



NEWS RELEASE

Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation Hosts First-Ever National School Garden Summit

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Educational Programs Established During Four-Day Event to Benefit 2.5 Million Students Nationwide

PHOENIX, April 05, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- In an effort to strengthen and expand school garden-based education in local communities, the **Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation** will host the inaugural **Growing School Gardens Summit**, April 22 through 25 in Denver, Colorado. As the first-ever national gathering focused entirely on school gardens, the Summit will unite over 400 educators and leaders from across the country working to sustain school garden programs at the school, regional and national level. These educators - and the nonprofit organizations they represent - operate learning gardens at over 6,000 school campuses, providing hands-on nutrition, science and academic instruction to an estimated 2.5 million students each year.

"Sprouts is committed to improving children's nutrition education, and we believe our investment in school garden education is one of the best tools available to advance this mission," said Lyndsey Waugh, Executive Director of the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation. "Hosting the Growing School Gardens Summit is an opportunity to level-up our impact by focusing on how we can empower school garden educators, understanding that through this support we will have an even greater and lasting impact on students."

The Summit comes at a time when **evidence backing** the benefits of student participation in school garden programming is leading more schools to invest in the creation of these outdoor learning spaces than ever before.

"The number of organizations using gardens as learning spaces continues to grow each year and, with this, comes a greater demand for teacher training and peer-to-peer learning," said Life Lab Program and Partnerships Director



John Fisher, who is also a co-founder of the School Garden Support Organization Network, a professional learning community of more than 4,500 educators. “The Summit provides this space and also raises awareness for the effectiveness of school gardens in teaching children that establishing healthy eating habits early in life will lead to better health outcomes as they become adults.”

Starting on Earth Day, Friday, April 22, the four-day Summit will have an innovative recipe for learning, including over 115 dynamic workshop sessions and lightning talks led by school garden professionals. There will be field experiences to explore Denver’s robust school garden scene, an Emerging Leaders program to support young professionals in the field, and inspiring networking opportunities designed to leave educators feeling empowered and appreciated in their work. Keynote **Jose Gonzales**, founder and director emeritus of Latino Outdoors will be in attendance, along with special guest **DJ Cavem**, Grammy nominated eco-hiphop artist and culinary climate action ambassador, who will serve as event emcee for a plant-based dinner planned in collaboration with four local student culinary programs.

Centered on a **commitment to equity and inclusivity**, 25% of all attendees are receiving scholarship assistance to remove the financial barrier of attending. In total \$65,000 in scholarships have been awarded with support from **The Republic of Tea**, who has backed Sprouts’ school garden programs since 2018. An all-star committee comprised of 40 individuals, representing 30 organizations, helped shape and create the Summit.

Since its inception in 2015, the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation has granted \$15 million to more than 300 nonprofit partners which have brought hands-on, garden-based learning to 1.5 million children and provided nutrition education programs to an estimated 900,000 K-12 students. Sprouts Farmers Market covers all the Foundation’s operational expenses.

For more information, including a complete schedule of events, roster of core planning team, and additional media assets, visit **schoolgardensummit.org**, or follow **#growingsschoolgardens** on social media.

About Sprouts Farmers Market, Inc.

Sprouts is the place where goodness grows. True to its farm-stand heritage, Sprouts offers a unique grocery experience featuring an open layout with fresh produce at the heart of the store. Sprouts inspires wellness naturally with a carefully curated assortment of better-for-you products paired with purpose-driven people. The healthy grocer continues to bring the latest in wholesome, innovative products made with lifestyle-friendly ingredients such as organic, plant-based and gluten-free. Headquartered in Phoenix, and one of the fastest-growing retailers in the country, Sprouts employs approximately 31,000 team members and operates more than 380 stores in 23 states nationwide. To learn more about Sprouts, and the good it brings communities, visit **about.sprouts.com**.

About Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation

Founded in 2015, the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation aims to inspire, educate, and empower individuals, especially children, to live healthier lives. With a focus on nutrition education and fresh food access, our nonprofit partners teach children both how to grow and prepare fresh foods, as well as why such foods are important to their bodies. Knowing that kids who learn these lessons from a young age are more likely to grow up eating healthier food as adults, we reach children at every stage of development, providing hands-on learning and tasting of fresh fruits and vegetables as they grow. Sprouts Farmers Market covers all of the operational expenses of the Foundation, ensuring that every dollar raised goes directly to programming.

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Plant the Seed - Nashville, TN

Plant the Seed, a nonprofit teaching school garden education in the Metro Nashville Public School District, serves 1,100 young people each week through its school and community garden programs. © Plant the Seed – Nashville, TN

UT Austin College of Natural Science's TX Sprouts Program – Austin, TX

Undergraduate students from the College of Natural Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin, teach hands-on nutrition classes in Austin area elementary schools gardens, helping bring nutrition education to life for children. © UT Austin College of Natural Science's TX Sprouts Program – Austin, TX

Source: SFM, LLC d/b/a Sprouts Farmers Market