

Seeding Hope

“Sustainable Lives and Sustainable Communities”



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Executive Summary

Pro-Vision has been in the business of cultivating hope and purpose for twenty years. We have pursued this goal by creating programs that address the specific needs of young men of color growing up in drastically underserved neighborhoods of Houston, and with needs that are immense and varied. Seeding Hope as a program is the flowering of a seed that was planted in the beginning of the organization – a desire to empower the community as a whole one child at a time.

The Urban Farm is the principal component of Seeding Hope, and consists of several acres of cultivated farm land on the Pro-Vision campus. Currently, ½ an acre of land has been converted to crop rows that produce a wide variety of produce. These crop rows will be harvested three times a year. In addition, the Urban Farm will include honey production harvested twice a year, and an orchard that produces figs, limes, and other fruits. Over the next 5 years, Pro-Vision hopes to expand crop row production to 3 acres, triple the number of trees in the orchard, and double honey production from 2 hives to 4. All farm operations are supervised by a professional horticulturalist.

Preparing young people for the 21st century work force is one of the primary goals of the Seeding Hope Project. Through their work on the farm, participants are guided through every aspect of becoming a responsible worker and valued member of the community, and are taught a number of important skills such as marketing, accounting, sustainable land use practices, and design. Even if participants do not enter these

vocations, these skills will be applicable in a range of endeavors professionally and personally. The second and equally important goal of Seeding Hope is to provide a source of nutritious and affordable produce to the elderly and poor in the Houston community. Produce from the farm will be sold at the Pro-Vision farmer's markets and to local grocers. A portion of the produce will also be donated to the elderly and less fortunate in Houston.

It is the goal of Pro-Vision for the Seeding Hope program to produce and sell enough output to be self sustaining by 2013. In order to achieve this goal, Pro-Vision will need to expand current crop row production to 3 acres, double honey production, and triple orchard production. In order to expand, we are currently pursuing an additional \$300,000 for equipment, supplies, and personnel.

Pro-Vision believes the Seeding Hope Project will be a model for community revitalization and organization self-sustainability that others will want to replicate. The benefit to youth through building confidence by creating a successful business model will be invaluable to the youth themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods. Therefore we know that anyone who invests will be making a sound investment in the future of Houston and beyond.

Pro-Vision's Mission

Pro-Vision has been in the business of cultivating hope and purpose for twenty years. We have pursued this goal by creating programs that address the specific needs of young men of color, growing up in drastically underserved neighborhoods of Houston and with needs that are immense and varied. It is easy to get overwhelmed by the enormity of the problems that these young people face. But instead of focusing on the multiple causes for the academic, emotional and social deficits we see in these young people, Pro-Vision has been guided by what can be accomplished.



After two decades of working with these young men, we have developed a range of programs aimed at equipping them with the intellectual, emotional and social skills that are the key to long term personal fulfillment. The goal has never been to remove youngsters from their surrounding, but

rather we have focused on launching confident, competent, and positive young men who are equipped with the self knowledge and self esteem to live purpose filled lives no matter where they land. Seeding Hope is a program that embraces Pro-Vision's dual focus on individuals and communities. Seeding Hope is a program that touches every aspect of Pro-Vision's mission, and as a result deepens the overall meaning and the impact of the organization's efforts.

Program Description

The Urban Farm will consist of three acres of cultivated farm land on the 21 acre campus occupied by Pro-Vision and will be harvested three times a year. In addition, the Urban Farm will include honey production harvested twice a year. The yield from the Urban Farm will be sold at monthly Farmer's Markets, seasonal Festivals, and through local food distributors. Revenue generated from the sale of produce will allow the Seeding Hope Project programs to become self-sustaining by 2013. A portion of the revenue from sales will be set aside in a scholarship fund for program participants. Additionally, some of the produce will be donated in-kind to the elderly and less fortunate in Houston.



Seeding Hope Project will teach the value of positive community engagement and the importance of allocating resources for self sufficiency. The program is also an important vehicle for teaching critical aspects of business and modern agriculture. Currently, the Urban Farm is overseen by a certified horticulturalist who works with the

organization's leaders to create meaningful connections between the farm, local growers, and the Sunnyside Community.

