipping containers and striding up a mound of gravel, Johanna Gilligan, 31, can't contain her excitement. "This looks so awesome!" She nods her head at an alcove between two containers, painted the pale color of new celery, with dry sinks attached. "That's going to be for processing."

Gilligan, co-director of New Orleans' Grow Dat Youth Farm (http://growdatyouthfarm.org/), traipses up the mound, which terminates at a deck of sorts and more containers, crowded with architectural students from Tulane University and local urban farm experts. Beyond the deck sits a bayou, lined with trees weeping Spanish moss into the water; the I-610 freeway buzzes along in the background. "I can't believe how much is done! My office is going to be in a treehouse!"

She has reason to be excited. At four acres, the buildings' site is just a sliver of City Park, 1,300 acres of green space on New Orleans' north side. But come February, the buildings will be done, the beds will be ready for planting, and the second class of Grow Dat farmers will commence their work. The goal: one acre planted, 10,000 pounds of food grown, 20 jobs for student workers.

Pitched as the natural progression of programs like Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard (http://edibleschoolyard.org/berkeley/about-us) (New Orleans is home to the first Edible Schoolyard affiliate outside of the Bay Area, and its founding director, Donna Cavato, sits on Grow Dat's board), Grow Dat will welcome its second round of student workers in February. The project was founded in 2010 with the Tulane City Center (http://www.tulanecitycenter.org/home/), a community design and architecture initiative, and the Urban Innovator Challenge Fellowship (http://tulane.edu/socialentrepreneurship/urban-innovation-challenge.cfm), also at Tulane. The backing let Gilligan, a founding staffer for the New Orleans Food and Farm Network (http://www.noffn.org/) and a driving force behind Rethink (http://www.therethinkers.com/)'s New Orleans School Food Report Card (http://www.louisianaweekly.com/area-elementary-students-grade-food-policies-of-schools/), bring in a small staff to work out kinks for the program's first year. In its inaugural year, Grow Dat employed 13 student workers who grew a total of 2,200 pounds of food, donating nearly two-thirds of it to food banks, and selling the rest at a farmers market.

The effort, says Denise Richter, who coordinates gardens at five elementary and middle schools for Edible Schoolyard New Orleans (ESY-NOLA), solves a riddle that's confounded ESY-NOLA since it was founded: how to keep students engaged with food after eighth grade.

"There was always this moment where it was like, 'Great, we've been able to establish a culture and an understanding of how important it is to know where your food comes from and cook it,'" says Richter, who says ESY-NOLA works with more than 500 students each year. "And there's always this regret, because what do they do [after ESY]? Go to a place where their cafeteria food looks like it did five years ago, eating slop. Grow Dat is such an asset, because our students can apply their skills and go even further."

A young Grow Dat participant. Andy Cook

With an older — if much smaller — pool of students, Grow Dat is aiming to expand teenagers' food knowledge while teaching even broader lessons about work and collaboration. "A key concept of Grow Dat is that you cannot do social change only in one neighborhood," says Gilligan. She sees the program's site at City Park as neutral ground for students, who this year will come from a mix of public and private schools, to learn "to communicate across race and class lines."

That's a heady goal, but if Aston Shields, 17, is any indication, Grow Dat may have some luck in meeting it. One of last year's students — he's angling to return as a crew leader this year — Shields didn't start out interested in food. "I was just reading posters on the wall, and stumbled onto [the job listing]," says Shields in an urban drawl, adding that he mostly applied because it was a paid job. For a modest stipend, he learned how to plan and maintain food gardens, wash and prepare vegetables for market and track their sales, and even attended a handful of lectures on food systems at Tulane. "I came here and I was like, 'Wow, I never even really thought about how people produced our food,'" says Shields. "It was just a whole new world."

Grow Dat Youth Farm

City Park

The most unusual building this year also houses the most unusual institution, a nonprofit created by Tulane University and City Park: the Grow Dat Youth Farm. The new facility supports the farm, where 35 high school students work learning to grow and harvest crops for local consumption. The students are paid for their work, and they learn about caring for and preparing the vegetables for the table. Under the auspices of the Tulane City Center, more than 50 upper level students from the Tulane University School of Architecture (TSA) were involved in every aspect of design and construction of the project in studios led by professors Abigail Feldman, Emilie Taylor and Scott Bernhard (full disclosure: the author is also a TSA faculty member). With the building now virtually complete, the farm began operations in 2012.

