

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



## A WORD FROM GOFM'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It continues to be a thrilling privilege to watch the scope and impact of GOFM grow with each calendar year. I've finally wised up a bit and stopped saying, "After this year, I think we'll take a pause on growing any bigger."

It finally clicked for me— as long as we grow intentionally, make decisions with integrity and stay grounded to our bottom line at the same time as dreaming up a bigger arm's reach, then why wouldn't we keep growing if our growth is rooted in responding to need?

I'm most proud of the gaggle of tremendously talented, intuitive, kind and savvy people who make up GOFM's team. They've watched (and continue to watch) me learn how to do my job with each passing season; they inspire me (just wait till you read the killer work they've done this past year), provide me grace (bushels and bushels of it), and galvanize me into bringing more people, more partners, more funding, more eaters and more believers into our big ol' mixing bowl. But when you consider what we've been up to, the believin' is easy. In 2023:

- I witnessed folks turn from strangers into fast friends as they spent hours discussing which native plant in our 'Plants for the People' giveaway at market was just right for their yard;
- I absorbed more hugs than I can count from Ball High's Life Skills students with every visit to the new CultivaTOR garden build in partnership with the Ball High Tor Store program;
- I watched my staff cry as they awarded "Turnip the Most," "Dig Deep" & "Golden Grub" awards to their dearest volunteer friends who put up tents, pull weeds & bake lasagnas;
- I delighted in children racing around our McGuire Dent Victory Garden after the "Pollen in Love with Pollinators" event, trying to best each other's ability to identify new bugs;
- I cried watching our high-school SEED interns stand on a stage at market to publicly share their personal stories of how they'd grown and present their new knowledge on Gulf Coast growing seasons, the local food system, environmental racism, and the power of plants to center your mind;

The impact of GOFM isn't the only thing that keeps growing- our gratitude for those who share our love of food, nature and their ability to connect any and all types of folks is ever-expanding. And I see no end in sight.



**CASEY MCAULIFFE**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**









**Galveston's Own  
FARMERS MARKET**

# OUR MISSION

To build and sustain a local food community through a vibrant, producers-only marketplace, improved food access, and educational programming







## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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# STAFF



**Casey McAuliffe**

Executive Director

**Mercedes Pang**

Director of Operations

**Cody Wright**

Director of Finance

**Honi Alexander**

Young Gardeners Program Director

**Keaton Argubright**

Gardens Manager

**Caitlin Townsend**

Community Engagement  
Coordinator

**Varsha Kumar**

Market Manager

**Amy Argubright**

Young Gardeners Program  
Coordinator


**Janna Pate**

Deputy Gardens Manager

**Denise Walker**

Real Food Project Coordinator





It's my happy place! If I'm not there, people check on me. GOFM is Church in the very best sense of what it means to go to Church.

It's every Sunday morning and I roll up to Galveston's Own Farmers Market with my shopping bag and empty mug. The most welcoming volunteers greet me like family.

The community tent is filled with kids, volunteers and Galvestonians. The music from the stage has kids dancing. Everyone is smiling. I stake my claim to fresh honey, crisp veggies, tamales, and croissants. Galveston's Own Farmers Market is a place to commune and connect over locally sourced food.

GOFM is the heartbeat of the community and an integral part of my week.

**WENDY MORGAN**  
LONGTIME CUSTOMER, LOCAL  
BUSINESS OWNER



# FARMERS MARKET

Galveston Historical Foundation heroically shared their “Depot on Market” space with us in 2022 as a welcoming home for our weekly farmers market operations.

Since then, we’ve introduced 10+ new activities/events at market with community partners, including “Buy Nothing” swaps, free public salsa lessons and Toy & Hygiene Supply Drives for local schools & hospitals.



22,714

Total Market Visitors

14

New Vendors

84

jobs created or supported by our network of 48 vendors

## The Place to Be...

GOFM debuted the ‘Craft Artisan Corner’ featuring local artists/artisans & held over 50 partnered activities at market to educate, entertain & energize our community:



Plants for the People



Once Upon a Story Thyme



YGP Veggie Patch



Pop-Up Rosenberg Library





# MARKET VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

## *Corduroy Coffee*

If you've ever been to the market and needed a caffeine boost, you knew Corduroy Coffee had your back.

