

2024 GCYP

IMPACT REPORT

GREENCORPS CHICAGO'S MISSION IS TO EMPOWER RESIDENTS FROM CHICAGOLAND'S UNDERSERVED NEIGHBORHOODS TO CREATE CHANGE IN THEIR LIVES AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRAINING, SERVICE, AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL FIELDS.

The Greencorps Chicago Youth Program (GCYP) is a 6-week summer employment program that exposes youth ages 16-19 to careers and service projects in sustainability related to bicycling and horticulture.



PROGRAM GOALS



- **Build youth identity and agency within the environmental field** by participating in community-based service projects and exploring career pathways.
- **Educate youth on bicycle safety** and maintenance.
- **Empower youth through experiential STEAM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) learning.
- **Facilitate community connections** and engagement for youth.
- **Introduce life and work readiness skills** to youth.
- **Reduce community violence** by providing youth a safe and healthy workspace to learn and grow during the summer.



9 OUT OF 10

YOUTH RECOMMEND THIS PROGRAM

“It was fun and I learned new things while getting paid!”

-Orr Youth

“This program pushes you to help your community, and you get fit with bike rides and the hard labor!”

-Solorio Youth

“I had fun! I met new people and had great times with my peers. Working on the farm was the best part.”

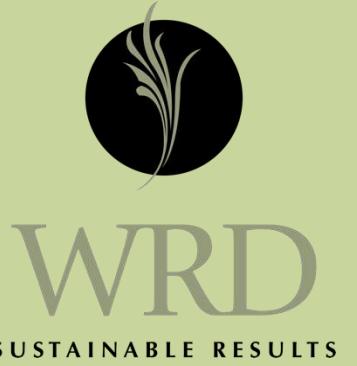
-Richards Youth

“This program is very fun with amazing people.”

-Dyett Youth

ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

Partners:



Department of Family
and Support Services

Funding:



Youth Employment Agencies:





PROGRAM TIMELINE

Program Components

Host School Recruitment & Acceptance

March

April

May

June

July

August

Youth Participant Recruitment & On-boarding

Staff Training & Development

Youth Program Implementation

Partnership Development & Admin





YOUTH EMPLOYMENT MODEL



Youth Employment:

- 161 participants
- June 21st-August 2nd
- M-F, 9am-1pm

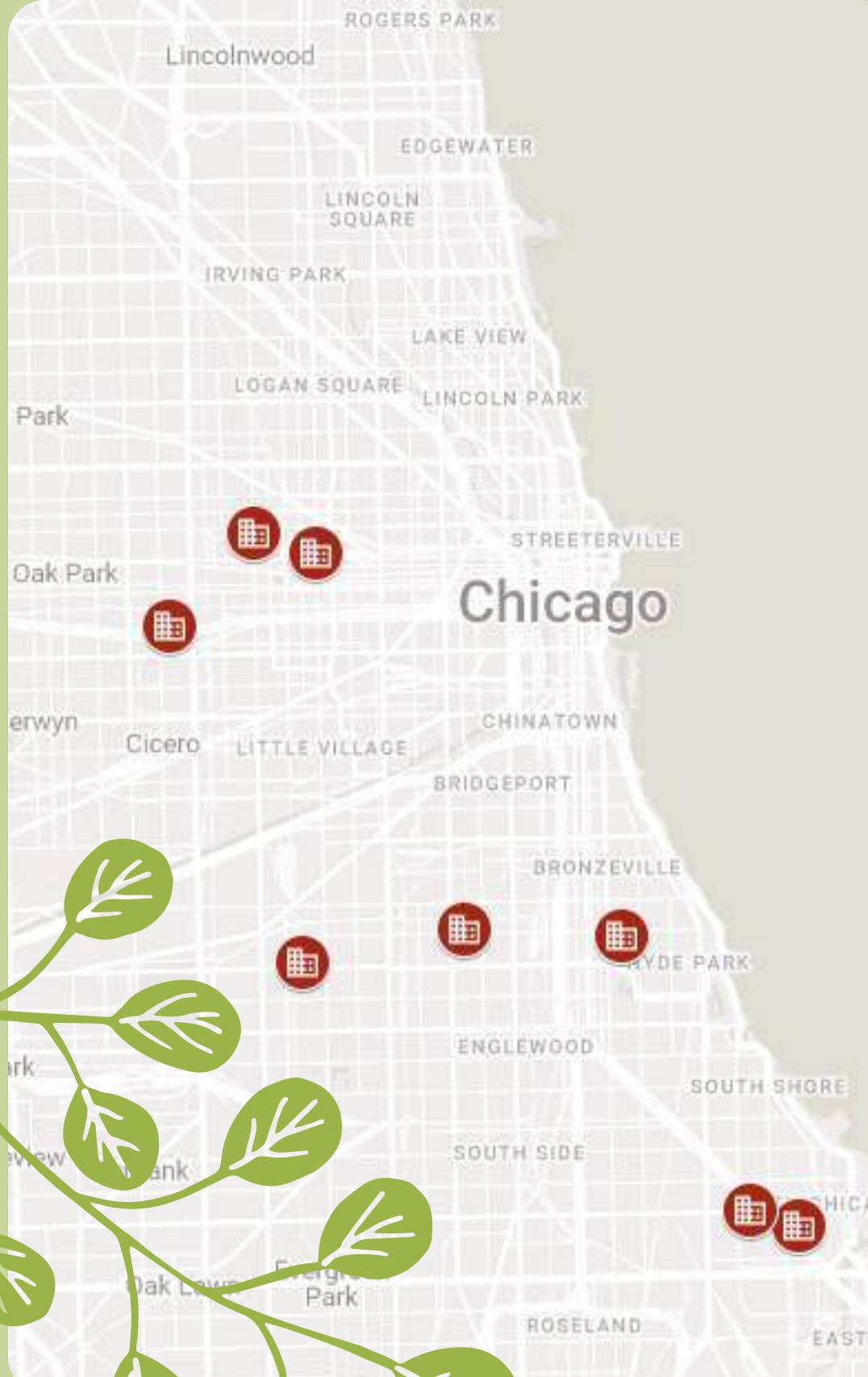
Youth Pay:

- \$15.80/hr
- 20 hrs/week

**\$254,000+ TOTAL
YOUTH WAGES**



CPS PARTNERSHIP



- Host School recruitment focused on south and west side neighborhoods in alignment with the Mayor's Office priorities
- Schools applied, then were accepted after identifying a School Liaison
- School Liaison coordinated required school resources and assisted with youth recruitment, selection, and onboarding