Managing a fledgling nonprofit, Youth Farm co-directors Johanna Gilligan and Leo Gorman recognized that resources are precious, so the building had to be highly efficient and low in cost. The building utilizes seven recycled standard shipping containers. Some provide the storage necessary for production; one even houses the farm office and conference space. The steel containers are strong, so they provide

much of the support and lateral bracing for the roof structures. Some containers are organized around the airy double-height outdoor classroom that's the heart of the project. This space, open for cross ventilation, is a comfortable place for informal events with its generous roof and louvered screens providing shade and shelter.

The project is sustainable to a fault; roof water is collected and composting toilets are featured. The farm is located on one of the former golf courses, abandoned after Hurricane Katrina. The fields were bioremediated, and a new bioswale enhances onsite water storage and groundwater recharge. This project showcases the ways that architecture can both inspire and support our collective aspirations.

Scott Bernhard, architect of record and design team leader; Emilie Taylor, project design/build leader and senior designer; Dan Etheridge, bio-systems designer and project/community development leader.

From The Atlantic CITYLAB

An Urban Farm Puts New Orleans Teens to Work

Grow Dat offers kids a chance to learn about urban farming and hunger.

KAID BENFIELD | @Kaid_at_NRDC | Oct 10, 2012 | 10 Comments

Courtesy: Grow Dat

Stories of Urban Reinvention. **See full coverage**

In a city that is perhaps the country's most culturally rich, it is a bit surprising that the large city park in its heart is called, well, City Park. But don't mistake the generic name for a place devoid of special activity.

Indeed, at the heart of City Park is the much more colorfully named Grow Dat Youth Farm, which is developing a sense of responsibility, community, environmental stewardship, and service among city

high school kids through the collaborative work of growing food.

Grow Dat grew out of a partnership developed between the Tulane University City Center, the New Orleans Food and Farm Network, and City Park. It's program is pretty sophisticated. From Grow Dat's website:

> The farm works with several high schools and youth organizations throughout New Orleans to recruit a diverse and committed group of youth who develop leadership and life skills during their intensive, hands-on work experience. Through a structured application process, Grow Dat conscientiously recruits a mix of students: 20% of whom have already demonstrated leadership skills inside or outside of school, 20% of whom are at- risk of poor performance at school, and 60% of whom are students that are neither excelling nor failing at school. Programmatic success is defined by students' consistent participation in the program, their increased ability to communicate effectively with other students and staff, and their ability to achieve production goals on the farm . . .
>
> Over the 19-week program, youth participants learn a variety of skills related to growing, cooking and selling organic vegetables and fruit. Full time Grow Dat staff have created a curriculum that includes lessons on sustainable agriculture, cooking, communication and team- building, economics, nutrition and community health, food systems, and the agricultural history of our region.

The students must commit to a work schedule, for which they are paid. In addition to the work they perform on site, they are expected to take their experience to the larger community:

> Working in rotating teams, students take on the responsibility for selling food at farmers' markets and preparing food for homeless or underserved populations. In addition to these hands-on activities, students also participate in a highly-structured system for enhancing their communication skills called 'Real Talk'... In addition to improved communication skills, students are also trained on time management, effective strategies for team work, and public speaking–all skills that can be broadly applied in future jobs.

The farm enjoys a central location accessible by public transportation. It is located on a four-acre site in City Park, with two acres of cultivable land.

Grow Dat's most recent quarterly report notes the friendly competition that the students have had at a local farmers' market to see which crew could sell out first, and also that every kid had the opportunity to prepare and serve their produce at a free monthly breakfast hosted at a local church. Over three months they served over 300 meals, learning "important, and sometimes surprising, lessons about what the face of hunger in our community looks like."

With the assistance of the Tulane School of Architecture, buildings on the site have been designed to serve the program. The campus includes green building innovations for the facilities, including an outdoor classroom, a teaching kitchen, locker rooms, administrative offices, and large post-harvest handling areas.

