



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Serving the Bayview Hunters Point Community since 1998



Who would've thought that 22 years after Literacy for Environmental Justice was founded there would be intense rioting in the streets of our country protesting police brutality and systemic racism? Who would've thought that the healing work LEJ does would be more needed than ever in the tumultuous chaos that is the year 2020?

LEJ remains true to connecting youth to the land by showing them how to grow native plants and restore local urban open spaces. There's so much they learn about the history of the community and other communities like Southeast San Francisco in the process. They learn about what environmental justice is and how their voices are so important as advocates on local issues. LEJ is at a point where we are reflecting on our roots and checking in on how we are staying true to our mission.

OUR ROOTS: In 1998 I was approached by Dana Lanza in our little storefront on Innes Avenue. Dana said she wanted to teach the youth of Bayview Hunters Point about environmental justice issues in their own neighborhood. The organization I was part of, the Southeast Alliance for Environmental Justice, mostly conducted outreach to adults and focused on stopping a new power plant, along with identifying toxic sites in the neighborhood, and became LEJ's fiscal sponsor. But Dana recognized the healing of a community depends so much on reaching and educating the youth. The early work with the youth focused on education about toxic sites, food security and quickly shifted to becoming stewards of Heron's Head Park. A big focus also included advocacy work to shut down the Hunters Point power plant and pivoted by embarking on a monumental task of building San Francisco's first off-grid building, The EcoCenter at Heron's Head Park in the shadow of the former power plant. This building is now owned and maintained by the Port of San Francisco and SF Recreation and Parks manages. During construction, LEJ also seized an opportunity to set-up a native plant nursery and become the stewards of Candlestick Point State Recreation Area. LEJ has built out six campsites at Candlestick which can be reserved through the California State Parks. LEJ has hosted youth campouts along with kayaking adventures with LEJ's fleet of kayaks right in our coastal waters of San Francisco Bay. If you're in need of some inspiration, watch this video. LEJ's reputation for cultivating native plants and conducting restoration has also led to establishing a native plant nursery on Treasure Island to support the restoration there and on Yerba Buena Island.

NOW: As you can see, LEJ's history has been richly filled with education, advocacy and infrastructure project development. And today is no different as we look at a sizable project ahead of us with the expansion of the native plant nursery at Candlestick. This capital improvement project will more than double the capacity of the current nursery, will create more community garden beds, will create a central hub for learning for the community, volunteer groups and LEJ's staff and Eco-Apprentices.

This past year we had to make some tough decisions with staffing in order to see a path to stronger financial health and we are, indeed, on more solid ground. I am always amazed at what our little non-profit is able to accomplish despite spells of turbulent waters throughout the years. Recent challenges with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have, in some instances, created new opportunities. LEJ will be a team member for the SFUSD's Community Learning Hubs initiative to support low-income youth who have a tough time in the distance learning equation.

This work is not possible without the generous commitment of our funding partners and donors, many late nights of our amazing staff and board members, and the sweat of many volunteers and Eco Apprentices. Today is our opportunity to focus forward together to actualize the completion of the nursery expansion. Today is the time to build on the workforce development program to support the education and advancement of the youth and staff of LEJ. And today is the time for us to remember healing can happen when handfuls of dirt sift through the hands of our youth as they are planting seedlings.

Peace through justice,

Wendy

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People of LEJ

Our Mission

LEJ promotes ecological health, environmental stewardship, and community development in Southeast San Francisco by creating urban greening, eco-literacy, community stewardship and workforce development opportunities that directly engage and support local residents in securing a healthier future.



Seed Collecting



I didn't know that I could lead people but LEJ gave me the opportunity to have this leadership experience. I think that a good leader is also a good follower. LEJ believes in and supports me.

Chantelle Hernandez
Nursery Eco-Apprentice Crew Lead,
Celebrating one year with LEJ



Transplanting Seedlings

Young Adult Eco-Apprentices

The Eco-Apprentice Program is a paid internship opportunity for young adults to develop professional skills and access career pathways in the environmental sector.