Program Impact

Pro-Vision is in the business of shaping both individuals and a community that are self sustaining through its own efforts. These two goals are complementary. The Urban Farm will provide a steady stream of revenue for Pro-Vision, allowing it to be less dependent on outside sources. Similarly, the young men who work in every aspect of the Seeding Hope Project will learn skills and concepts that will contribute to their own ability to create sustainable lives. The community is supported by the young men it helps to shape.

Preparing the 21st Century Workforce

Preparing young people for the 21st century work force is one of the primary goals of the Seeding Hope Project. Understanding the lack of adult interaction with which these young people must contend, Pro-Vision has developed a job training



program that focuses on marketable skills. Unlike most job training programs, Seeding Hope does not operate under the “sink or swim” principle. Instead, participants are guided through every aspect of becoming a responsible worker and valued member of the community. Throughout the year, Urban Farm participants receive continuous feedback

from mentors who assess individual progress weekly. As a result, set-backs become productive lessons rather than a path to failure that becomes familiar with repetition.

The Seeding Hope Project will also link individuals to the neighborhood by demonstrating the value of community service and healthy living and a sense of confidence in the ability to change one's environment. The Urban Farm focuses on developing social skills, work habits, and a level of decision making skill that leads to long term success. Among other skills, the program will teach basic technical skills in marketing, accounting, and horticulture. Even if participants do not enter these vocations, these skills will be applicable in a range of endeavors professionally and personally.

Crime Prevention

Pro-Vision's very existence in this neighborhood has had a dramatic impact on crime rates. Research conducted by the Trust for Public Land offers definitive proof that crime drops when adequate parks and recreational activities are available in inner-city neighborhoods.¹ The Trust also found that proximity to open green space increases property values.

Increasing Access to Healthy Food

Sunnyside has been identified as a neighborhood with poor food security, making it difficult for individuals to find and purchase healthy food. Pro-Vision seeks to

¹ Healing America's Cities: Why We Must Invest in Urban Parks. Trust for Public Lands. 1994.

ameliorate this problem by offering fresh produce from the Urban Farm through local food suppliers, a Farmer's Market, and in kind donations to the less fortunate.

Combating Childhood Obesity



Pro-Vision's constituency of adolescents from low income households, combined with its location in the Sunnyside neighborhood, provide a unique opportunity through the Urban Farm for combating

the epidemic of childhood obesity that has had a disproportionately negative impact on minority youth. It is a simple and disturbing fact that persons of lower socioeconomic status, and particularly minorities, are overrepresented in the ranks of the overweight and obese.² There are several factors that contribute to this relationship, including a lack of knowledge about nutrition and lack of access to nutritional foods.³ Quality fruits and vegetables are expensive, and fast food and snacks are cheap, making low income families more likely to make poor food decisions.⁴ The Urban Farm also has the added benefit of combating obesity by increasing physical activity.