Kevin & Kaiya, the masterminds behind the cute little teal trailer, started with a small booth at the market – slinging cold brew, lattes, and their freshly roasted beans when weather permitted.

As time went on, the duo built a transportable trailer that they could take to events, to the market, AND solidified a set location where folks can get their addicting liquid energy on most days of the week.

For us at GOFM, it's a rewarding moment to see a vendor grow and to provide a space where they can practice and share their craft with the community.

Follow Corduroy Coffee on social media:  
[instagram.com/corduroycoffeeandclay](https://www.instagram.com/corduroycoffeeandclay)





# FOOD ACCESS PROGRAMS

## MARKETMATCH

**\$17,763**

SNAP/MarketMatch funds spent on fresh, local food by food-insecure individuals/families

SNAPBUCKS	BONUSBUCKS	FRESHBUCKS
\$9,170	\$4,748	\$3,845



## FRESHBOX

**575**

FreshBox deliveries made

**2,300**

Meals made from FreshBox ingredients

**3,563**

pounds of locally grown, fresh fruits, vegetables, proteins & bread provided FREE to local families experiencing food insecurity



This year, we added the USDA's Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program which serves income-restricted seniors over the age of 60+ by offering \$50 vouchers to buy produce & honey at the market for FREE.


**70%**

Redemption rate for WIC Vouchers

**83%**

Redemption Rate for Senior Vouchers





"Delivering Freshbox was such an astounding experience. I absolutely love to serve my Community and being a part of families having a Farm to Table experience is priceless.

Hand delivering to each family I was given the opportunity to express my love and gratitude of nourishment in each "Freshbox" which impacted me for a lifetime. Thank you GOFM for allowing me to Community with YOU!"

**MARY WILLIAMS,**  
*FRESHBOX VOLUNTEER*



# YOUNG GARDENERS PROGRAM (YGP)

400+

Children Enrolled  
in SY 22-23

4,000 +

Lbs of veggies harvested  
in school gardens

6

Eat Fresh Days  
in SY22-23

1,959

Total Kids Fed During  
Eat Fresh Days!



## Growing Our Youth

### Milestones

- Won \$200k USDA Farm 2 School grant to support enrichment of all GOFM's garden-based activities (YGP, Eat Fresh Days, new curriculum for school day, etc.)
- Added Ball High CultivaTOR garden to pilot dynamic school-day use of gardens as outdoor classrooms, learning tools & spaces for mental wellness among students & staff. From Sept--Dec 2023, the gardens were used by over 250 students during the academic school day!
- Developed partnership with UTMB School of Public & Population Health to co-execute multiple tiers of surveying the experiences and knowledge gained by YGP students





# More YGP Milestones...

YGP staff grew with the hiring of a Program Coordinator to support the expanding school day-use operations of YGP gardens, write curriculum focused on TEKS-standards & SEL support & support the growing SEED internship!



All 9 sites debuted 'Veggie Patch' stands at the Sunday GOFM market, selling their own school-grown produce to the public! 4 YGP sites held their own campus garden markets, selling veggies to staff/parents.



Expanded our Students for Eco-Empowerment & Diversity (SEED) paid summer high school internships in partnership with national org, EcoRise. Held 2 internship cycles for 15 teens from Galveston high schools







# REAL FOOD PROJECT (RFP)

20

Cooking  
Classes

32

Community  
Meals

## Feeding Our Community

2178

People fed at  
Community Meals




## Milestones:

- Rebooted the monthly community meals for Galveston Housing Authority's Gulf Breeze Apartments residents (had been suspended since COVID)
- Collaborated with 6 local chef instructors on classes, 13 community partnerships
- Average impact of community meals grew from 30 people to 70 people served per meal!







“Is there a greater gift than cultivating  
the hearts of our children and  
empowering them to appreciate and love  
the world around them?”

GOFM inspires our students to take  
ownership of their world and in doing so,  
their future.”