Eco-Apprentices make all of our work at LEJ possible, from growing over 70,000 native plants in the nursery to providing environmental education programs to approximately 2,000 public school youth and volunteers.

LEJ's Young Adult Eco-Apprentices facilitate Environmental Education programming for impactful peer to peer learning. In 2019, we launched our Programs Eco-Apprenticeship. The program divides the Eco-Apprentices' time between Urban Greening initiatives and Environmental Education programs.





Plant Care
Yerba Buena Island



City College of San Francisco
Community Garden Volunteers



Environmental
Education
Sunrise Point

Young Adult Eco-Apprentices

The Eco-Apprentice Nursery team has been very focused on growing plants for the Yerba Buena Island restoration project. They've made big improvements to the nursery on the island by building tables and installing irrigation.

Additionally, the team has been ramping up their best management practices to prevent the spread of plant diseases, like Phytophthora Ramorum (Sudden Oak Death). At the Candlestick Nursery, we're growing plants that will be planted at Yosemite Slough next year.

**Eco-Apprentices interned
for 6,470 hours this year.**

6,470



Young Adult Eco-Apprentices



It feels good that we were able to stay on track and not have any extreme issues in light of COVID-19. When the Shelter-in-Place first started, I felt guilty toward the Eco-Apprentices because I knew it wouldn't be as fun without volunteers around and that every day might start to feel the same. But when I actually talked to them about it, they'd say that they love working here being around everyone else. They were grateful to have the opportunity to work right now when so many people can't work.

