



Green St. Louis Machine GAZETTE

Sustainability
theme of the month:
Social Justice

April, 2025
Green Gala
Edition

The sustainability efforts of Green St. Louis Machine (GSM) aren't just rooted in rockwool (the material made from recycled rock that we use instead of soil in our tower gardens)—they're also grounded in social justice. During April, our sustainability word of the month is *social justice*, and for good reason. At the heart of our program is the belief that sustainability must include access, equity, and empowerment. Our students didn't just grow food—they grew community, cultivating conversations about environmental justice and the right to healthy nourishment for all. Through every seed planted, they explored: *Who has access? Who decides? And how can we make change together?*

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the accomplishments of our student growers, harvesters, and chefs. We are eternally grateful to our community of supporters, volunteers, families, and guests—thank you. Your encouragement, attendance, and generosity have made all of this possible. You showed up not just for a meal, but for a mission. And now, without further ado, we're excited to share the photos from this year's unforgettable Green Gala...

P.S. Don't forget to celebrate Earth Day on April 22nd this year!!!

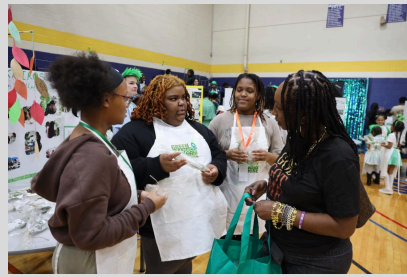
Attendance at the April 3rd Green Gala included almost 150 GSM students from 15 schools and organizations that were able to attend, and 50 educators/leaders and their administrators who support GSM! Additionally, there were almost 100 guests including family members of the students and community friends.

1,300 servings of food were prepared! See Menu Section!

Click here for our "Why Green STL Machine" Video that was shown at the Green Gala!
Gala Promo Video



April 3rd was GSM's 10th Annual Green Gala! Each GSM Team received an award to congratulate them on their growing achievements. Each year, students showcase what they've been growing, learning, and doing through display boards featuring their Tower Garden activities and lessons. Students also bagged gift bags of herbs and handed them out to families who attended to take home and enjoy cooking with. Finally, students proudly served up a dish made from the plants they grew. It was a celebratory, educational, and delicious way to come together as a community! Join us next year!



Chefs created 1,300 servings of quite a variety of food for 300 Green Gala guests!



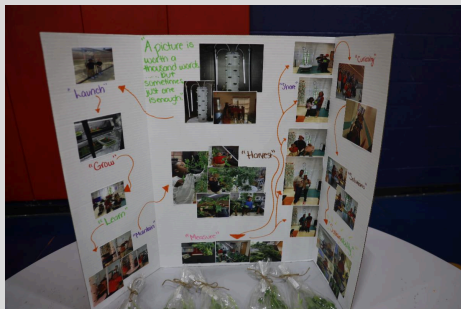
Green Gala Menu
17 delicious menu items
for guests to enjoy!



- Fiesta Cilantro Lime Chicken
- Roasted Herb Baby Potatoes

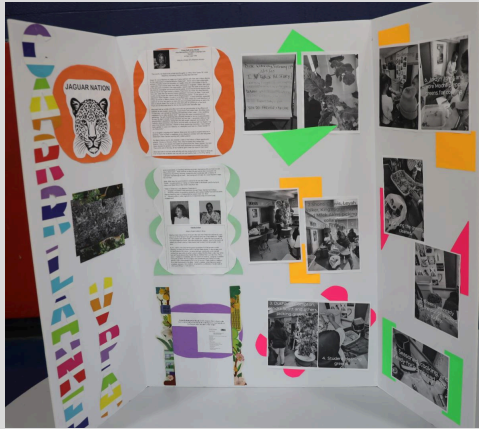
- Mixed Greens
- Sesame Ginger Bok Choy
- Slow Cooker Cilantro Shredded Chicken
 - Kale Pesto Pasta Salad
- Marinated Garbanzo Bean Salad
 - Cauliflower Catastrophe
- Crudités Platter with Dill Dip
- Salad with Buttermilk Ranch Dressing
- Chef Rona Leah's Chopped Salads with Vinaigrette Dressing
 - Rainbow Swiss Chard Dip
 - Kale Chips
 - Adobo Lettuce Cups
- Lemon Garlic Chard Crostini
- Green Goddess Hummus
 - Corn Muffins

