

# Congrats to this month's nonprofit of the month: **Project Green**



Sixth-grade students help to collaborate on a \$10,000 grant application for Project Green



## **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Claire McGhehey**

**What made you want to become a volunteer for Project Green?** As an El Dorado Hills resident and Rescue Union School District parent, I've seen the value that school gardens bring to students. Entering the elementary school system during the pandemic, there was uncertainty for all—a need to expand the classroom beyond its four walls and spend time outdoors whenever possible. Gardens provide a safe, nurturing environment for children to build peer relationships, develop creativity, and engage in the care and responsibility a garden requires.

**What do your volunteer duties entail?** As the finance chairperson, I'm responsible for managing the monetary side of the nonprofit: overseeing the budget, tracking expenses and income, ensuring funds are allocated appropriately, and maintaining accurate financial records, among other duties. As a garden instructor, I lead classes in a variety of hands-on activities (planting, watering, maintaining garden beds, composting, harvesting, etc.).

**Is there training required?** No! All you need is an open mind and heart. It's a very hands-on experience, and you quickly realize that the children are excited to be there, eager to learn, and full of energy. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and it makes the experience enjoyable and rewarding without the need for any formal training. Just being present and ready to guide them through the garden is all that's needed to make a positive impact.

**What's the time commitment?** As a weekly garden volunteer, I spend about an hour each session teaching a class and guiding students through different garden-related activities.

**What's been the best day of volunteering so far?** The best days are when the kids get to try the fruits and vegetables they've grown. There's always such a buzz of excitement when they taste the produce they've nurtured from seed to harvest. It's rewarding to see their pride and enthusiasm as they enjoy the literal fruits of their labor, and it makes all the hard work feel even more special.

**What's one of the biggest challenges?** Keeping up with the increasing demand from schools who want to be part of the program while also being able to fund their needs with the appropriate resources, tools, materials, and support.



Project Green's mission statement is "to engage students to help grow school gardens by creating a safe outdoor educational environment while nurturing emotional and social development." By partnering with local school districts, they assist in taking gardens to the next level by applying for grants (funds are used to purchase garden materials and supplies),

holding fundraisers to support garden programs, collaborating with local master gardeners and science teachers to develop garden curriculum, and guiding and training garden coordinators and volunteers.

**For more information, including ways you can donate or volunteer, visit [projectgreencommunity.org](http://projectgreencommunity.org).**