



THE Garden's EDGE

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**THE
Garden's
EDGE**

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Our work is made possible by the collaborative efforts of **individual donors like you, the Emily Sandal Foundation, the Vibrant Village Foundation, Metabolic Studio, CC Culver, the Undaunted Carnival Foundation, End World Hunger 2030, the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, and Gates and Batavia churches.**

You are all amazing! You help us grow and serve more people each year. Thank you for partnering with us.

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Dear Garden's Edge Family,

The theme of this year has definitely been Amaranth. It seems to be connected in some way to almost all the work that we do. It has been vitally important and successful in treating malnourished children in our maternal health program. The market for Amaranth is growing in Guatemala, so we are able to help families economically by buying their seed and transforming it into cereals and other nutritional products that are sold throughout the country.

A National Geographic article stated, "Amaranth's amino acid profile is as close to perfect as you can get for a protein source." At this year's National Heirloom Exposition in California, at least three of the speakers mentioned Amaranth as one of the most important plants to focus on as our climate changes. It can adapt well to extreme temperatures and is packed with nutrients. Its seeds contain 30% more protein than rice, sorghum, or rye.

As we plant Amaranth with our #seedtravels project, we find that this ancient grain connects people to their past. People from the Philippines, Jamaica, Africa, Central America, India, Taiwan, the Pueblos of New Mexico, and the Navajo reservation remember it and shared stories with us. I even talked with an ethnobotanist who

"The almost forgotten Amaranth plant holds the story of the past from so many cultures in its tiny seed and holds the potential of a healthy future."

Sarah Montgomery, Director

recently found parched Amaranth in a fire pit on the west mesa of Albuquerque that dates back to 1050 AD.

The almost forgotten Amaranth plant holds the story of the past from so many cultures in its tiny seed and holds the potential of a healthy future. Similarly, our work at The Garden's Edge is a dance between modern and ancient, always trying to find balance. We bring together agriculture, nutrition, and economic development in a way that supports the traditions of the communities where we work.

Amaranth continues to play an important role in our programs in Guatemala. Our maternal health and nutrition program has grown to reach 92 Children, 66 mothers, two schools (80 students), and 100 family gardens. It also includes workshops for our scholarship students and youth in reproductive health, nutrition, and community radio. There is also a healthy snack program that often features Amaranth.

In this year's newsletter, you will find many examples of our work to achieve a healthy future for the families we work with.

--Sarah Montgomery



Activities on the ground in Guatemala expand as we continue to find ways of addressing childhood malnutrition through training youth to be leaders of the project and expanding our gardens to include more protein and nutrient rich foods.



Amaranth, once important to Mayan diet and spiritual practices, was nearly eradicated after Spanish conquest. We have worked hard to bring back this highly nutritious grain to Guatemala since 2003.

Qachuu Aloom organized a health and nutrition fair in October. People came from all over Guatemala to spend 2 days learning about nutrition, healthy eating, cooking and planting. We always try to motivate the families we work with by making events fun as well as informative.



#seedtravels

This year, we planted seven Amaranth gardens in California and New Mexico with support from Metabolic Studio. Each garden was vastly different based on the location and participants. We held workshops on planting, cooking, painting, pottery making, harvest techniques, and seed saving at each garden, establishing a stronger relationship with the plant and with each other. During each workshop, we discussed history, memory, immigration, borders, trade routes, ecology, nutrition, and spirit. Amaranth is a happy plant, and it wanted to be shared and enjoyed.



1. Seed Library of Los Angeles
2. Owl Peak Farm
3. Milagro Allegro Community Garden
4. Villa Parke Community Center
5. Bishop Paiute Food Sovereignty Program

Check out our Blog for more about this project!

Villa Parke Community Center

At the last workshop, a participant with chronic pain from an autoimmune disease approached us with tears in her eyes. "I've loved the Amaranth events. Being with the plants and other community members helps me forget my pain for a few hours, Thank you!"

Follow [#seedtravels](#) on social media and check out www.seedtravels.org for more about this project.

Bishop Paiute Reservation, CA

At the Bishop Paiute Tribe's Food Sovereignty Program, participants helped tend the Amaranth garden. They sold the Amaranth greens at farmers market and made seed bars with the local schools.



"We love our farmers and native peoples. We are so grateful to be able to care for these local heroes."

-Dr. Arlo Starr

First Traditions Medicine

In October, doctors Arlo Starr and Monica Lucero traveled to Guatemala with support from the Native Acupuncture Project and the Emily Sandall Foundation. They provided traditional medicine, acupuncture, massage, moxibustion, and herbs to 350 residents of all ages in five villages in Rabinal! The patients understood the meaning behind the treatments, which share many qualities with traditional Mayan medicine.