The Biome School's herb gift was cilantro which was grown in school and included in their recipe. Fifty servings Cilantro Lime Chicken were prepared for the Gala. All of Biome's science students are involved in Green St. Louis Machine. Unfortunately, the Green Gala occurred during Biome's spring break however, science educator, Ciara Fisher attended and represented the school's Green St. Louis machine program! Their display shared how they harvest, measure and share their crops with their classmates and families. They are led by Ciara Fisher, M.Science, K-5 Science, Laura Myers M.A., Principal, and Bill Kent, President and CEO.



BKG Pamoja Prep's GSM students include 4th grade and Middle School students and 11 students attended the Green Gala! They grew chives for their herb gifts. Their 100-serving recipe included the chives they grew, to create Baby Herb Potatoes with Chives made by 4th Grade teacher, Briand Sykes, who is not only an avid gardener, but a chef! Their display showed the process from seed, to seedling to sprout to plant to harvest! BKG is led by Briand Sykes, 4th Grade, Marquitta Estes, Middle School, Angel Nave M.A., Principal, and DeAndria Wallace M.A., Assistant Principal.





Carr Lane VPA's Green St. Louis Machine students included 6th Grade ELA students taught by Alisa Bennet-Hart, an avid gardener! They grew Collard Greens which Alisa used to make a delicious pot of Mixed Greens. Their display was about the history of Black Americans farming and cooking for their families. They are led by Alisa Bennett-Hart, ELA Teacher, and Darwin Young M.Ed.,Principal.



Ferguson Middle School gifted Gala attendees with 60 gift bags of mint. Our chefs made 50 servings of Sesame Garlic Bok Choy, which is being grown in their Tower Garden in the sustainability classroom. They had 22 students attend the gala and their display informed us how growing our own food helps sustains our community and the need for local farming. They are led by Ryan Young, Sustainability Teacher, Holly James, School Libraria and Ce'Andre Perry, Ed.D., Principal.





Grand Center Arts Academy Grand Center Arts Academy grew Basil in their Tower Gardens and gifted 60 sprigs of basil to Gala attendees! They also grew Cilantro and invented their signature dish, Cilantro Lime Chicken with Salsa, which Chefs prepared and students served. They had 10 students in attendance at the Gala. Their display reported on the longevity of the curriculum, and the rainbow of sustainability. They are led by Cassandra Lentz, Middle School Science, Kathleen Bateman, 6th grade ELA, and Arnez Newton, Principal.



Gene Slay's Boys and Girls Club gifted Sage and Oregano to Gala attendees. Our GSM chef Rona Leah used Basil and Kale, also grown at Gene Slay's to create 50 servings of Chickpea Salad and 50 servings of Pasta Pesto salad, and both were AMAZING! They had 18 students and 3 staff members in attendance at the Gala. Gene Their display included a tub of composting where they learned the value of worms in gardening! They are led by Mary Bueckendorf M.A.T., Education Coordinator, Valencia Pettigrew, Program Manager, Betsy King M.A.T., Director of Programs.





Kairos Academy's students grew marjoram for their herb gift and our chef followed their creative recipe to prepare fifty servings of their unique, fun and tasty dish called Cauliflower Catastrophe! There is also a story behind this dish. Eleven students and four staff members attend the Gala. The topic of their display was how the Tower Garden increases health, teamwork and social justice. Additionally, they included the A in STEAM – a huge piece of artwork in the shape of a tree, which they brought with them, and which survived the transport from Kairos to the Green Gala and which added a wonderful component of the sustainability theme! They are led by Emi Belciak M.Ed., High School Science, Adaure Nduka M.Ed., Principal, and Nick Gaudiana M.Ed, Assistant Principal.