² American Obesity Association

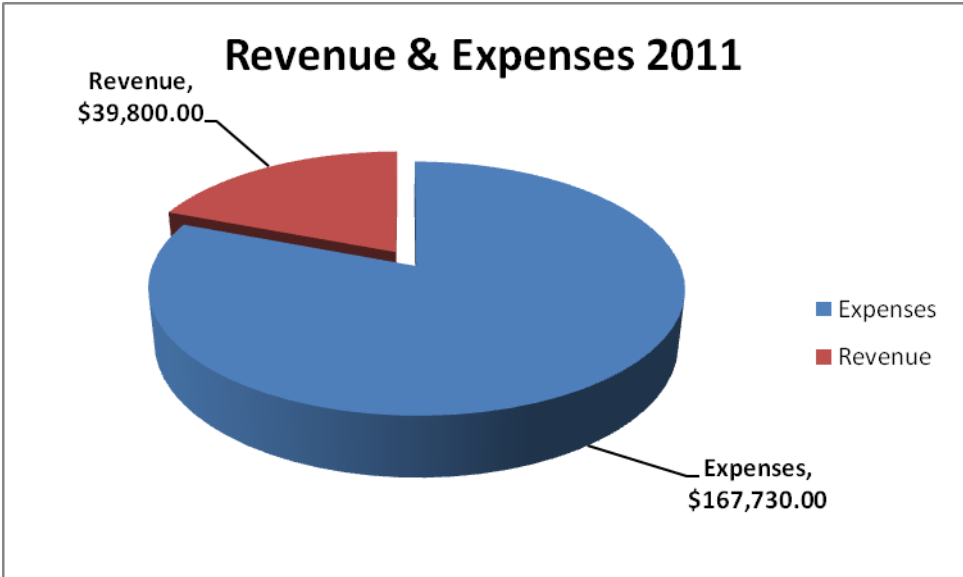
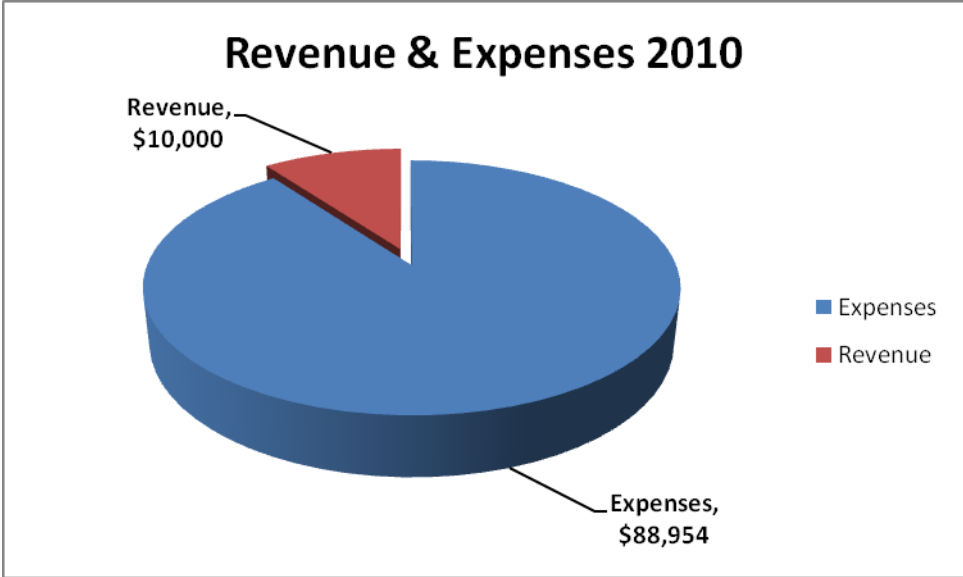
http://obesity1.tempdomainname.com/subs/fastfacts/Obesity_Minority_Pop.shtml Accessed May 31, 2010

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 22 November 2005

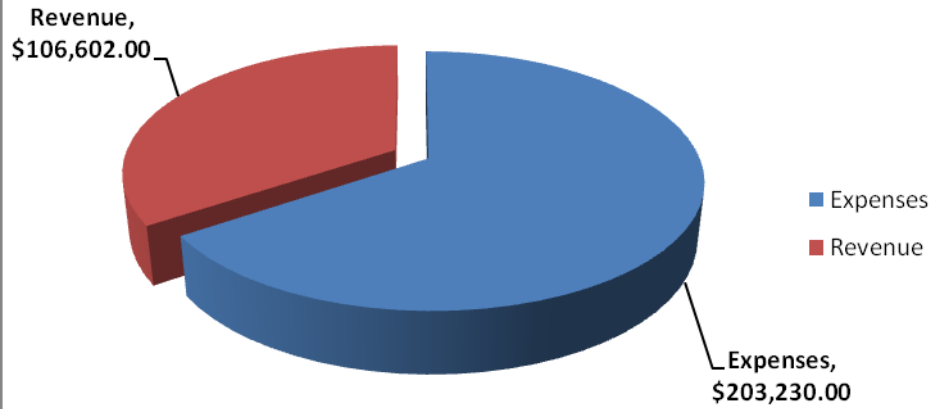
<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/1000152/index.html> Accessed May 31, 2010

⁴ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. ("Policy Basics: Introduction to the Food Stamp Program," May 6, 2010 <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=2226>) Accessed May 31, 2010.