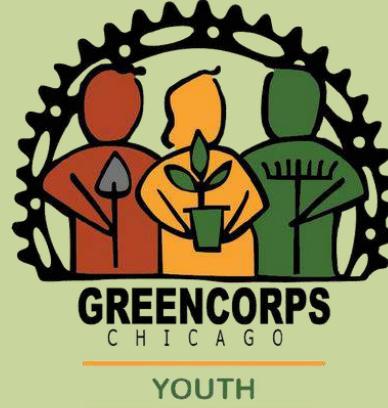
2024 HOST SCHOOLS



MICHELE CLARK
Academic Prep Magnet High School

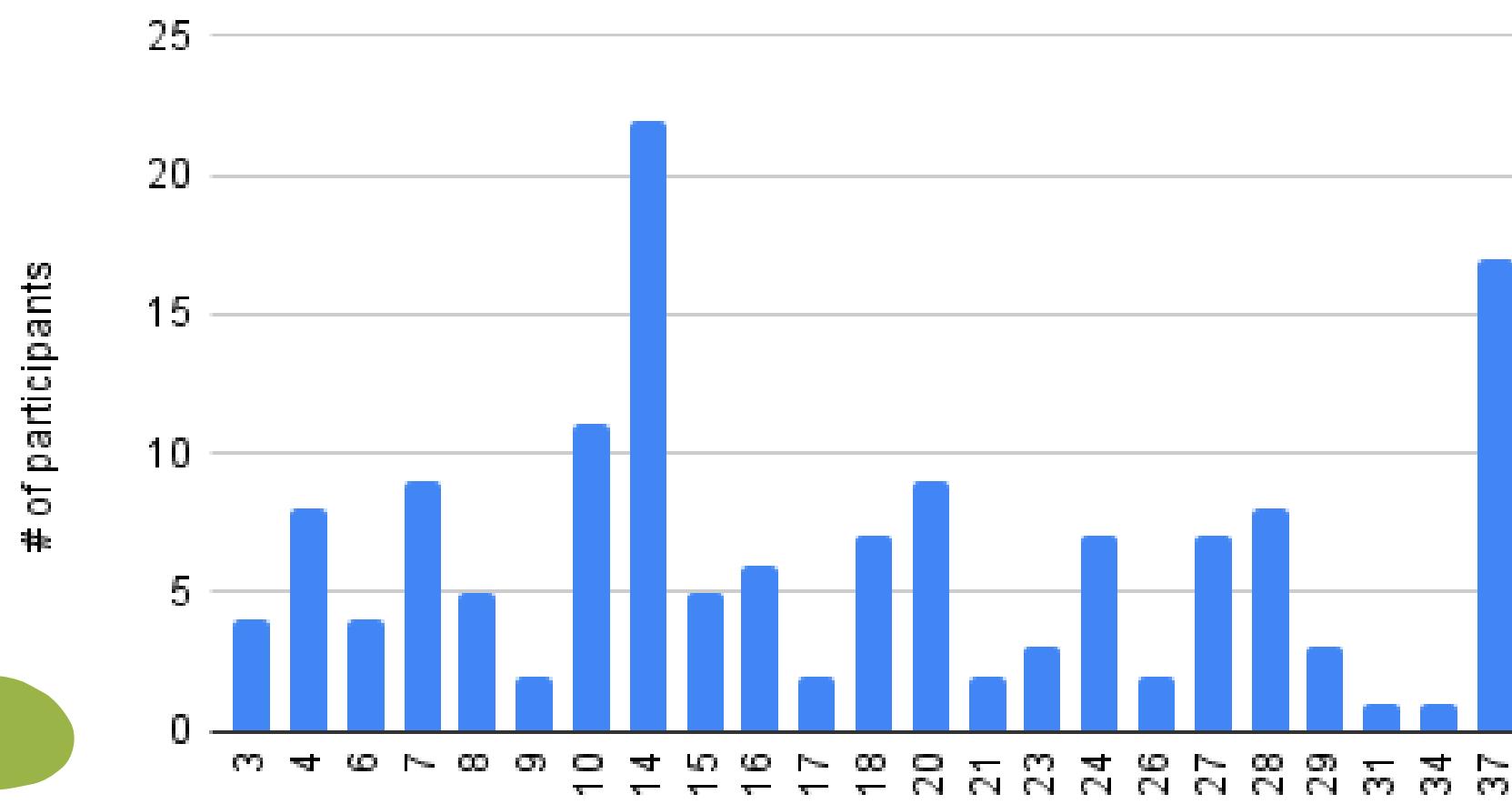
- James H. **Bowen** High School
- **Chicago Vocational Career Academy**
- Walter Henri **Dyett** High School for the Arts
- **Michele Clark** Academic Prep Magnet High School
- **Orr** Academy High School
- **Richards** Career Academy
- Eric **Solorio** Academy High School
- George **Westinghouse** College Preparatory High School





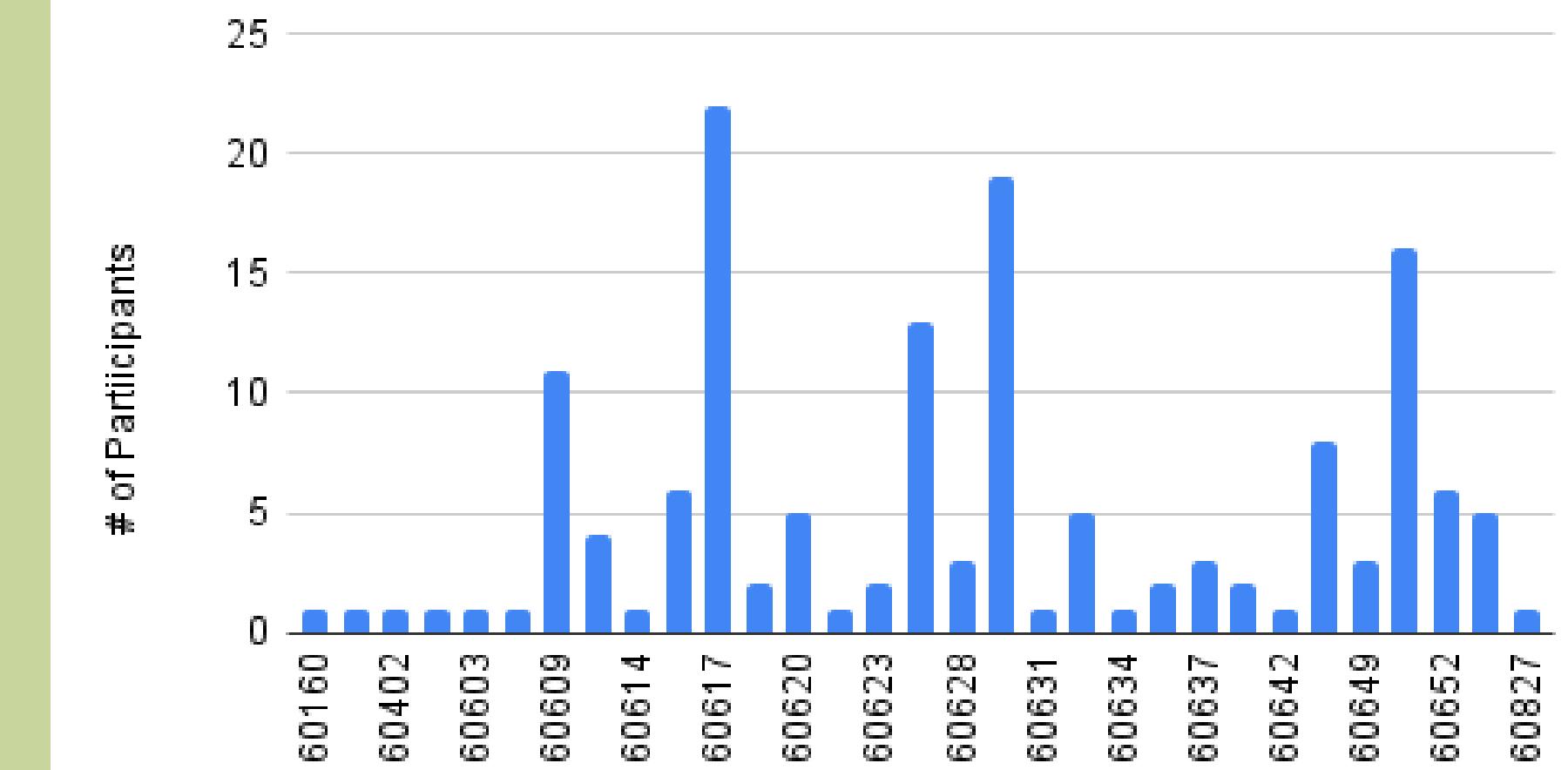
YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS

Wards



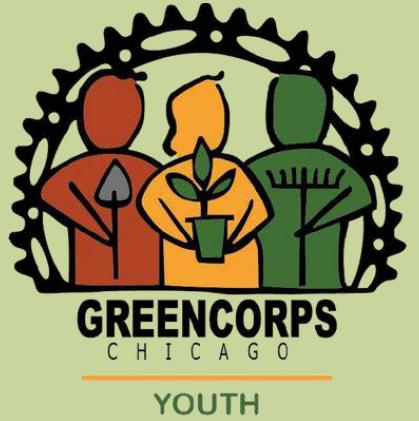
23 unique wards

Zip Codes

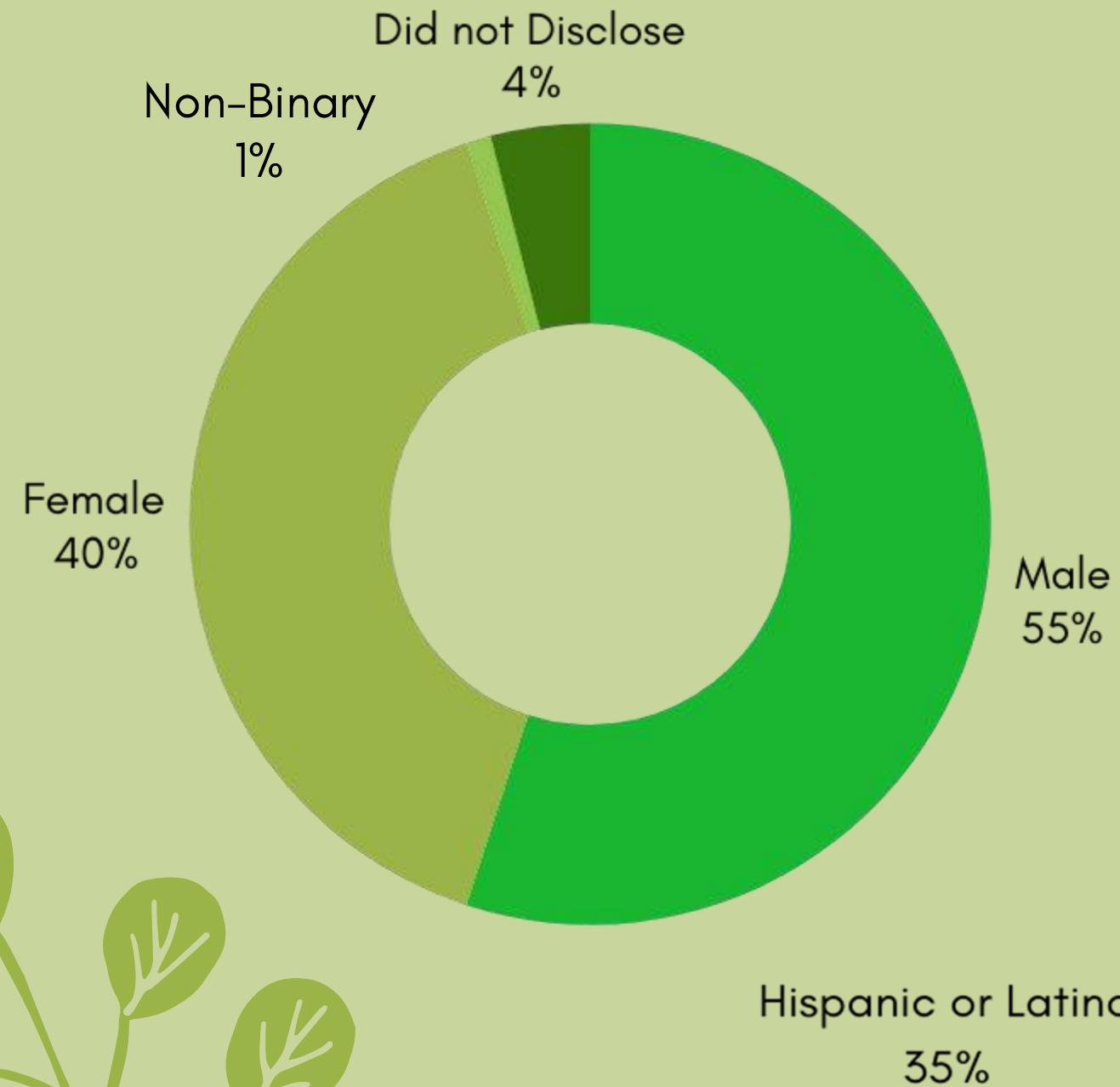


31 unique zip codes

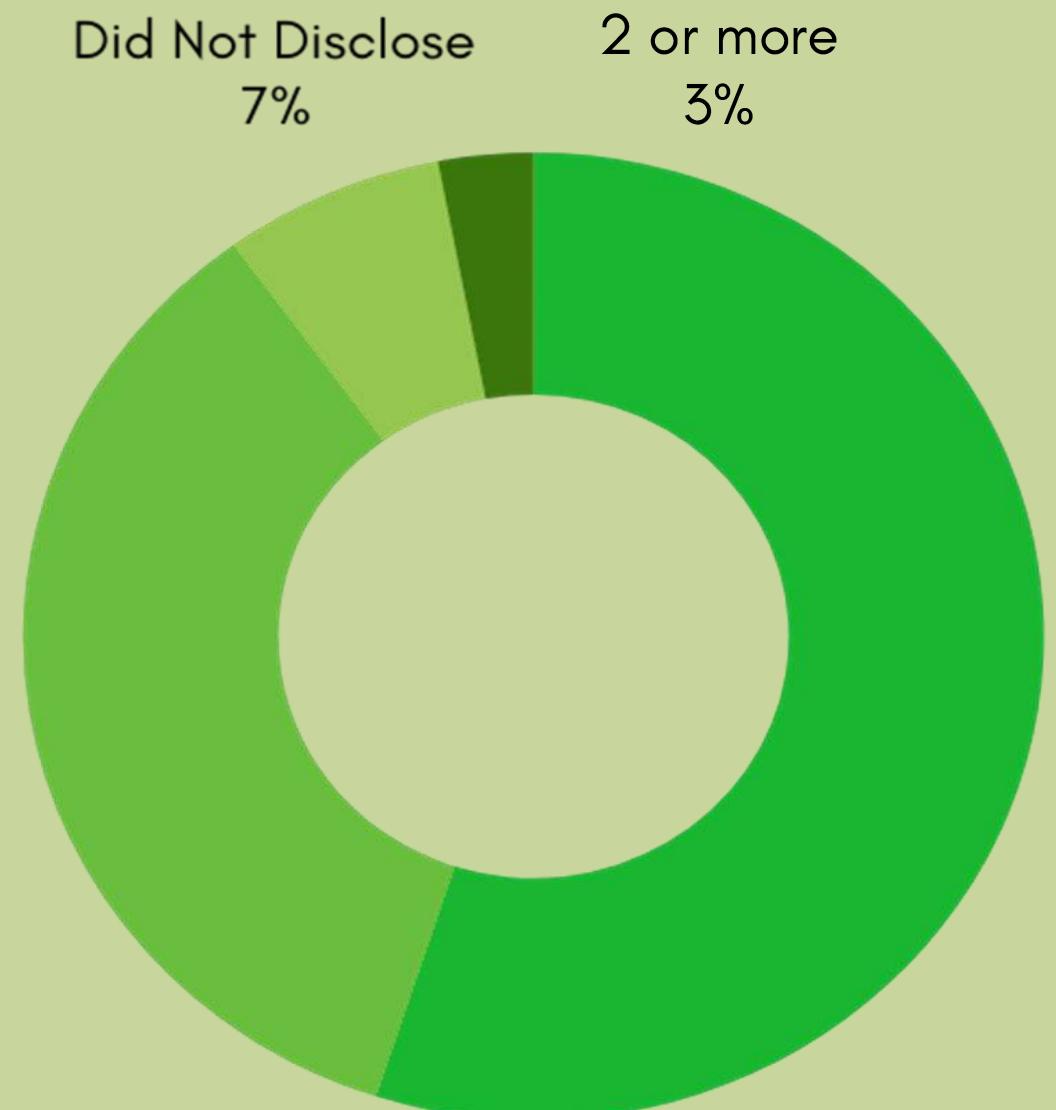
YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS



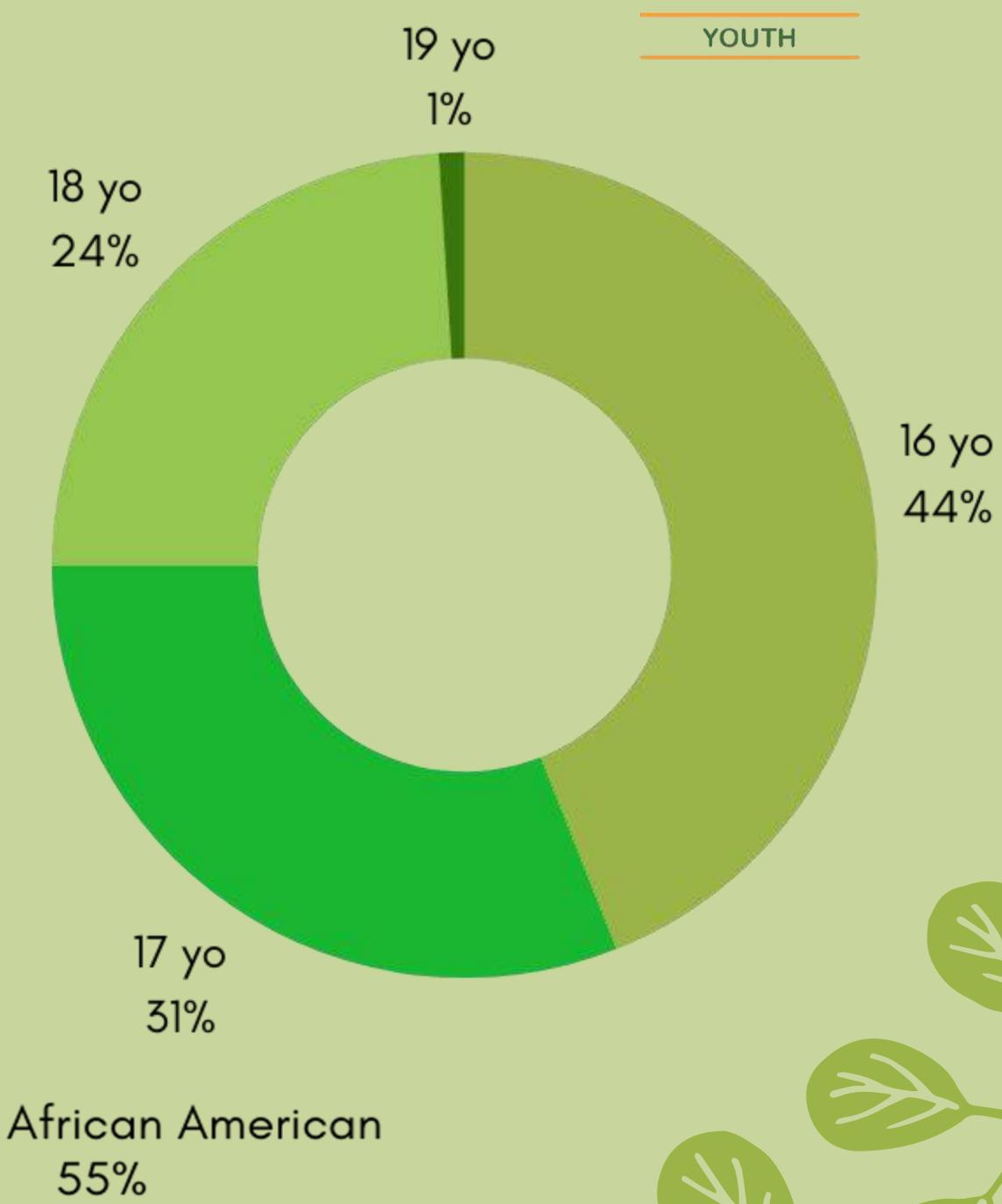
GENDER



RACE & ETHNICITY



AGE



STAFF MODEL

Our team brings diverse expertise in ecology, positive youth development, cultural competency, and cycling skills. We create a safe, welcoming, and engaging learning environment where youth feel a strong sense of belonging.

