



Northern California Region Unites with Organic Farm Enterprise to Provide Transformational Opportunities for Homeless Population



Beth Plevy Wyland | NorCal Regional Office Santa Cruz, CA

A Store Support Coordinator, Beth credits Whole Foods Market being a **mission-driven** company as the reason she has been a Team Member for nearly 12 years. “I am extremely **passionate about serving** my community and translating the focus we have for people and products in store to our larger community,” she says. Working with Homeless Garden Project is an opportunity not only to expand organic produce offerings in Santa Cruz but also to provide job training, transitional employment and support services to community members. Beth secured a second Community First Grant on behalf of Homeless Garden Project after seeing great involvement from Team Members in Capitola and Santa Cruz! She looks forward to **advancing the partnership** through volunteer opportunities and community events which can generate more awareness for the nonprofit and help broaden its reach.

Homeless Garden Project homelessgardenproject.org

The Homeless Garden Project utilizes an organic farm enterprise as a vehicle for providing **transitional employment, job training** and **support services** to individuals experiencing homelessness. They operate an organic 3.5-acre farm in Santa Cruz, where they grow flowers, fruits, herbs and vegetables for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, as well as manage their value-added enterprises. Utilizing an innovative and **holistic transitional employment model**, combining paid work with job- and life-skill training and social work support has enabled more than 90% of current program graduates to secure stable employment and housing within three months of leaving the program. Whole Cities Foundation is honored to support Homeless Garden Project as it helps those experiencing homelessness develop a strong sense of self-worth through meaningful work with food.



Whole Foods Market Team Members can nominate a local nonprofit increasing access to fresh, healthy food or nutrition education for a \$5,000 grant.

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