Mandy, Nursery Manager



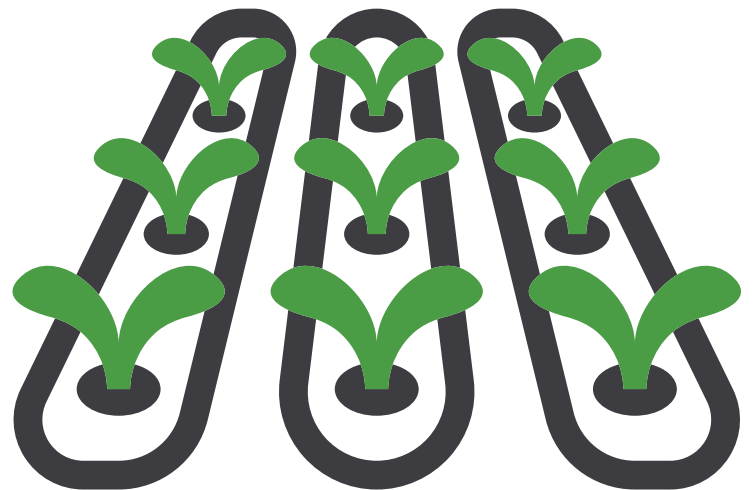
**Bird Counting
Candlestick Park**



**City College of San Francisco
Volunteers**

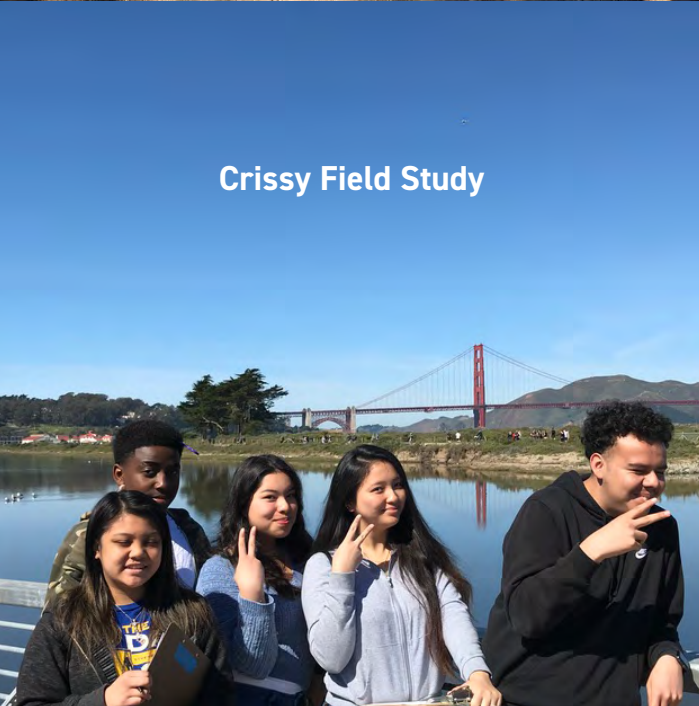


**LEJ supporting BLM
Bayview Hunters Point**





Greenagers Camping Trip



Crissy Field Study



Kayaking in San Francisco Bay

High School Eco-Apprentices

During the summer of 2019, LEJ hosted the Summer Youth Leadership Academy, co-facilitated by one of LEJ's Young Adult Eco-Apprentices. This was a 5-week paid summer academy with Greenaction and 10 youth from Bayview Hunters Point. These youth met 3 days a week, including a Sustainability Summit Camping and Kayaking weekend. Youth participated in activities such as:

- 2 public speaking engagements at BMagic and the EJ Task Force
- Education on air pollution
- 40 hours of community outreach
- Civic engagement
- Piloting community air monitoring project
- ID pollution problems
- Learning about and routinely using the IVAN air monitoring network

Youth gained valuable knowledge about environmental injustices in their community. Youth also learned about the role of plants, stewardship, and advocacy in addressing air quality issues.



I don't really know for sure what I want to be when I grow up. All I know is that I have many options to choose from and environment is one of my choices... Regardless of what my choice may be, I will always have a love for nature and the environment around me; I will seek other programs like this in the future.

Xyra, Age 17

Bret Harte
Elementary
School



“

I don't want to go back to school.
When can we come back?

Destiny, Age 11

I could do this all day -
this is fun!!

Josaiah, Age 10

Eco-Adventures

LEJ brings youth together from public schools, after school programs, and other youth organizations to camp, kayak, practice environmental stewardship, and learn about community health and environmental justice in San Francisco.

Over 30 youth camped at Sunrise point during programs this year, and had a transformational time learning with the land. For several youth this was their first time to camp outdoors and their first time away from home.

All Eco-Adventures contain opportunities for working with plants and participating in engaging exercises with LEJ youth like our Wild in the City Mapping Activity and Principles of Environmental Justice Board. Our participants walk away with a whole spectrum of hands-on learning experiences at Candlestick. Some even realize how important their contribution is to the care of the park, so they return for LEJ programming year after year.

“

I enjoyed kayaking in the water, cooking with the other campers, and making smores around the fire. Would definitely camp again!!

Greenagers Camper, Age 14

Camping
Sunrise Point





Camping Sunrise Point



Camping & Art
Sunrise Point



Kayaking Jack Rabbit Beach

Eco-Adventures

The LEJ Programs Team is collaborating with All Hands D-10, SFUSD schools, SF Rec and Park, and other community organizers to develop scaffolded experiences for youth from Pre-K to high school graduation. Additionally, LEJ has been working to create interpretive educational panels and signage for use in the park and at the Nursery and Community Garden.

In response to COVID-19, LEJ has not held community programs since March of 2020. We are working with community stakeholders to determine how programs will adapt to necessary health guidelines when public programming is safe to open.



I love being in the water with my best friend Azucena! We got to see a seal popping its head out of the water. That soil city was great! I learned a lot about flooding and topography; how that impacts people in different ways.

Eco-Adventure Participant



An Interview with Abigail Alfonso, LEJ's Community Programs Coordinator

What were some of your earliest or most memorable experiences connecting with nature?

One of my earliest memories was in 3rd grade as an inner city kid at Visitacion Valley. My after school program, called Waterfront by the YMCA, took us on a bus to ocean beach to do clean up. It was the first time I was introduced to nature in such a gentle way and the first time my program leader and the other staff were all African American. There were people of color leading us, taking us out into nature and exposing us. If it wasn't for those programs, I wouldn't have been exposed to nature in that kind of way. I grew up with my grandma and she couldn't bus us to ocean beach and take us tide pooling. It was a good pathway that I wouldn't have had if it weren't for those programs. That's part of the reason why I wanted to join the programs team to give that experience to children who were in similar situations to the one I was in.

