

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Table of Contents

- 2 Our Vision & Mission
- 3 Year In Review
- 4 Impact Metrics
- 5 Core Programs
- 8 Groundwork
- 11 Supporters
- 13 Financials
- 14 Looking Ahead

“Do not wait for someone else to come and speak for you. It’s you who can change the world.”

– Malala Yousafzai



Our Vision

A world where every community has the knowledge and resources to work in harmony with nature to cultivate a healthier planet.

Our Mission

LEAF's urban gardens are living classrooms, soil science labs, and community spaces that empower people to learn, connect, and grow together.

2024

A Year of Transformation

Like a butterfly, our transformation mirrors nature's magic, stronger, more vibrant, and full of endless possibilities.



At the beginning of 2024, the plot of land located adjacent to the railroad tracks and Mission Blvd. near Mowry was but a dream. But life was about to change when we were given notice to vacate our beloved LEAF Stone Garden of ten years and move to the weedy field next door covered with Bermuda grass, curly dock, and bindweed.

Our heroes of 2024 are the gritty gardeners who literally dug in and moved all the farm structures through the muddy fields, and our partners and donors who provided the building materials and financial support to create our new LEAF Urban Farm. Together, we've transformed the space with revamped educational and composting areas, two new nurseries in the rebuilt shade houses affectionately named Pretzel and Quad, and a new gazebo, which is the centerpiece of our new garden.

In addition, the LEAF Community Garden in Niles has also been transformed with a brand new gazebo, two shade trellises, and a nouveau-arty structure around the porta-potty. Throughout all this, we continued to grow, harvest, and donate over 5,300 pounds of healthy, nutritious food to our food bank partners and educated over 2,400 people across 70+ events on how to work in harmony with the planet.

During 2025, we will build new gathering and research spaces for our educational programs, science initiatives, and partnerships. Our newly formed strategic action team and strategic advisory boards are creating a five-year strategic plan to determine those programs. It's an ideal time for you to visit, donate, or volunteer in our gardens to see the transformative change for yourself.

Let's grow together.

Elaine, President

A woman wearing a dark cap and a striped shirt is planting a green tomato seedling into a garden bed filled with dark mulch. The background shows a sunny day with trees and a clear blue sky.

2024

Our Impact

5,335 lbs.

of Food Donated

7,520+

Volunteer Hours

2,431 Attendees

Across 74 Events

CORE PROGRAMS

LEAF Earth Day

Every year, LEAF partners with the City of Fremont to celebrate Earth Day. The 2024 event was so much fun with 78 volunteers in 19 booths talking to over 1,500 people about topics that keep us happy like the birds and the bees, and the veggies and the trees, and the sun up above and the soil down below, and embracing the circular economy by living a regenerating lifestyle.

Earth Day 2024 highlights included an art circle with local artists demonstrating and teaching others their talents and the Coyote Hills Girl Scout Service Unit collecting 107 pounds of unwanted but perfectly usable goods, thereby diverting them from the landfill.



Every LEAF day is Earth Day!



62 lbs. of Socks

went to Smartwool Second Cut™ Project. Smartwool teamed up with Material Return™, a circularity platform to deconstruct hard-to-recycle socks and turn them into new goods.



23 lbs. of Crayons

went to Staples Recycling Program that collects crayons for the Crayon Initiative, whose mission is to bring happiness to children who are being hospitalized by reducing their stress using crayons for creative play.



22 lbs. of Bras

went to The Bra Recyclers, donating bras to organizations that support underserved individuals, families entering shelters and transitional programs, and uninsured breast cancer survivors.

CORE PROGRAMS

Youth Education

*29 Events, 79 Hours,
259 Visitors to our Garden*



Students for LEAF

Students for LEAF, our flagship summer program, welcomes middle and high school students to our garden for hands-on learning and community service. The 2024 cohort spent the summer with their hands in the soil, mastering regenerative gardening techniques and forging lasting friendships. They got busy with soil health research, beekeeping, harvesting & propagation, cooking, landscape design, botanical illustration, and much more!



California School for the Blind

Our partnership with the California School for the Blind program provides students with garden education and vocational training, featuring hands-on experiences in garden maintenance, worm composting and beekeeping.