There is tremendous need for health care in the villages and very little access to any. There was a group of youth interested in learning these traditional healing techniques and we hope this is the beginning of a long-term partnership.

New Partner: End World Hunger 2030

We are so excited for our partnership with End World Hunger 2030, an organization based in Sonoma, CA. They have included The Garden's Edge in their giving circles, and organized a beautiful fundraiser diner for us while we were in California this fall. They thoughtfully included Amaranth in all the dishes at the dinner, and we taught a seed saving workshop to community members at the Sonoma Garden Park. The director, Todd Evans, planted Amaranth from Qachuu Aloom in his home garden and we harvested it as part of the event. Thank you Todd, Cathy, Marge, and all your supporters for welcoming us into your home and community.



Hungry Radio

Otis Gray, founder of the Hungry podcast, spent a month at Qachuu Aloom with the support of CC Culver to document traditional foods like Amaranth and corn. Hungry is a podcast about the food we eat, the people who make it, and the inspiring stories surrounding food that you don't usually hear. His podcast revolves around the beauty of cooking and how the stories behind food make it that much richer. Listen to the harrowing, tragic, and inspiring story of Amaranth in Mayan culture by subscribing to the Hungry podcast or at www.hungryradio.org/



Cultural Exchange

With a grant from the First Unitarian Church of Rochester's Paul and Josephine Wenger Fund and the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, four members of our nutrition team traveled to NM and NY to meet supporters and share current projects and dreams for the future. We find these cultural exchanges to be extremely effective at strengthening the work we do. It allows us to tell our story in far away places and form lasting bonds and friendships with the people who make our work possible.

"[The cultural exchange] showed me that another world is possible. It is not far away if we keep fighting and working locally. It's not about how much I do; it's about how much all of us can do, uniting small efforts. All this gives me strength and encourages me to keep doing what I do."

-Jose Miguel, Leader of the Nutrition Program at Qachuu Aloom
Pictured below, right



With support from the Emily Sandall Foundation, The Gardens Edge provides scholarships to young Maya Achi women pursuing formal education, while simultaneously encouraging the younger generation to value their rich heritage and culture.

Damaris (pictured above, left), a Garden's Edge scholarship student and youth leader in our maternal health and nutrition project, also participated in the cultural exchange, where she learned and shared many things, while gaining a deeper respect for her Maya culture.

"The trip changed my way of thinking. We don't need to be ashamed of being indigenous. We visited tribes in the United States who are working hard to protect their traditions. It made me want to preserve our native Achi language and dress. I want to teach our children about their origin and rich traditions."

-Damaris, Garden's Edge Scholarship Student

For more about Damaris' experience, read an interview with her in the Blog section of our website.



We are excited to share the story of Wendy, a four year old in our maternal health and nutrition program. When Wendy started the program, she suffered from chronic malnutrition and cried most of the time. Today, she has reached a healthy weight and height and loves to play and help our nutrition team weigh the other children!



We want to thank everyone who attended our annual fundraiser in Albuquerque, NM in June. We learned about how the youth leaders in Guatemala conduct health assessments and they led us in a traditional blessing for the children in our community.



Our Mission

The Garden's Edge supports sustainable agriculture, micro-enterprise, and education in rural communities in order to revitalize cultural knowledge and improve economic well-being.

How We Work

We focus our work in the following areas through our on-the-ground partner, **Qachuu Aloom**, a Mayan run organization in Guatemala.

• Maternal Health & Nutrition

Nutrition screenings for babies, pregnant mothers, and children under five help detect and treat malnutrition and provide long-term solutions.

• Micro-Enterprise

Very small loans help stimulate economic growth by providing the necessary resources to start small businesses or improve homes and gardens.

• Scholarships

Our scholarships allow young women to overcome widespread illiteracy and gain skills to share with their community and support their families.

• Seed Saving

Seed saving helps maintain biological diversity and traditional plant species, while also contributing to community economic well-being.

• Seed Travels

We work to document the spread of Qachuu Aloom's Amaranth to people across the globe. Amaranth symbolizes our connections to the land, our food, and each other.

• Sustainable Farms & Gardens

Small-scale agriculture in rural communities promotes healthy eating, seed saving, traditional agricultural practices, and economic development.

• Farmer Exchanges

We love to share our experiences with interested organizations through farmer trainings and exchanges.

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