**ROB LEWIS**  
*BALL HIGH TOR STORE*



# VICTORY GARDENS PROGRAM (VGP)

**2,191**

Pounds of food harvested

**69**

# of Food Distribution Days

**8,191**

Total Square Footage of Garden Beds at VGP, YGP, & new Ball High CultivaTOR Pilot Garden!

**6,191**

Total pounds harvested from all gardens

## Milestones:

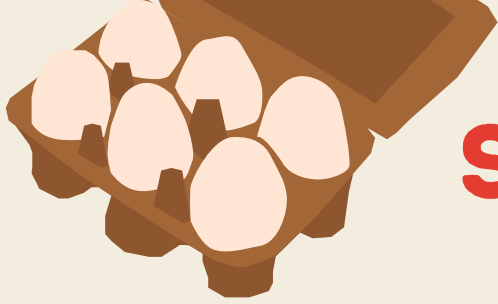
Held first-ever 'Pollen in Love with Pollinators' community workshop in the McGuire Dent Victory Garden at Menard Park, led by GOFM Board Secretary Christopher Smith Gonzalez! (40 community member attendants!)



## Building Food Spaces







# SPECIAL EGGSTRAS

Won 3 year \$300k federal USDA  
Farmers Market Promotion  
Program grant to support vendor  
recruitment/training operations at  
market, marketing campaigns and  
more!