Marian Middle School

students grew dill in their Tower Garden and gifted 60 gift bags if the herb to Gala attendees. Extra dill turned in to 50 servings of Dill Dip which was served alongside a crudite platter! They also are good at growing lettuce at Marian, that was served with their signature Buttermilk Ranch Dressing! YUM! Their display told how growing their own food helps increase sustainability when they share their harvest with the school and



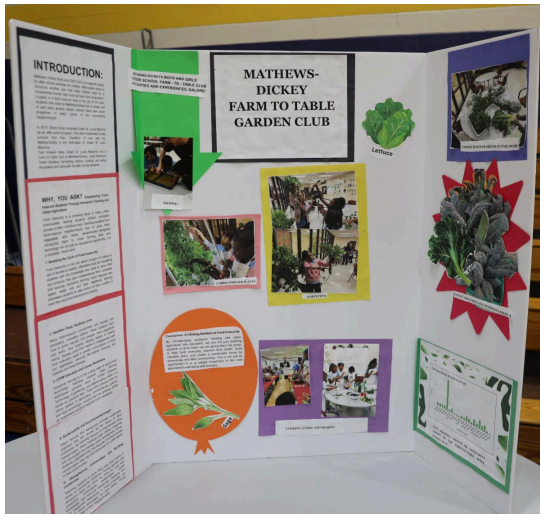
community. Nicolle von der Heyde M.Ed., Science Teacher, Christine Gallas, Math, Sierhah Price MBA, M.Ed., Principal.



Mathew's-Dickey Boys and Girls Club



Mint is the herb gifted to attendees at the Gala by Mathew's-Dickey Boys and Girls Club's Farm-to-Table Garden Club. They grew Swiss Chard in their Tower Gardens – and for the Gala, prepared 50 servings of Swiss Chard Dip (Green Dip!) along with 100 servings each, of Salad and Black Beans and Rice. 20 students and 10 staff attended. Their display talked about the history of Green St. Louis Machine and the cycle of growth from planting a seed through preparing food from the harvested produce. They are led by Sherry Amen, GSM Coordinator, Pareece Sanders, Alisa Edwards, Kendal Cross, Youth Development Professionals, Valerie Simmons, Tutor, Anthony Buckner, Maintenance (set up the gym for the Gala – Thanks Anthony!) Charles Woods, Program Manager, Joyce Jones, Membership, Raefel Merriweather, Director of Athletics and Thomas Sullivan M.B.A., Club Director.



The Missouri Botanical Garden grew Rosemary and Kale, and John Lawler attended and made Kale Chips to serve, which disappeared quickly! Their display included pictures showing experiences by students who attended their educational sessions while on field trips and doing experiments using the Garden's Tower Garden in their Plant Lab.



North Side Community Elementary School





North Side Community Elementary School's Farm-to-Table Club grew basil, lettuce and other greens in their Tower Gardens. They gifted the Basil to Gala guests. Their recipes included 50 servings of Lemon Garlic Chard Crostini and 50 servings of Adobo Lettuce Cups made by chef Joia Walker, who is featured weekly after school at the Farm-to-Table Club. 35 students attended the Green Gala. Their display informed us how their scholars are shaping healthy lifestyles one vegetable at a time! The After-School Team is led by Veronica McCowan, and includes leaders Tabitha Guy, Jelen Woods, Aisha Wortham, Morgan Steuck, Rose Thompson, Indiana Smith. Thanks also to Martine McGull M.Ed., Principal, Jetan Tatton M.Ed., Assistant Principal and Douglas Thaman Ed.D., Executive Director.



The STEAM Academy at McCluer South-Berkeley gifted the guests at the Gala with 60 gift bags of parsley they grow in their Tower Garden. Their recipe was Thai Lettuce Wraps with peanut-free sauce! Fifty servings of their favorite dish were prepared! 3 students attended. . Their display gave statistics on the difference between plants growing in natural light and under the grow light. Their program is led by Karen Doering, M.A., 2nd Grade PROBE, Maggie Ahern MAT, Fine Arts, High School, and Keith Rhodes, Athletic Director.



Woerner Elementary Kindergarten

(yes kindergarten!)

and Second Grade students grew dill and lots of lettuce in their classroom Tower Gardens! They bagged the dill and gave out 60 gift bag of the herb at the Gala. Their recipe is one they often make in school - 100 servings of Caesar Salad! They are led by Elizabeth Buehler M.Ed., Kindergarten, Kaitlin Gaffney, 2nd Grade, Kathy Matthews M.Ed., Principal.



YES!

