

GROWING

SOLUTIONS

Farm

A PROGRAM OF URBAN AUTISM SOLUTIONS



On a 1.2-acre farm on the West Side of Chicago, there's more growing than just vegetables. **GROWING SOLUTIONS FARM** (GSF) is a unique learning environment where transition-aged (16 – 22 years old) students with autism and related challenges from West Side public high schools learn about urban agriculture while gaining transferable job and social skills they can apply to future employment or to lead meaningful lives as they transition to adulthood.

Students **LEARN THROUGH HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE** at the farm. Guided by our lead grower, they learn everything about urban agriculture including light construction, food safety and sanitation, how to plant and maintain crops, create nutrient-rich compost and how to harvest, wash and package food for sale at our farm stands, through our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project and to small businesses, restaurants and wholesalers.

For many of our West Side students, who come from neighborhoods with some of the highest crime rates in the city, GSF is one of the few places they can enjoy being outdoors safely to exercise, work hard, and be off their devices.

While we don't expect our students to become urban farmers, by working at the farm they acquire 'soft skills' they can use at any job: navigating to work using public transportation, showing up to work on time and in uniform, following a daily schedule to accomplish tasks, and appropriately communicating with co-workers, supervisors and instructors.

Each summer, students also receive paid employment at the farm as part of the City of Chicago's One Summer Chicago program. This paid employment and experience can give them an advantage on their resumes and in interviews.

The farm **DONATES 20% OF IT'S HARVEST** to Grace Seeds Ministry which delivers it to West Side food pantries. Our students, 90 percent of whom come from families at or below the federal poverty level also bring home fresh produce each week to share with their families.



7,000 SQUARE FEET OF GROWING SPACE



OUTDOOR TENTED CLASSROOM



30 COMPOSING BINS



COOLING SHED



3 STORAGE SHEDS



FARM STAND & WASH/PACK STATION



HIGH HOOP HOUSE



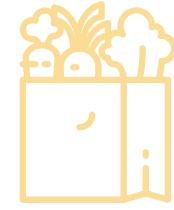
1.2 ACRES



GROWING SOLUTIONS *Farm*



WEST SIDE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS LEARN TRANSFERABLE
JOB SKILLS AT GSF



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GRACE SEEDS MINISTRY, WHICH DELIVERS IT
TO WEST SIDE FOOD PANTRIES



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