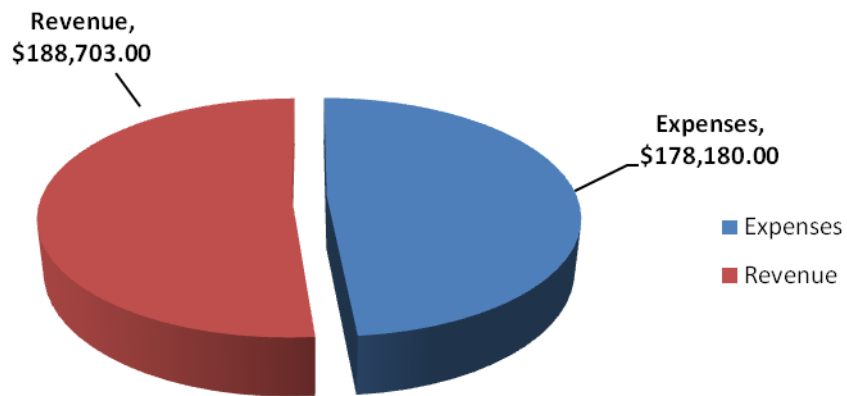
Financials



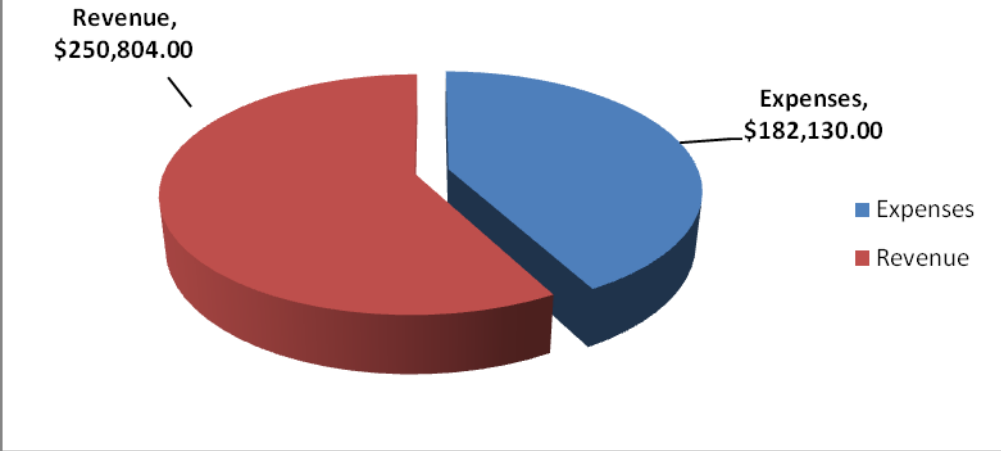
Revenue & Expenses 2012



Revenue & Expenses 2013



Revenue & Expenses 2014



Conclusion

Pro-Vision believes the Seeding Hope Project will be a model for community revitalization and organization self-sustainability that others will want to replicate. The benefit to youth through building confidence by creating a successful business model will be invaluable to the youth themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods. Therefore we know that our community partners will be making a sound investment in the future of Houston and beyond.

Appendix A

Pro-Vision, Inc. Urban Farm Budget

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Expenses					
Personnel	35,000	96,000	120,000	122,000	125,000
Supplies	16,450	50,800	43,000	42,650	42,650
Sheds/Barns	32,000	10,000	-	-	-
Equipment	2,000	4,000	30,000	2,500	2,500
Maintenance	1,100	2,250	2,750	2,750	2,750
Fuel	500	2,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Bee Farm	1,895	2,680	3,480	4,280	5,230
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<u>88,945</u>	<u>167,730</u>	<u>203,230</u>	<u>178,180</u>	<u>182,130</u>
Revenue					
<i>Total Revenue</i>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>39,800</u>	<u>106,602</u>	<u>188,703</u>	<u>250,804</u>
Balance	-78,945.00	-127,930.00	-96,628.00	10,523.00	68,674.00