

# 2024 AMA Garden Studio: Community Garden Impact Report

This summer, our nonprofit launched a 12-week Community Garden Program designed to bring children, parents, and neighbours together through hands-on learning, environmental stewardship, and shared connection. What began as a simple idea—teaching kids to grow food from seed—quickly became a vibrant weekly gathering place where families dug, planted, learned, and built lasting memories.

Each week, children explored a new theme in the garden, from soil science and companion planting to water conservation, healthy eating, pollinators, and the importance of patience in nature. Our curriculum blended environmental education, literacy, cultural teachings, and practical gardening skills. Children planted seeds with care, tended their beds, learned new vocabulary, explored biodiversity, and developed a genuine sense of ownership over the space.

The garden soon grew into more than a learning site. It became a hub of connection, where parents and caregivers came together to support one another, pray together, enjoy tea, and build community.



## Attendance and Participation

- A minimum of 5 families and 10 children attended every week.
- Some weeks drew as many as 18 families, often with multiple children each, gathering to learn and grow together.
- Over 12 weeks, dozens of children engaged directly with the garden, while many more parents and neighbours participated informally through weekly gatherings, conversations, and community support.





### Program Highlights

Our weekly sessions fostered curiosity, teamwork, and environmental literacy. A few examples include:

- **Soil Detectives (Week 1):** Children explored soil types, learned how soil supports plant life, and helped build and fill the garden beds themselves.
- **Garden Friends (Week 2):** Kids learned about plant companionship, gentle planting techniques, and caring for young seedlings with intentionality and respect.
- **Team Garden Designers (Week 3):** Children created garden layouts using natural materials, learning about biodiversity, sunlight, and plant needs.
- **Planting Days (Weeks 3–4):** Families planted spinach, garlic, beans, peas, herbs, and more—working row by row in coordinated teams.
- **Nourish from the Garden (Week 5):** Children explored recipes, nutrition, and healthy eating, connected the harvest to family meals, and learned watering techniques before enjoying a chai gathering with parents.
- **Pollinators, Pests, and Garden Science (Later Weeks):** Kids observed insects, studied water movement in plants, tested DIY irrigation tools, and built simple insect habitats from natural materials.

Across the program, the garden served as a living classroom where families experienced the joy of growing food together and deepened their connection to the land and to one another.





### Community Impact

The garden provided meaningful benefits to children, parents, and the broader neighbourhood:

- **Hands-on environmental education** accessible to families of all backgrounds.
- **Opportunities for families to gather weekly**, building trust, friendships, and a sense of belonging.
- **Cultural grounding and spiritual reflection**, including shared duas, gratitude circles, and teachings that honoured both faith and nature.
- **Health and wellness promotion**, from active outdoor play to healthy eating lessons.
- **Intergenerational participation**, as parents and children worked side-by-side, learning and teaching together.

By the end of the season, kids had not only grown vegetables—they had grown confidence, community connection, and curiosity.





### Looking Ahead: Sustainability and Expansion

This is an ongoing project, and we are eagerly looking forward to reopening the garden next spring. With additional funding and sustained community support, we plan to expand the number of garden beds, increase program capacity, and introduce more culturally grounded curriculum throughout the season.

We are also committed to strengthening the garden's long-term sustainability. Over the coming year, our goals include:

- **Installing an irrigation system** to reduce manual watering demands and improve plant health.
- **Implementing rain-capture infrastructure** to conserve water and support a more resilient garden ecosystem.
- **Introducing solar-powered systems** to move the site toward net-zero energy use.
- **Securing a permanent, dedicated location** for the garden, allowing us to build continuity, expand programming, and deepen our long-term community impact.

Our vision is a self-sustaining, culturally grounded community garden that nourishes families, strengthens neighbourhood ties, and teaches future generations the value of caring for the earth.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every family, volunteer, donor, and partner who contributed to this year's success. Together, we grew far more than plants—we grew community.