The students have grown over 7,000 pounds of food, donating a third to needy families; still under development, Grow Dat hopes to produce up to 40,000 pounds by 2014. So far every participant has reported satisfaction with the development of leadership and work skills. Watch this great video about the farm and its program, and hear the kids talk about their experiences:

new wave

Plans Move Ahead for Grow Dat Youth Farm

February 18, 2011 5:45 AM

Kathryn Hobgood Ray khobgood@tulane.edu

This semester Tulane architecture students are designing a plan for an urban farm that will expand fresh produce options for New Orleanians and increase jobs and educational opportunities for high school students. Alumna Johanna Gilligan is director of the Grow Dat Youth Farm that will cover 3.5 acres in New Orleans City Park, including offices, outdoor classrooms and market space.

Tulane empowers HELPING PEOPLE BUILD A BETTER WORLD

Johanna Gilligan, a 2003 Newcomb College graduate, is an Urban Innovator fellow at Tulane working to improve the regional food system. The Grow Dat Youth Farm is one of her initiatives. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

“Our mission is to nurture young people through the meaningful work of growing food,” says Gilligan. “We will work with several high schools and youth organizations to recruit paid interns and teach them how to grow vegetables and fruit and prepare them for market.” The high school students also will have classes in cooking, nutrition and finance.

Gilligan, a 2003 Newcomb College graduate, is an Urban Innovator fellow at Tulane. She was awarded a stipend from the Rockefeller Foundation to develop the program in coordination with Tulane Community Health Centers and the Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives office at Tulane.

Meanwhile, two architecture studio classes are working on design aspects for the farm for the Tulane City Center, which oversees the site design.

Leading the architecture design class is Scott Bernhard, while Abigail Feldman leads the landscape design class.

The building stage, supported by major gifts from Maziar Behrooz, a 1985 School of Architecture alumnus, and John and Anne Mullen, could begin as early as next month.

By January 2012, says Gilligan, one acre will be in production. The farm aims to produce 10,000 pounds of food in its first year.

“At full production, 40 percent of the food will be donated and 60 percent will be sold — either at a market area on site or to local vendors,” says Gilligan. She anticipates that the farm will grow into its space over the next three years.

Photo © Halkin Mason Photography

« Back to Design from farm to table

Urban Oases

July 2013

Projects from mobile markets to full-on farms are greening America's food deserts.

By Lamar Anderson

Photo © Will Crocker
Students at Tulane's design-build program converted a former New Orleans golf course into the 4-acre Grow Dat Youth Farm, which includes a 6,000-square-foot education center made from shipping containers.

In a section of Seattle's Delridge neighborhood, residents who rely on public transportation face a daunting choice: take two buses to get to the nearest grocery store–or trek up a large hill. “What we found was that most people were either going to the grocery store much more infrequently, or they were becoming heavily dependent on convenience stores,” says Carrie Ferrence, a cofounder of Stockbox markets who studied access to fresh food in the city while completing her M.B.A. at Seattle's Bainbridge Graduate Institute.

Photo courtesy Stockbox
Stockbox began in Seattle's Delridge neighborhood with a mobile construction office turned grocery. When its founders conceived the project, they imagined an itinerant network of temporary markets fanning out across the city's food deserts, but in response to demand, they have begun building larger, permanent stores.

That scenario is typical of urban food deserts–city neighborhoods with poor access to fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthy foods. While there is no official measure of how scarce a carrot has to be for an area to qualify as a desert, a 2009 report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that 23.5 million people live in low-income neighborhoods more than a mile from a supermarket, which could contribute to poor eating habits, obesity, and diet-related diseases. But in the vacuum left by traditional stores, urban innovators are experimenting with alternative models for delivering fresh food to underserved areas.

One notable success has been Chicago's Fresh Moves Mobile Markets, city buses repurposed as one-aisle grocery stores that make stops on the West and South Sides of the city five days a week. (The project was featured in the exhibition *Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good*, which debuted at the 2012 Venice Architecture Biennale and is on view at the Chicago Cultural Center through September 1.) A pro bono team assembled by Architecture for Humanity Chicago and led by Katherine Darnstadt of the firm Latent Design retrofitted the first bus in 2011. Fresh Moves reached more than 11,000 customers in its first year, and a third bus will join the fleet this month.