Scouts Eagle and Gold Award Projects

With the help of 17 dedicated scouts, we advanced our LEAF Urban Farm vision through infrastructure service projects, including shade structures, benches, planter cages, worm composting bins and worm farm trellis. These projects enhance our farm while offering scouts valuable leadership opportunities to develop project management and practical hands-on skills.

CORE PROGRAMS

Classes and Events



Weekend Fun Classes

Our classes, led by local experts, offer educational sessions at the Fremont Main Library and our LEAF Urban Gardens. Participants can explore a variety of topics, including composting, plant propagation from cuttings or with soil blockers, fruit tree pruning, beekeeping, worms, and more.



Talkin' Dirt

Talkin' Dirt connects growers and enthusiasts in a community rooted in regenerative agriculture. The online series unites gardeners of all levels to explore sustainable techniques, while in-person workshops at Fremont Main Library offer hands-on learning with Master Gardeners.



Gardens for Community Events

Our gardens are community outdoor spaces designed for corporate volunteering, team building, group meetings, special events, casual gatherings, picnicking, and especially for school field trips so kids can explore a garden and get their hands dirty.



Volunteer Events

Our weekend volunteering events bring together community volunteers and students for hands-on projects that maintain and create new garden spaces. These work events focus on essential garden projects such as clearing rocks and weeds, mulching, and composting for our new Urban Farm and painting our community murals.

GROUNDWORK

Soil—More Than Just Dirt

A single teaspoon of healthy soil holds more living organisms than there are people on Earth. Beneath our feet lies a vast, unseen world that fuels life above ground. Driven by the goal of restoring health to the land and the people who walk it, we start from the ground up with the soil. Here's how we do it:

We keep soil covered and undisturbed.

By planting cover crops and avoiding tilling, we sequester carbon, prevent erosion, improve soil structure, and allow underground networks of roots and microbes to thrive, creating healthier, more resilient land.

We create a home for pollinators to keep our gardens thriving.

Bees, butterflies, and other pollinators are essential for growing food, so we plant flowers, avoid chemicals, and provide safe habitats to support their survival.

We grow without costly synthetic pesticides and herbicides.

Instead of relying on chemicals, we strengthen food webs, attract beneficial insects, and build healthy soil, and grow safe produce for all.

We return organic matter to the land, closing the loop.

Leaves, plant trimmings, and other organic materials decompose into compost, creating rich, fertile soil that supports healthy plant growth without synthetic fertilizers.

We follow the science.

Backed by research and soil sampling, our practices are tested in the field and refined through data to improve soil health, capture carbon, and grow nutrient-dense produce.





5,335 lbs.
of food donated,
including 1,351 lbs.
of gleaned fruit.

*We deliver freshly harvested produce directly from
our Urban Gardens to food banks the same day.*

GROUNDWORK

From Garden to Food Bank

Around 14% of all households in the Bay Area face food insecurity*. Our one and a half acre LEAF Urban Farm and our LEAF Community Garden provide seasonal and regional produce to communities facing food insecurity through our food bank partners: [Tri-City Volunteers \(TCV\)](#), in Fremont and [Centro De Servicios](#) in Union City. We also collect leftover fruit and veggie scraps from the food banks and use them to feed our worms, who turn it into compost—closing the loop and avoiding food waste with a circular system!

"The partnership with LEAF has been invaluable—it allows us to connect farm-fresh produce with local food banks who need it. It's not just about food; it's about dignity, health, and showing that our community cares."

-Paddy Iyer, Executive Director, Daily Bowl

"LEAF's fresh, locally grown produce has been an incredible resource for our food bank clients. Many struggle to afford nutritious food, and the quality and variety that LEAF provides ensures they have access to healthy options that nourish their families."

**-Kellie Barron, Program Manager,
TCV Food Bank + Mobile Pantry**

* <https://www.cafoodbanks.org/food-insecurity-data/>

GROUNDWORK

LEAF Urban Farm

The LEAF Urban Farm is our one-acre working farm, where we practice building living soil and growing healthy food. It's a living classroom to discover the positive impacts regenerative agriculture practices can have on our planet.