The Saint Louis Science Center's Agriscience YES Teens were super instrumental in helping with all aspects of the food preparation for the entire Gala! YES stands for Youth Exploring Science. They showed up early and jumped right in to assist Chefs Rona Leah and Joia Walker! They grow herbs and greens in their Tower Gardens and chose a favorite recipe – Green Goddess Hummus. Their display showed the activities done by the youth during their school year including plants and also animals – including the snake in their classroom! They are led by Doug Schilling, Agriscience Focus Area Manager, Kerry Stevison M.A., Manager, STEAM Content, Community Programs & Partnerships, and Siinya Williams, Senior Director.





The St. Louis AgriBusiness

Club had a table at the Gala and their gift was a large useful green fabric tote bag. This came is very handy for guests to put their herb gift bags into as they went table to table! This new community partner of Green St. Louis Machine's purpose is to promote the positive impact of the agricultural industry in the Greater St. Louis region through educational, networking and professional development opportunities. Dean Dittmar, Executive Director said The Green Gala was an excellent chance to meet and network with GSM schools, students and leaders and to recognize the need and opportunity to explain about pathways for their students to prepare to enter into careers in the St. Louis Agri-Business sector.



Students (and adults!) had fun in the Photo Booth as well!

We thank Fete Booth for coming out to the Gala! You can follow them at:





Food leftover served multiple purposes, including

- Served to teachers at Woerner (Caesar salad)
- A student party at Kairos (Dips and hummus)
- Kairos students competed for 6 heads of cauliflower leftover
- 20 pounds of Bok Choy and 3 pounds of Crisp Green Lettuce were used in cooking lessons at three after-school programs
- Donated to a food pantry in North St. Louis - Wesley House where it will be used in cooking lessons for seniors and the neighborhood food pantry
- Some baked chicken was able to be frozen for use in after-school programs before the end of this school year.



Green St. Louis Machine's Urban Agricultural Learning Center's

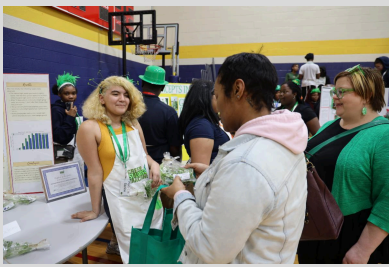
Greenhouse supplied **over 200 pounds** of greens for the Green Gala, to supplement what was grown by the schools and organizations as follows:

- 83 pounds of Bok Choy
- 13 pounds of Swiss Chard
- 67 pounds of Romaine Lettuce
- 39 pounds of Crisp Green Lettuce
- 10 pounds of Butter Lettuce
- 212 Total pounds

Comments from leaders, guests and volunteers included:

- Students were all so polite.
- The event experience was very successful.
- Overall the Green Gala was an amazing experience
- It was good! Quite a feat to pull off!
- All staff and members, came away being glad we were part of Green St. Louis Machine and that we were at the Gala.
- Overall the Green Gala was well organized!





Regarding the question, “What aspects of the Green Gala event would you like to see continued?” here are some responses we received:

1. Student, parent and family participation
2. Herbs
3. Food tasting
4. The way you all had the scholars come in and be recognized by group
5. The parents were able to go around and “shop” for the herbs and see the displays was cool and they really enjoyed it.
6. Having jobs – roles to play
7. Variety of food
8. Table displays and “shopping”
9. My kids enjoyed the whole event and said they look forward to attending again next year.
10. Assigned roles for students: These roles organized us and gave our students a sense of responsibility.



Regarding the question, “How did this event influence or affect the students, guests and families that attended?”, here are some responses we received:

1. The families were thrilled to be there to celebrate the children’s accomplishments
2. The children were able to enjoy all the work that they have put in throughout the year



3. One student said he had begun to see a future career in agriculture or in culinary as a result of participating in this event and in GSM

4. Students actually WANTED some of the leftover cauliflower and bickered as to who got the cauliflower!



5. The Green Gala brought the community together

6. Students engaged with the community in serving the food, explaining the displays and handing out the herbs.



7. The Green Gala was an exciting event for our students. They had been looking forward to it all year.

8. Students were so excited to go on a “field trip.”





9. Getting to see other kids from around St. Louis made them feel they were part of a Green St. Louis Machine community.

10. The Green Gala gave students opportunities for leadership and responsibility. Students loved having jobs to do and took them very seriously.