Management Team

Program Manager (1)

Program Consultant (1)

Program Assistant (2)

Program Team

Instructor (9)

Assistant Instructor (29)

Each group of 20 youth has:

1 x Instructor

2 x Assistant Instructors

Staff Development:

2 weeks of training, weekly team meeting & mid-program school team goal setting, post-program reflection & feedback



GREENCORPS EQUITABLE AND TRANSFORMATIVE (G.E.T.) SOLUTIONS

The Social Services Team provided comprehensive training on fostering a culture of belonging and how to apply asset-based frameworks in our work with youth



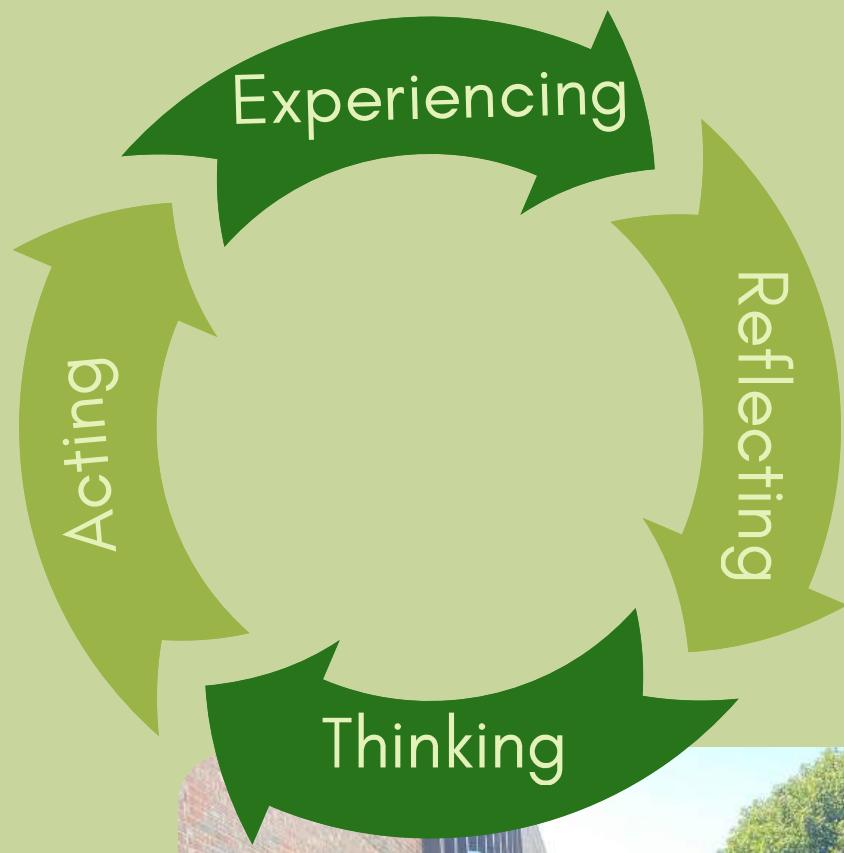
Workshop topics & strategies:

- Fostering a Belonging Culture (1 hr.)
- Asset Based Framework (1 hr.)
- Trauma Informed Care (1.5 hrs.)
- Case Management Practices (1 hr.)
- Restorative Practices (1.5 hrs.)

The Social & Supportive Resources for Youth Engagement Toolkit supported staff putting the training into practice.

GCYP management staff and G.E.T. Solutions collaborated to create and use the *Case Management Engagement Log* manage needs by school.





EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CURRICULUM APPROACH



**Project-Based
STEAM Learning**

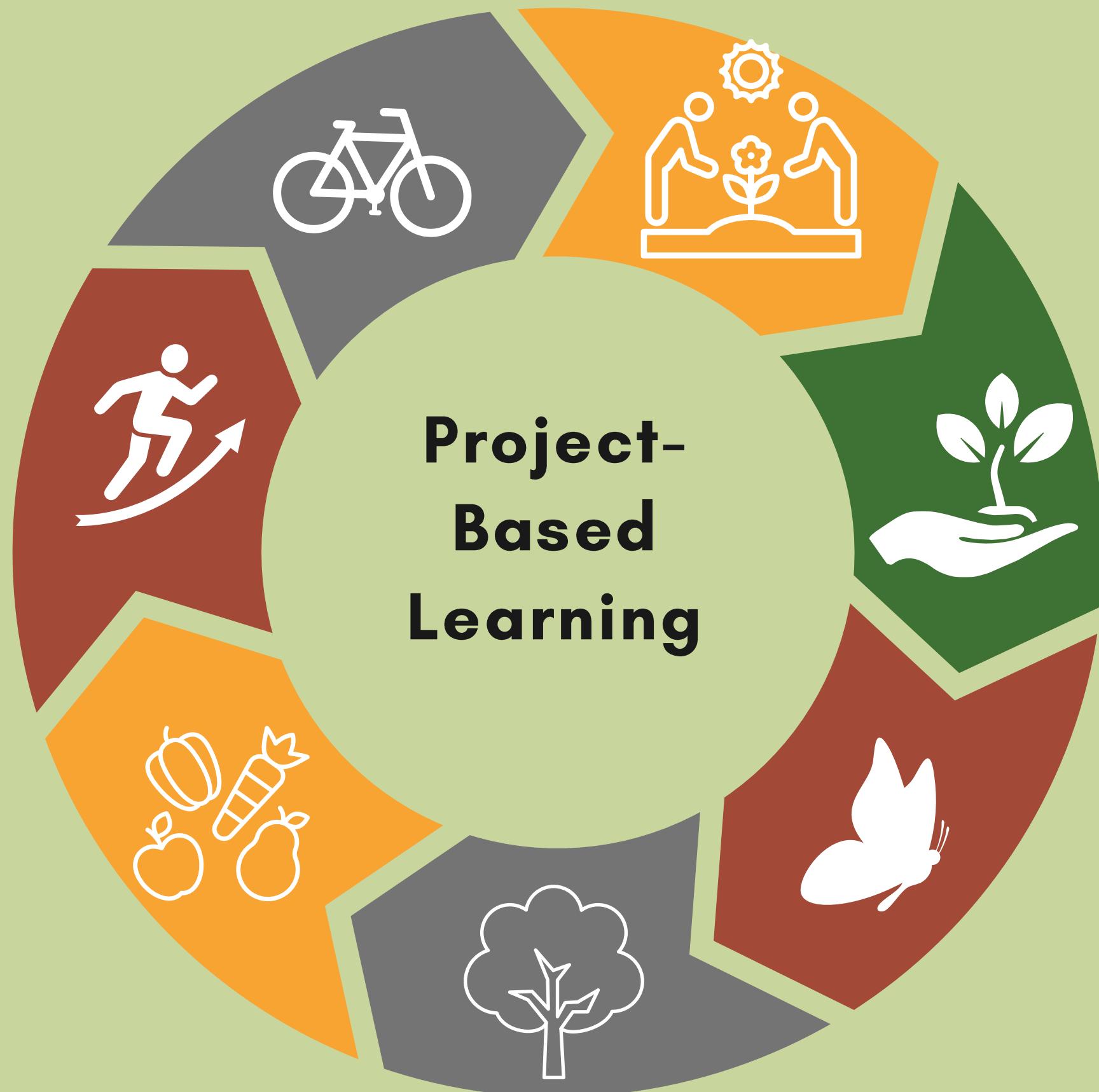


**Field Trips &
Community Service**



**In-Classroom
Activities & Speakers**

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM CONTENT OVERVIEW



- Bike technical skills & safe city cycling
- Gardening & urban agriculture
- Plant science
- Ecosystems & ecological restoration
- Urban forestry
- Nutrition & food systems
- Career readiness & pathway exploration

“I really enjoy this job because it gave me the opportunity to learn and work with my hands with plants and bikes. Also, it showed me a future career.”

-Solorio Youth

PROGRAM CONTENT: BIKES

Youth developed bike mechanic skills, safe city cycling experience, and an increased awareness of and appreciation for the benefits of biking.



During the first week of the program, youth built their own bike which they then rode and maintained throughout the program.



Group bike rides were the primary mode of transportation and used to mobilize their exploration of local greenspaces, communities, and more.