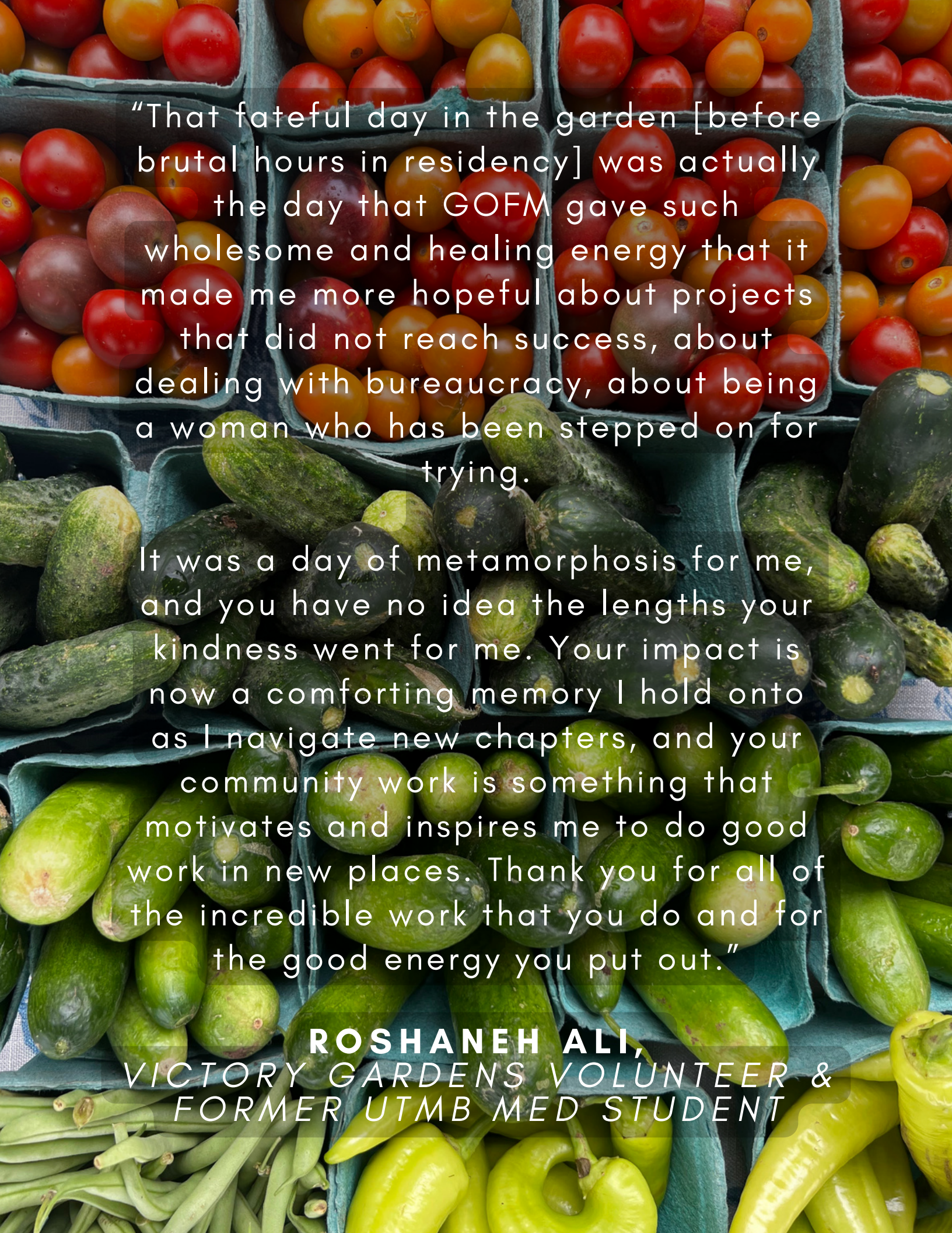


Brought 2 pivotal GOFM  
staff from part-time to  
FULL-TIME! (Director of  
Finance and Market  
Manager!)

Won 'Best Farmers Market in  
Galveston County' as part of  
Galveston County Daily News  
Reader's Choice awards







"That fateful day in the garden [before brutal hours in residency] was actually the day that GOFM gave such wholesome and healing energy that it made me more hopeful about projects that did not reach success, about dealing with bureaucracy, about being a woman who has been stepped on for trying.

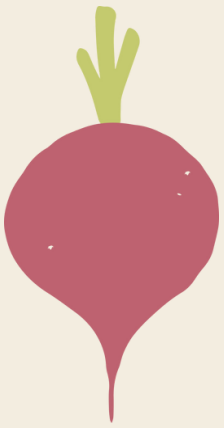
It was a day of metamorphosis for me, and you have no idea the lengths your kindness went for me. Your impact is now a comforting memory I hold onto as I navigate new chapters, and your community work is something that motivates and inspires me to do good work in new places. Thank you for all of the incredible work that you do and for the good energy you put out."

**ROSHANEH ALI,**  
VICTORY GARDENS VOLUNTEER &  
FORMER UTMB MED STUDENT



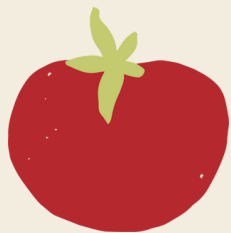
# LEARNING EXPERIENCES

We live, we learn, we grow. Trying, failing & trying again are all part of the process for us at GOFM-- here are a few things that we grew from in 2023!



We cancelled the 'Grub Grab' pilot initiative providing healthy snacks to Central Middle School alongside partners The Future Is Us & UTMB School of Public & Population Health. There wasn't enough direct funding or staff bandwidth to support this awesome project---*for now*.

After 3+ years, we sunsetted our beloved FreshBox program. The most urgent instigating factor (COVID-19) had waned & direct funding had tapered all while staff was juggling more and more projects. We're exploring what a reboot with more partners could look like in the future...



After assessing the low membership among GOFM's Backyard Growers Cooperative, we realized we hadn't given adequate focused attention to marketing & recruiting for this initiative. GOFM's new full-time Market Manager has it as a top priority for 2024!





# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

**425+**

Total volunteers across all of our programs

**145**

Total People Who  
Donated to GOFM

**68**

'Friends of GOFM'  
Donors who gave \$60+  
to General Fund

**17**

'Friends of GOFM'  
Sponsors who gave  
\$1000+ to General Fund

**\$68,956**

Total Friends &  
Sponsorship Donations

**\$57,852**

Net funds raised by  
9th annual OkraFest

**\$554,764**

Grant funds awarded in 2023





**Galveston's Own  
FARMERS MARKET**



**CELEBRATE GOOD  
FOOD FOR ALL.**



Scan the QR code to learn more about GOFM or visit [galvestonsownfarmersmarket.com](http://galvestonsownfarmersmarket.com)