11. Students took on the responsibility of preparing for the Green Gala. They prepared our display board. They assigned roles to the other students and they supervised them during the Gala. Other students took their roles so seriously! One girl served samples throughout the whole event. Another girl was such a good media manager that she went around taking photos and videos of everyone, not just our group. Our table hosts gave great explanations of the display which they had brought to demonstrate sustainability.



Volunteers!!!

It takes MANY volunteers to host The Green Gala! Jobs are fun like Scott and Mark here handing out the prizes at the end of The Gala to excited students and teachers!

To volunteer with GSM events or even just one event, please contact

**Sherry Amen, 314-757-6607,
Sherry@GreenSTLMachine.org
Stella Erondy, 314-590-3247,
Stella@GreenSTLMachine.org**



[Donate to the Growing of Green St. Louis Machine!!](#)

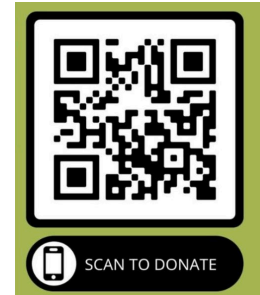
☀️ We are hopeful for donations to fund the upkeep of the greenhouse urban agricultural learning center, support our partner schools and pay for the Green Gala. Please consider a donation for our worthy cause! Thank you to those who have donated already this year! This incredible support will help us continue our mission to foster sustainability and innovation in our community. We are truly grateful for this kindness and commitment to our cause. Thank you so much! 🙏❤️

#GreenStLouisMachine
#GreenSTL_Machine #Gratitude
#CommunitySupport #Sustainability
#Innovation



Stella Erondu and Sherry Amen pose in front of Swiss chard, with the check!

If you would like to support us, you can donate by scanning our QR Code!



In case you still missed it, we were featured on Giving Tuesday on Channel 4!!

*See the video clip of Green St. Louis Machine's North Side
Community Elementary School Kids by clicking the link
below!*

[Watch us on Channel 4!](#)



A growing need: St. Louis nonprofits ask for help ahead of Giving Tuesday amid declining donations
firstalert4.com



[We need to raise \\$15,000 in 2025!!](#)

**We still have a LOT of need!
We are so thankful for \$12,500 we have received so far this year, which is greatly appreciated! We are hoping to raise an additional \$12,500 to reach our goal of \$25,000 in 2025!**

**[Thanks for giving to us!](#)
[You can donate to The Green St. Louis Machine here!](#)**

Or visit our website::
[Green St Louis Machine Website](#)

Why do we do The Green St. Louis Machine?



Food apartheid in St. Louis contributes to high rates of food insecurity, childhood obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Thousands of children live in areas with little to no access to quality grocery stores, leaving families with limited options for fresh, nutritious food. As a result, processed and unhealthy foods have become a regular part of their lifestyle.

Many of these children have never tasted or even learned the names of common fruits and vegetables. This lack of exposure to fresh, nutritious food affects their school performance, mental outlook, and overall well-being. Over time, poor nutrition increases their risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, and other serious health issues later in life.

YOU have the power to make a difference in their lives today — paving the way for healthier futures! Through our program, students grow, harvest, prepare, and enjoy fresh, nutritious foods, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment over their own food choices. Together, we can transform communities and break the cycle of poor nutrition. Join us in our mission! Donate or volunteer today to help us create a healthier, brighter future for our children.

Thanks to Gala Volunteers

Dianne and Scott Schmidt, Paul and Anne McGhghy, Robin Wrice, Mark Amen, Uche Erundu, Tonja Riley

Photos and Video: Leon Algee, Nancy Joy

Chefs: Rona Leah, Joia Walker

GSM Advisory Team

Emi Belciak, Alisa Bennett-Hart, Mary Bueckendorf, Cassandra Lentz, Tyrean Lewis, Robin Wrice, Sara Paracha, Ciara Fisher, Rona Leah