BIKE STATISTICS



163 BIKES BUILT



66 RIDES TAKEN



224 MILES RIDDEN

**“It opened my eyes to how easy
and effective biking is.”**

-Solorio Youth

**“I want to ride bikes
everyday now.
It’s so fun!”**
-Richards Youth

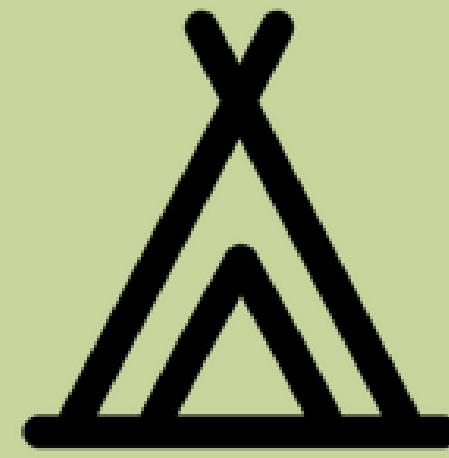


COMMUNITY PARTNERS



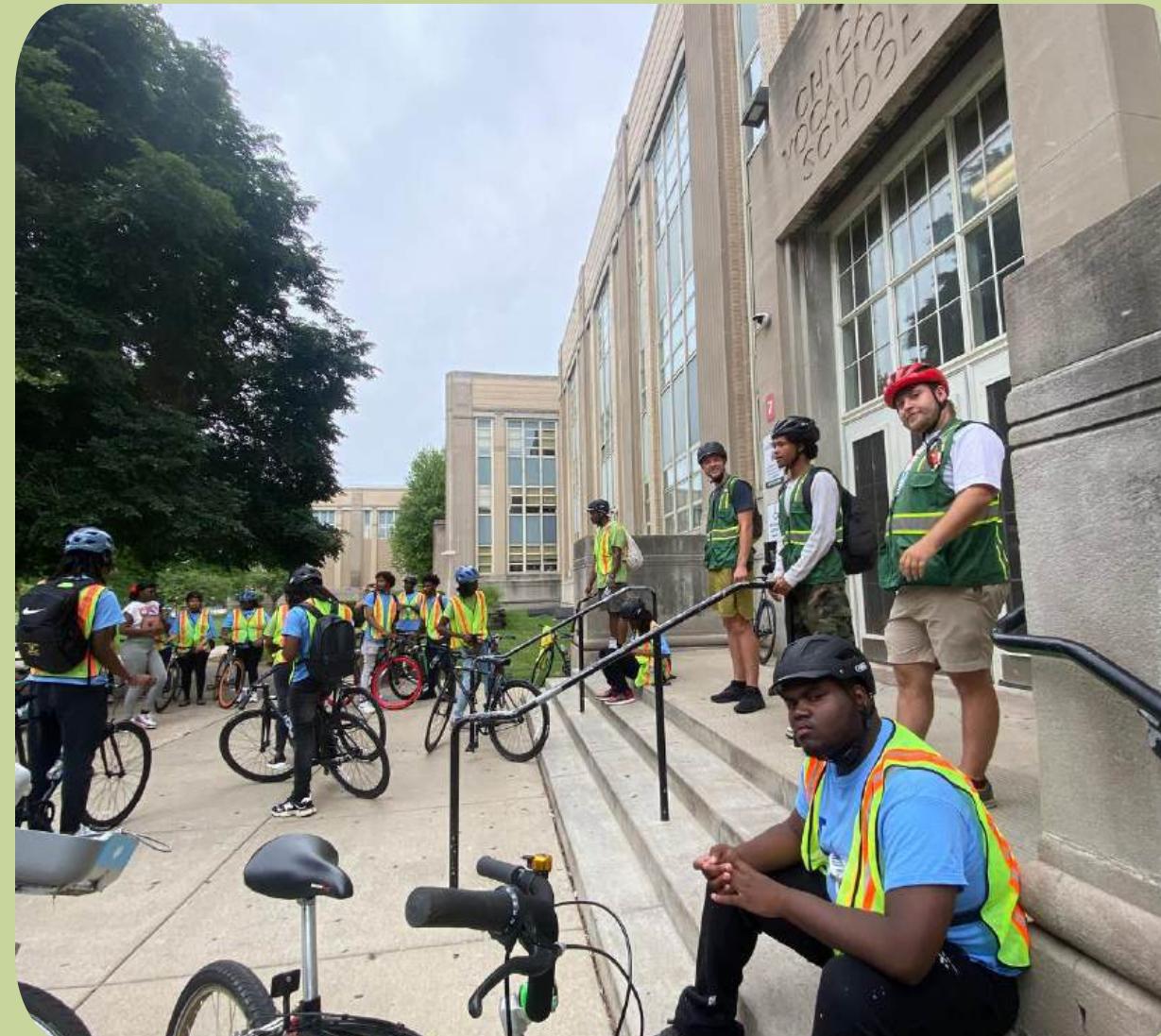
CHICAGO'S
SAFE
AMBASSADORS

STREETS ARE FOR EVERYBODY



Out Our Front Door

Youth enhanced their bike riding skills and safety knowledge, participated in extended rides, learned about the historical context of their routes, and discovered how to explore safely on their own post-program.





SUPPORTING SAFE & ACCESSIBLE CITY CYCLING

In partnership with Bike Chicago CDOT program, youth who successfully completed the program were eligible to:

- Keep their bike and helmet
- Receive a bike accessory kit with a u-lock, light, bell, multi-tool, and chain lube

 **139 YOUTH ELECTED TO
KEEP THEIR BIKES**
at the end of the program



YOUTH VOICE



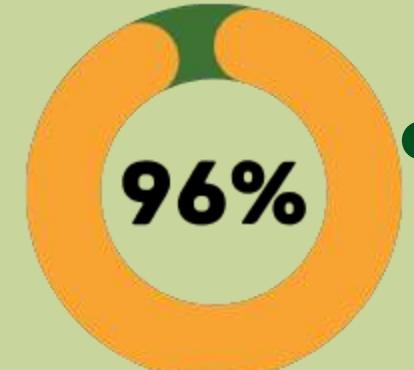
“Participating in Greencorps has really **changed my perspective on using bikes for transportation**. It made me more aware of the environmental benefits, like reducing carbon emissions. It can also be a great way to stay fit and healthy.”

-Michele Clark Youth



“Now I see the **importance of maintaining bike lanes and good roads**.”

-Solorio Youth



Youth reported feeling confident or very confident riding their bike after participating in GCYP



“I have come to respect people who use biking as a means of transportation. It **has convinced me to bike to locations close to me**.”