In East New York, Brooklyn, Abruzzo Bodziak Architects is extending the mobile idea to agriculture with a pair of butterfly-roofed greenhouse modules based on prefab components. At 1,100 square feet, the larger design fits the common sizes of New York City lots. The firm's client, the nonprofit Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, has access to 11 such sites through short-term leases. Pending financing, the group hopes to begin construction on its first hydroponic greenhouse next spring. “The benefit of having a kit that you can move from place to place or use in multiples is that you don't have to wait to remediate the site, which can be costly and take a lot of time,” says partner Emily Abruzzo.

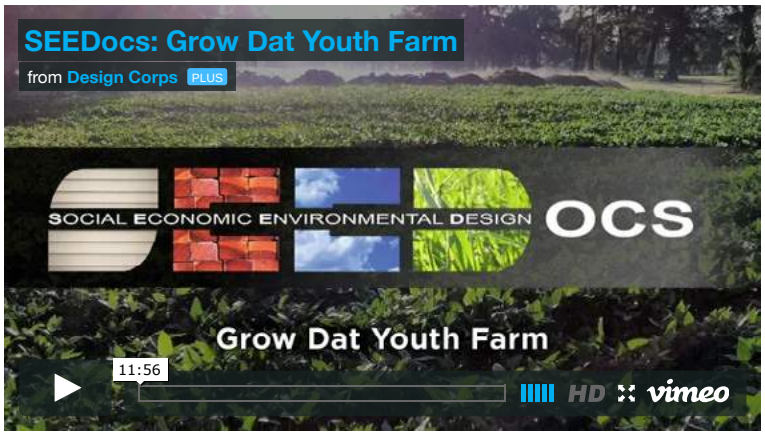
Back in Delridge, Ferrence and her business partner, Jacqueline Gjurgevich, took a step toward solving the neighborhood's food problem with a pop-up market in a 160-square-foot mobile construction office. Stationed in a parking lot for two months in 2011, the first Stockbox sold a mix of produce, dairy, meat, and grocery staples. The project was a success, but the duo found that they needed more space to meet demand for a wider variety of items. Last year they opened a permanent 550-square-foot storefront in nearby South Park, and this summer Stockbox will add a 2,000-square-foot location in the First Hill neighborhood.

Improving food access alone won't end health problems associated with food deserts, notes Fresh Moves designer Darnstadt. “Getting that produce is just one step of the process that goes into a healthy lifestyle,” she says. At Grow Dat Youth Farm in New Orleans, high-school students not only tend 4 acres of crops in City Park, they also learn how to cook with them. To create the farm, architecture students from the Tulane City Center–the design-build program at the Tulane School of Architecture–converted a disused golf course damaged by Hurricane Katrina into agricultural land, which began production in January 2012, and built an adjacent education pavilion. With each crop, the high-school students learn several recipes, explains Emilie Taylor, design-build manager for the project. “Many students are in single-parent households, and often end up cooking for the family,” she says. “If we can give them skills and access to food, they'll cook better for their siblings.”

In March, Grow Dat began hitting the road, too. For his thesis project, Tulane master's sstudent Justin Siragusa created a mobile farmstand from a modified boat trailer. That evolution underscores the potential for these types of interventions to build on one another. “It's such a simple idea,” says Darnstadt. “You can grow tomatoes in the garden, then sell them to a mobile market, and you see this whole small-scale network of neighborhood enterprises form around food.”

Lamar Anderson is based in San Francisco and frequently contributes to RECORD.

The Grow Dat Youth Farm & SEEDocs: Mini-Documentaries on the Power of Public-Interest Design



If you read our infographic, then you know that Public-Interest Design is one of the few growing sectors of the architecture industry. From the prevalence of Design-Build curriculums in Architecture Schools to the rise of the 1% program and non-profits like Architecture for Humanity, Public-Interest Design (PID) is hitting its stride.