GSM Thanks the Following Donors

Midwest BankCentre
Harold and Marilyn Hughes
Paul and Anne McGhghy
Sherry and Mark Amen
Donna Larson
Carol Bazan
Dorothy Uhlig
Tawnya Martin
Brenda Bakota
Terri-Ann Ruffin
Barbara Poelker
Mary Bueckendorf
Deborah and Ron Kniepkamp
Alisa Bennett-Hart
St. Louis Community Foundation

Thrivent Financial
Edith and James Leible
Dianne and Scott Schmidt
Gregory Grohman
Ashley Palmer
Christine Nickelson
Jodi Hart
Nancy Joy
Mark Dana
Katie Meyer
Collin Bueckendorf
Shineeka Smith
Emi and Sinclair Bowman
Nancy Joy
Stella Erundu

* Anonymous – Largest Donor

GSM IS INVITING ALL OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES TO GET INVOLVED! The Green St. Louis Machine relies heavily on donations and support from volunteers and community partners.

For more information contact:
Sherry Amen, 314-757-6607,
Sherry@GreenSTLMachine.org
Stella Erondy, 314-590-3247,
Stella@GreenSTLMachine.org
VISIT OUR
WEBSITE! www.GreenSTLMachine.org

**Give STL Day is coming in May!
Please consider us!**



Video Clip!

You can learn more about our mission by clicking here to watch our video: [Green St. Louis Machine Promo Video](#) and feel free to pass this video on to your friends and family. Thank you for your support!

Download our Mission Statement Flyer!

[Click here to download](#)



Agriscience (STEAM) Summer Camp at Mathews-Dickey:

Students can participate in Green St. Louis Machine activities and experiments during Summer Sports Academy Summer Camp at Mathews-Dickey Club, which runs from June 9 through August 1, M-F, 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM. Leaders of Agriscience will be the Saint Louis Science Center's YES teens and their manager, Doug Schilling. Children will receive and participate in, engaging STEAM learning activities that the YES teens have developed! To sign up please contact Ms. Joyce at (314) 302-5710 or stop in at Mathew's -Dickey between 10 am and 5 pm.

Note: YES stands for Youth Exploring Science.



AMERICORPS VISTA!

THREE POSITIONS ARE STILL OPEN!!

We want to let you know ASAP that Green St. Louis Machine has 3 AmeriCorps VISTA positions OPEN! Could you suggest contacts/people we could forward this to such as colleagues in the organizations, schools and universities you work with?

M:STL- Green STL Machine Community Builder VISTA

M:STL- Green STL Machine Farmer in Chief VISTA

M:STL- Green STL Machine Outreach, Capacity & Market VISTA

These positions could be good for high school graduates or college students taking a gap year to explore career path opportunities or to gain resume-building experiences and knowledge to prepare them for applying for good jobs.....or even early retirees or people in-between jobs or careers! Full health coverage and child care is certainly appealing, as is a monthly stipend of over \$1,800!

So please help us with these great opportunities and call/text with any questions

Sherry Amen 314-757-6607, Sherry@GreenSTLMachine.org

Stella Erondu 314-590-3247, Stella@GreenSTLMachine.org



*Thank YOU for
partnering with us!*

Wish to donate? Click here:
[Donate to The Green St. Louis
Machine!](#)

Here's what your donation can do if you
click on DONATE ANY AMOUNT
ABOVE:

Donate award certificates for all 500 students in
the GSM \$100

\$200 or more: Attend the Green Gala to be part
of it as a VIP and meet Stephen Ritz himself who
will be our keynote speaker!!

\$1,500 will buy a Tower Garden for a school
desperate for the opportunity to grow food in a
classroom!

\$2,000 will cover the food and chefs to make the
students' recipes at the Green Gala!

Donate T-SHIRTS for all 500 GSM students
\$5,000 (Can have your company logo too!)

Donate 500 APRONS for all Green St Louis
Machine students – \$6,500 (Can have your
company logo too!)

Support the GSM portion of salary for a GSM
Americorps Vista (Like the Peace Corps only)



working on American soil) for a year \$5,000

Support a GSM summer camp including field trips to GSM's Urban Agricultural Learning Center Greenhouse for 8 summer weeks of 2025 \$7,000

Have questions?

Sherry Amen at 314-757-6607

Email: Sherry@GreenSTLMachine.org

Stella Erondy at 314-590-3247

Email: Stella@GreenSTLMachine.org

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