-Bowen Youth



GARDENING & URBAN AGRICULTURE

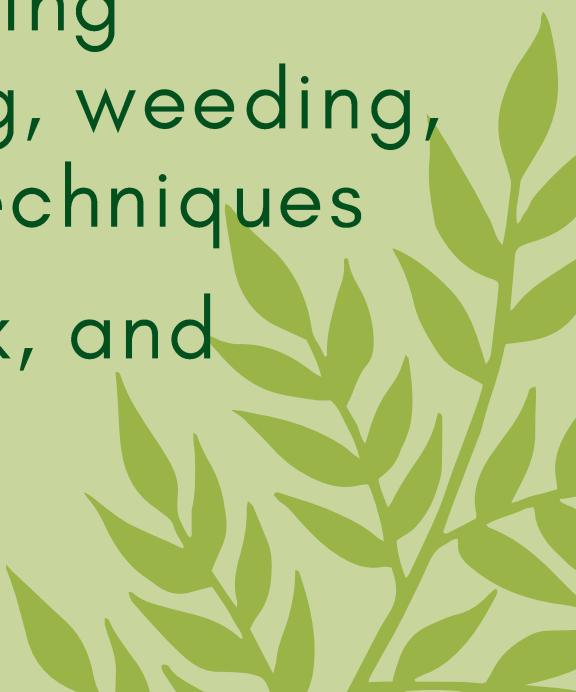


PROGRAM CONTENT: GARDENING & URBAN AGRICULTURE

Time spent in nature improves youths' mental and physical well-being

Youth engaged in community-based service projects to:

-  Build awareness and appreciation for the biodiversity in their neighborhood
-  Establish native gardens to benefit local pollinator habitats
-  Develop gardening and landscaping technical skills including watering, weeding, pruning, mulching and tool use techniques
-  Foster leadership skills, teamwork, and collaboration
-  Assist in maintaining urban farms



COMMUNITY PARTNERS: URBAN FARMS



COMMUNITY PARTNERS: COMMUNITY GARDENS



neighborSpace



"I learned a lot about urban farming and how produce can be grown even in a big city like Chicago."

-Westinghouse Youth



CAPSTONE PROJECT: NATIVE GARDEN INSTALLATION

Staff and youth collaborated to design, install and maintain a garden at their school to increase the biodiversity and beautify their space.

GARDENS INSTALLED:



8 GROUPS INSTALLED NATIVE POLLINATOR GARDENS



1 GROUP INSTALLED A VEGGIE & HERB GARDEN



17 NEW GARDENS TOTAL INSTALLED



1,330 PLANTS PLANTED





PROGRAM CONTENT: PLANT SCIENCE

**Enriching STEAM education through
experiential learning**

Focused on:

- Flower anatomy, pollination, photosynthesis and plant reproduction
- What part of the plant common foods come from & how they grow



“This program gives our youth the real-world and authentic learning experiences that are sometimes missing from their school year science curriculum.”

-School Liaison

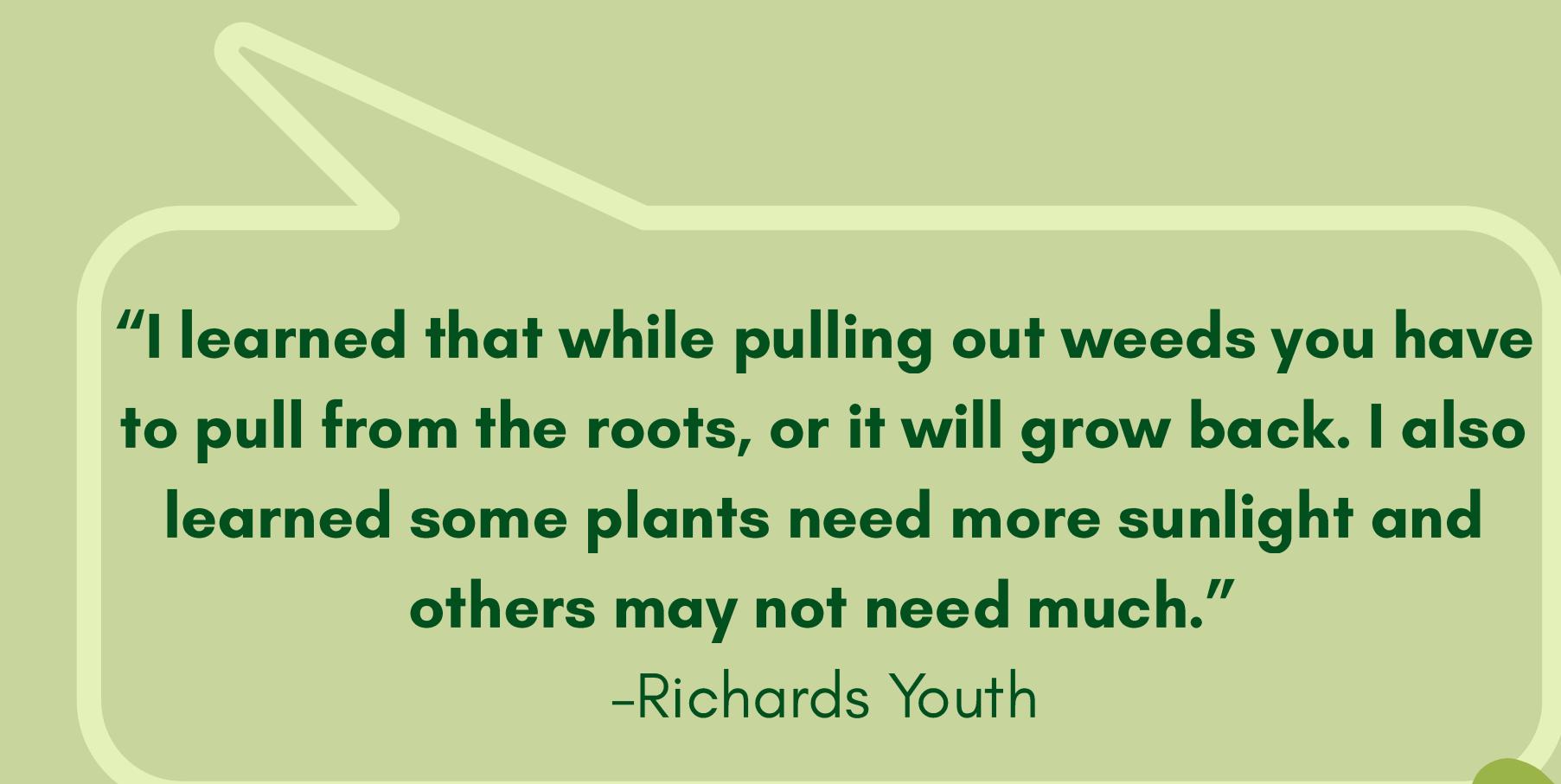


PROGRAM CONTENT: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION



Focused on:

- What an ecosystem is and its components
- Native species, non-native species & invasive species
- Methods of ecological restoration



"I learned that while pulling out weeds you have to pull from the roots, or it will grow back. I also learned some plants need more sunlight and others may not need much."

-Richards Youth



COMMUNITY PARTNERS: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION



Before: "Not good at all."

After: "I love it! It's a fun way to make your community and others look and feel better."

-Orr Youth



Youth used kayaks to explore a unique riparian ecosystem and learn about community-based efforts to transform waterways into wildlife sanctuaries.

Before: "My relationship was pretty neutral because I spent a lot of time outside but not really to help it."

After: "My relationship is strong because I learned a lot about them and helped to improve them."