It's where volunteers grow and donate produce, conduct soil research in collaboration with universities, and hold workshops, classes, and summer programs for the wider community on beekeeping, composting, native plants, propagating from cuttings, and much more.



LEAF Community Garden

The LEAF Community Garden is how we make growing your own food accessible to the community. We offer forty 4'x12' raised planters to rent, each filled with nutritious soil and equipped with automatic irrigation systems. [Inquire about renting a planter now!](#)

Beyond being a hub for our gardeners, the LEAF Community Garden is also a place for our community to gather. We host a wide range of workshops, from yoga sessions to comprehensive courses on home gardening. Find out what's happening on [our events calendar](#).



SUPPORTERS

Thank You to Our Community

At the heart of LEAF is a community of dedicated individuals who share their time, talents, and passion to help our mission grow. Whether through hands-on work in the gardens, or contributing their unique skills behind the scenes, our volunteers forms the foundation of everything we do. It is this collective spirit—neighbors, students, families, and friends coming together—that has made LEAF what it is today.



Board of Directors

Bruce Cates
Founder and
Vice President

Elaine Owyang
President

Jerry Kuhlmann
Director of
Infrastructure

Lorna Jayne
Secretary
and Legal

Richard Godfrey
Director of
Community Outreach

Paul Phipps
Treasurer

Awards for LEAF



**Unsung Hero Award by
Assemblymember Alex Lee**



**Girl Scouts
Appreciation Award**

SUPPORTERS

Financial Sponsors

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our financial supporters, including grantors, foundations, and individual contributors. Your generosity invests in our staff, sustains our gardens, and ensures that our work continues to grow and reach more people. Thank you for believing in our mission and making it possible.

THOMAS FAMILY FOUNDATION

MARY A. CROCKER TRUST

established 1889


Western Digital


at home • at work • at school

ALTAMONT EDUCATION
ADVISORY BOARD


FARMERS MARKET




Community Energy

DAVID HALBERT,
COUNTY SUPERVISOR

T.S. & K.D. GLIDE
FOUNDATION

Community Partners

LEAF's impact is amplified through collaboration with dedicated community partners. United by a shared commitment to environmental stewardship, food security, and equitable access, we are proud to stand alongside them in advancing lasting change.


ALAMEDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT


City of Fremont
Dept of Parks and Rec,
Environmental Services,
Building & Safety


at home • at work • at school


FOOD BANK
MOBILE PANTRY


bowl


CENTRO
Centro De Servicios


UCDAVIS
DEPARTMENT of LAND, AIR
AND WATER RESOURCES


Renee's Garden
The Garden to Table Seed Company


Peaceful Valley
Farm & Garden Supply


CALIFORNIA
School for the Blind


Girl Scouts
in the Tri-City area


Urban Forest Friends


Boy Scouts
in the Tri-City area


YOUTH4GOOD


Tri-City Ecology Center


Urban Forest Friends


CivicSpark


ZERO
FOODPRINT


FREMONT FAMILY
RESOURCE CENTER
A division of the Human Services Department

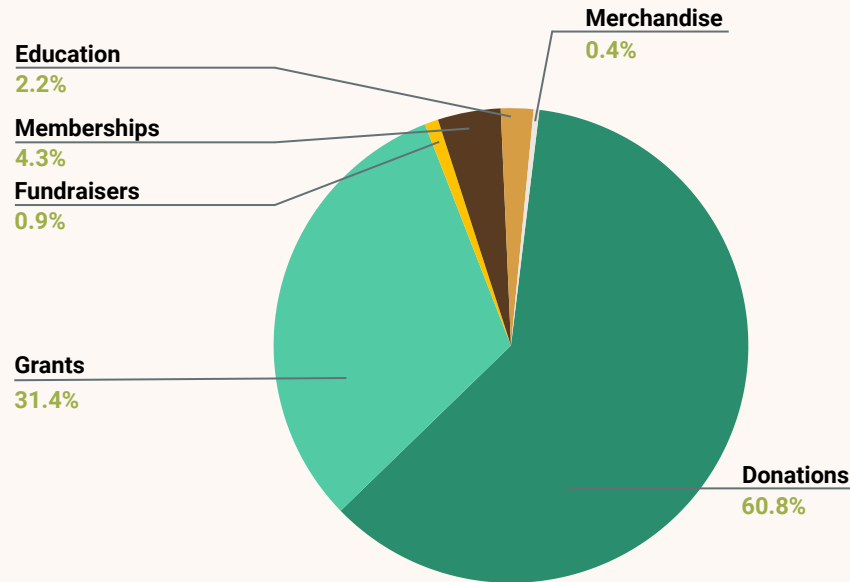

simplepractice


BACS
Bay Area Community Services


ALAMEDA COUNTY
RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Financials

Revenue



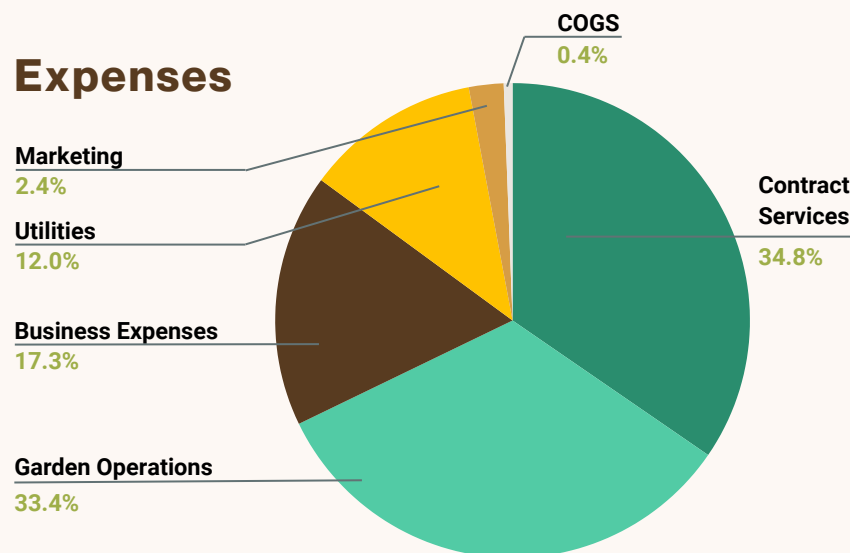
Revenue \$192,860

Enhanced revenue streams this year have greatly strengthened our capacity to serve the community. Grants of \$60,474 provided essential funding to expand program offerings, while generous donations totaling \$117,307 underscored the community's deep commitment to our mission. This increased funding will enable us to innovate and extend our reach.

Expenses \$68,188

We strategically allocated our expenditures to ensure operational excellence and enhance program delivery. Strategic investments in garden operations and contracted services enabled the launch of our new LEAF Urban Farm while revitalizing our community spaces and initiatives. Additionally, process optimizations implemented in Q4 2024 are projected to reduce our 2025 business expenses by \$8,000—a 67% reduction compared to 2024, reinforcing our commitment to long-term fiscal sustainability.

Expenses



Net Surplus \$124,672

Achieving a net surplus of \$124,672, we are well-positioned to reinvest in our mission in 2025 and pursue long-term sustainability. This surplus allows us to expand our educational programs, start new healthy soil research initiatives, enhance community outreach, and build on past successes to empower our community to learn and grow together to create a more resilient future.

Let's Grow Together

2024 was a year of transformation for LEAF. In 2025, we will continue to build on that foundation. We are doubling the size of our cultivation area at the LEAF Urban Farm from half an acre to one, allowing us to significantly increase the amount of produce we grow and donate. We've added new educational spaces, doubling our workshop offerings to engage and inspire future generations. Additionally, we've partnered with the UC Davis Department of Land, Air, and Water Resources and StopWaste to advance research on how regenerative agriculture can improve soil and planetary health.

Be part of the change we're creating together:

Volunteer: Learn about regenerative agriculture, help paint a community mural, or explore our garden to see native hedgerows and our edible pollinator garden.

Partner: Collaborate with us to educate future generations about sustainable living and agriculture, and to build community in Fremont.

Shop: Buy local honey from our garden or worms to fertilize your soil.

Donate: Help us to expand our impact and reach even more of our community to build a more sustainable future.

Let's grow together!





LEAF

fremontleaf.org