Which is why we're so excited that two of PID's biggest players, Design Corps and SEED (Social Economic Environmental Design), have teamed up to create SEE*Docs*, a monthly series of mini-documentaries that highlight the inspirational stories of six award-winning public interest design projects.

The latest SEE*Doc* follows the story of the Grow Dat Youth Farm - a brilliant example of what we call "Urban Agri-puncture" (a strategy that uses design & Urban Agriculture to target a city's most deprived, unhealthy neighborhoods) that is changing the lives of New Orleans youth.

More on this inspiring story, after the break…

Rendering of the Grow Dat Youth Farm, designed by the Tulane City Center at the Tulane School of Architecture. © Grow Dat Youth Farm.

Seven years have passed since Katrina, and yet New Orleans' poor, minority households continue to bear "the brunt of the devastation." There is crime, drugs, and violence, yes, but there is also a less newsworthy, and yet just as damaging, element to Katrina's legacy: the limited access to fresh food.

As a recent New York Times article pointed out: "Before the storm, there were 30 [supermarkets] in New Orleans; today, there are 21. Most that have reopened are in wealthier neighborhoods: a Tulane University survey in 2007, the latest data available, found that nearly 60 percent of low-income residents had to travel more than three miles to reach a supermarket, though only 58 percent owned a car. In the Lower Ninth Ward, one of the hardest-hit areas, the only stores within walking distance are dollar stores, which sell staples like eggs, milk and meat, but few fresh fruits and vegetables."

So it should come as no surprise that New Orleans suffers from a "hierarchy of health," where the wealthy can afford to be healthy, but the poor suffer disproportionately from malnutrition, obesity, and illness (particularly Diabetes).

And yet, nestled in 4 acres of New Orleans' beautiful City Park, lies a solution.

Image showing the sparcity of grocery stores in New Orleans. Photo via Grow Dat Youth Farm.

At the Grow Dat Youth Farm, youth from across the city of New Orleans come to learn, work, earn money, and grow food that goes back out to the city; the teens themselves sell about 60% of the produce to markets, restaurants, and corner stores, the other 40% they then donate via Shared Harvest.

But it's not just the youth that make this farm come alive – it's the people of all stripes, shapes, sizes, and disciplines (architects included) that have come together for this common cause.

Central to the farm's development has been the creation of a campus, designed and constructed by students enrolled in design-build studios at the Tulane City Center at Tulane's School of Architecture. From an abandoned golf course to an energy-efficient, organic farm sensitive to regional climate, the story of Tulane and the Grow Dat Youth Farm shows what can be accomplished when architects are heavily invested in, and in fact become a part of, the community they serve.

Architecture students worked with community-members to design various structures: an outdoor classroom, teaching kitchen, locker rooms, administrative offices, a large post-harvest area. This collaborative process may not always have been easy, but as Emilie Taylor, the Design Build Manager at the Tulane City Center puts it in the mini-doc:

"Design can make a difference, but you're not going to save the world by making a

Rendering of the Grow Dat Youth Farm, designed by the Tulane City Center at the Tulane School of Architecture. © Grow Dat Youth Farm.

beautiful object. But if you as a designer can plug-in with a community partner in a group and a larger community that's all working towards a goal, you can be part of a team that's really transformative."

Ultimately, this is what Public Interest Design is all about – empowering architects to not just design *for* a community, but *with* one, to help the community in their efforts to overcome crippling obstacles, and be a part of something truly transformative.

Health & Science

Hurricane recovery gave New Orleans reason to band together to offer more healthful food

By Della Hasselle June 24

NEW ORLEANS — “Rough” and “unhealthy” are the words Tim Dubuclet uses to describe his childhood. Raised in inner-city New Orleans, he and his friends would wander the city’s violent streets after school, living on a diet of fast food and soda. By the time he was 17, Dubuclet weighed more than 300 pounds.

But he dramatically transformed his lifestyle during a program with Grow Dat Youth Farm, where students are paid to grow fresh produce. There, he started focusing on his diet. He spent two days each week working in the garden, growing and weeding the radishes, chard and other vegetables he had never heard of before. He felt empowered cooking these new healthful foods, and lost 80 pounds.