-Bowen Youth

PROGRAM CONTENT: URBAN FORESTRY



Focus on:

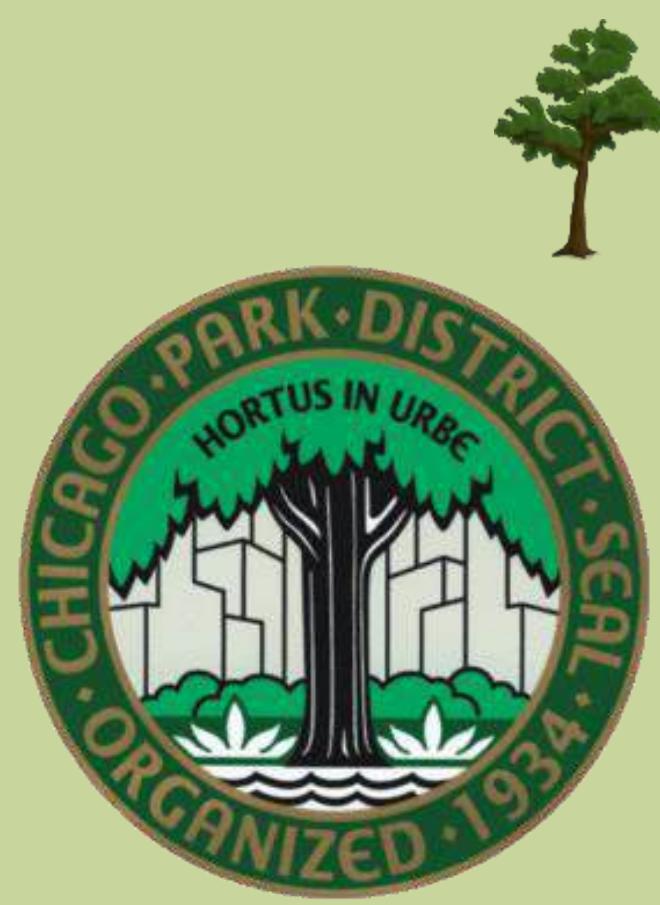
- Tree anatomy and physiology
- Tree identification
- The importance of urban trees
- The challenges urban trees face
- Tree care skills

**"I learn different types
of trees and how to
identify them."**

-Westinghouse Youth

**"I learned what
mulching is and how to
do it - which I loved!"**

-Westinghouse Youth



COMMUNITY PARTNERS: URBAN FORESTRY

Through our partnership with the Chicago Parks District, youth gained hands-on experience in tree identification and care, including mulching.

 **166 TREES MULCHED**





COMMUNITY PARTNERS: URBAN FORESTRY



All youth participated in a forest preserve experience, varying from learning about bird banding and migration, career shares, and exploration of local ecosystems.



PROGRAM CONTENT: NUTRITION

Focus on:

- Understanding difference between whole and processed food
- Practice reading food labels
- Climate friendly practices
- Seasonality of food
- Preparing a dish using whole foods
- Food systems



Throughout the program youth harvested fresh food and learned about the benefits of growing food locally.



Youth utilized cooking kits to prepare nutritious recipes, including cowboy caviar, guacamole, salsa, and smoothies.



Participants explored local restaurants featuring fresh, healthy options and experienced new foods.





PROGRAM CONTENT: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

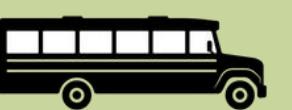
G.E.T. Solutions, with the support of Igniting Excellence Consulting, LLC, developed and facilitated 18 tailored youth training courses at 8 school sites.



The curriculum coupled life skills with an employment skills to help youth put their new skills into practice.

Topics included:

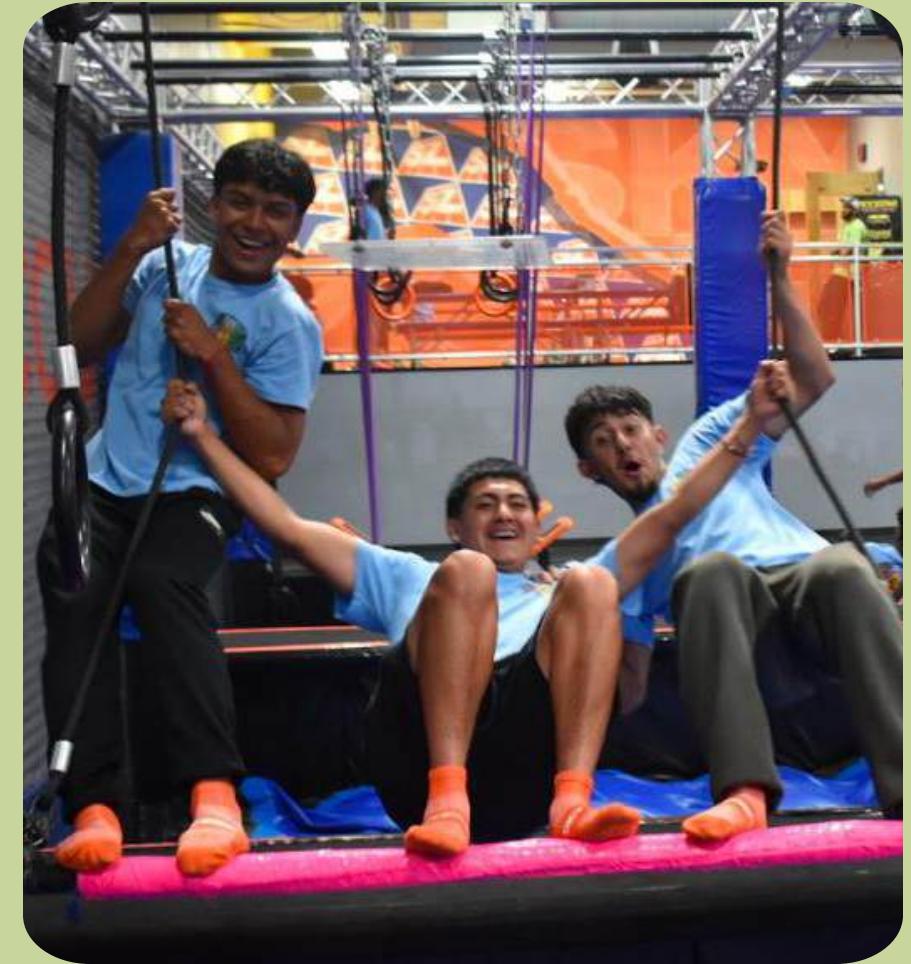
- Teamwork, Collaboration, & Customer Service Minded
- Identity, Self-Image, & Self-Motivation
- Career Readiness: Résumé Writing, Interview Tips, and More



FIELD TRIPS



Additional field trips, shaped by instructor and youth input, helped our youth build their identity and sense of belonging within the broader City of Chicago beyond their own block or community.



END-OF-PROGRAM SHOWCASE

Gratitude to Westinghouse HS for hosting all 9 program groups!



All program participants came together for a day of fun activities aligned with our curriculum, to receive recognition from city officials, and enjoy treats to celebrate their hard work.





POSITIVE OUTCOMES

PROGRAM YOUTH:

- Developed bicycle technical skills
- Practiced life and work readiness skills
- Built identity and agency within the environmental field
- Realized the importance of caring for their community through active participation
- Achieved a sense of belonging contributing to improved mental and physical well-being

...and had a lot of fun along the way!