“At the farm, people came to talk to us about health, opening our eyes to the dangers of things like sugary drinks,” said Dubuclet, now 20. “I started eating healthier, growing my own food. I realized there was so much more to life than what I was doing with myself.”

In 2013, Grow Dat found most of its incoming students living unwholesome lifestyles, with only 12 percent who reported eating vegetables in the previous 24 hours. Some, like Dubuclet, came from poor neighborhoods, or areas where residents lived more than three miles from a supermarket.

The lack of access to fresh produce has long been a problem for many residents in a city obsessed with food, and was exacerbated in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina, which left much of New Orleans underwater. According to one study, in 2008, there were nearly 18,000 residents per supermarket — far more than the national average of 8,800 residents per supermarket. But, with federal funding and nonprofit programs that came to the city after Katrina, some viewed the city’s recovery as an opportunity to improve access to healthful food.

Dwayne Boudreaux fought for eight years to reopen his Circle Food Store after Katrina decimated the 7th Ward grocery with five feet of water. An iconic photograph circulated after the hurricane shows stranded residents wading outside the

1930s-era building, chest-deep in water. Some feared the store, badly damaged, would never return to the area.

Walking along the aisles of the renovated store, which opened earlier this year, Boudreaux explained that he had long strived to make healthful food accessible to residents. A 2010 study found that 64 percent of New Orleanians were obese.

“We have things we never even sold before the hurricane,” Boudreaux said, smelling the leafy dill delivered that morning and gesturing to assortments of organic juices.

The area’s lack of fresh food was more than just inconvenient. It often meant the difference between eating produce and not, as nearly 42 percent of the 7th Ward’s population lives in poverty, and more than one in three families get by without a car. The neighborhood lost nearly 40 percent of its population after Katrina, according to city data.

Circle Food’s rehabilitation was funded in part by New Orleans’s Fresh Food Retailers Initiative, a $14 million project launched in 2011 to increase access to produce in the city’s most underserved neighborhoods.

Officials hope the initiative will be a catalyst for revitalization, said Aimee Quirk, economic development adviser to Mayor Mitch Landrieu (D).

“New Orleans is one of the nation’s fastest-growing cities,” Quirk explained. “Even before the hurricane, much of the city was underserved in terms of fresh food. Yet fresh food is

critical to attracting new residents."

In June, city officials announced a new grocery store opening in Central City and a Whole Foods Market opened in the Mid-City neighborhood in February. That store is part of the ReFresh Project, an experimental initiative that links the store to programs that teach residents to cook produce available at Whole Foods, and how to manage health problems such as diabetes through nutrition. Opening on the site in July, the Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine at Tulane University will serve as a first-of-its kind teaching kitchen for community members, medical students and medical professionals.

"It speaks to the idea that food is the best medicine," said Jeffrey Schwartz, founder of the neighborhood organization behind the project, Broad Community Connections.

The notion is so promising that a nonprofit created by Whole Foods will study the initiative and whether it can be replicated in other places, said Meredith Smith, executive director of the Whole Cities Foundation.

"Katrina really created this situation where people said, 'You know, we have to pull together, to rely on each other,' " Smith said. "There's this real spirit of collective action."

Johanna Gilligan, founder of Grow Dat Youth Farm, agrees.

"After the storm, there was just this moment of, 'How do we reimagine a city?' because what we knew was forever changed," she said. "So much didn't come back."

Since it began in 2011, Gilligan's farm has increased from 11 student workers to 41. This year, students are growing more

than 10,000 pounds of food on the seven-acre site in City Park. Of that, 40 percent is donated to students' families and other residents who need it.

"Inner-city kids don't have anything to do with farming or healthy eating — just football and McDonald's," Dubuclet said. "I didn't know anything about vegetables before I farmed."

Now, he not only knows all the steps of growing plants, but he cooks, too. Dubuclet thinks these programs can help transform communities like his — pointing to the fact that he now gardens and prepares food with his family.

"My grandmother is getting older, and working in the garden has helped me to get closer to her," he said. "Really, farming has made me the person I am today."

Hasselle is a freelance journalist who lives in New Orleans.