What inspired you to study Wildlife Biology?

Getting exposed to the environment and the unique wildlife that's around us in San Francisco. I was exposed by watching TV, Animal Planet, and seeing the diversity all over the world. It was important for me to see the diversity of San Francisco. At first glance, you wouldn't think it would be diverse or abundant but it is. I did a lot of volunteering (before college) for the Golden Gate Parks Conservancy, National Park Service, and even LEJ. I volunteered at Heron's Head when LEJ still managed that area. It created such a wonderful connection to this place. I can go back and see how everything has matured and it's so beautiful. And I was just really interested in Wildlife Biology so I sought those experiences out.

How did your experiences in work, college, or life influence you to work for LEJ?

I volunteered with an afterschool program in Visitacion Valley and worked with youth, getting them outside to recreate and build positive relationships with adults, especially people of color. Kids in the Bayview and Visitacion Valley can have very challenging home lives. They don't necessarily have the opportunity to have a positive relationship with adults that encourages them to stay active and be outside and tie in why that's important for their health. It doesn't have to be strenuous exercise... just going to a garden or park. I wanted to tie in my love for the environment and teach them a little bit more about science and share that experience with them. Those experiences brought me to LEJ.

What keeps you going when the going gets tough?

To be honest, the nursery. Coming out here and being able to smell, touch, just sit and relax and be underneath a living tree. There aren't a lot of places that you can do that. Connecting with nature. Connecting with the community gardeners. Just sharing the space with everyone and being with the plants. Everyone's vegetables are ready to harvest. They've been sharing a lot and I really appreciate it. I also play video games and go fishing a lot. I've been doing a lot of Bay fishing since that's what's close. They don't call it "catching", they call it "fishing". I haven't caught anything yet. I've been meeting and chatting with people there. It's nice to go out at night with the bats and just observe, let your mind wander.

Do you have any advice for young people who want to get into the environmental field?

First thing, try things out. You never know, just go to the park and see if it feels good. Find what feels good. Does it take a lot from you? If it does, does it give back? It doesn't have to be a career track, it can be a hobby. Something you do 30 minutes a day. If you're going into the environmental field, you have to love it. It doesn't pay well but if you find something you really love, you'll get paid in happiness. There is a balance you have to find. Seek out organizations and people that are doing what you'd like to do. Maybe you can shadow them or maybe it doesn't have to go that far you can just have a conversation. And props if they are "People of Color". Don't get discouraged with the lack of diversity that you see in this field because there's a new wave. If I were to give two pieces of advice for people who are getting into the environmental field: find what feels good and know that you are more than capable of doing what you want to do.

Nursery Plant Care



Transplanting is pretty fun. Ice plant removal is a workout and satisfying!

**Treasure Island
Development Authority
Volunteer**

Volunteers, Park Champs, Community Gardens

The stewardship we do at LEJ would not be possible without the effort of our volunteers. Volunteers have worked toward restoration and park stewardship for a total of 38,000 hours in public open space.

Community and corporate volunteer groups are essential to helping us maintain our nursery and meet the propagation numbers for our plant contracts.

A special thanks to all the volunteer groups who helped us out this year: Park Champs, SFUSD, CCSF, Treasure Island Development Authority, Parks Alliance, NERD Wallet, Subaru, HOBA, Cisco, Docu-Sign, Triage Consulting, Hands On Bay Area, Gonzaga University, and our local community members.



It's nice, therapeutic - coming back after a while.

Carrie, Community Volunteer



**Stewardship
Sunrise Point**



Collaborations

Alice Griffith Public Housing

A-T-S BMAGIC

Bay Area Wilderness Training Bayview Hill Association

Bayview Neighborhood Association Boys and Girls Club at BVHP

California College of the Arts

California Native Plant Society

California State Department of Parks & Recreation

California State Parks Foundation

City Kayak

City of Dreams (Oakland) Crissy Field Center

Friends of the Urban Forest

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy Girls 2000

Golden Gate Audubon Society

Green Action for Health and Environmental Justice

LINC Youth Leadership Programs

Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program Sunnydale

Northridge Cooperative Homes

Outward Bound Parks 94124 PODER

Port of San Francisco Rainbow Grocery

San Francisco City College

San Francisco Children and Nature Network

San Francisco Build

San Francisco Department of the Environment

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

San Francisco Rec and Park

San Francisco State University

San Francisco Unified School District SE Food Access Starr King Open Space

Student Conservation Association Urban Farmer

Wilderness & Arts Literacy Collaborative YMCA of Bayview / Hunters Point

Young Community Developers

Youth Outside 100% College Prep

Public Schools:

June Jordan High

Burton High

Downtown High - Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaborative

Five Keys

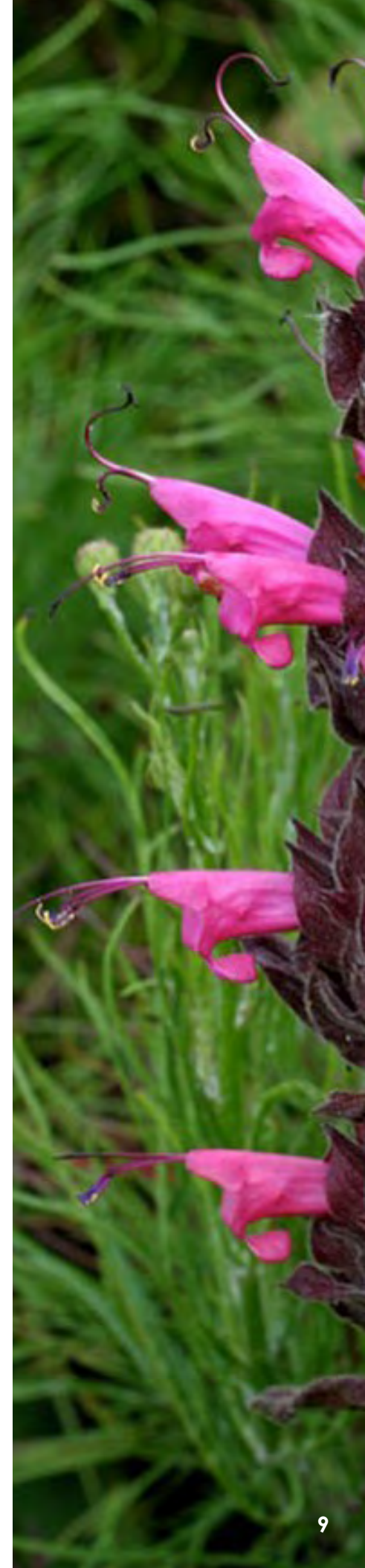
Bret Harte Elementary

Kipp Bayview Academy

James Denman Middle

George Washington Carver Elementary

Mission High



BY THE NUMBERS

70,000

Eco-Apprentices grew over 70,000 native plants in the nurseries

92

LEJ grows 92 locally native San Francisco plant species

38,000

38,000 volunteer hours were dedicated to California's first urban State Park, Candlestick Point State Recreation Area

6,470

Eco-Apprentices interned for 6,470 hours this year

17,000

Eco-Apprentices grew 17,000 native seeds into plants for habitat restoration

2,000

Eco-Apprentices provided environmental education programs to approximately 2,000 public school youth and volunteers

1,402

Eco-Apprentices led volunteers and school groups to plant 1,402 native plants at restoration sites in Bayview Hunters Point



We steward 7 local open spaces and multiple sidewalk gardens throughout the City and County of San Francisco. LEJ is supporting regional restoration and stewardship of the following:

- Treasure Island & Yerba Buena Island**
- Candlestick Point State Recreation Area**
- Heron's Head Park**
- Golden Gate Park**
- Starr King Open Space**
- Pier 94**



EARNED INCOME

VS

GRANTS,
CONTRIBUTIONS,
DONATIONS

LEJ, through its Eco-Apprentice and Urban Greening programs, is approaching a sustainable social and environmental business enterprise model that effectively sustains, leverages and matches traditional nonprofit income contributions.

28%



72%

72% of LEJ's revenue was earned through plant sales and restoration contracts.

Only 28% came from foundations, corporate donors, and individual donations.



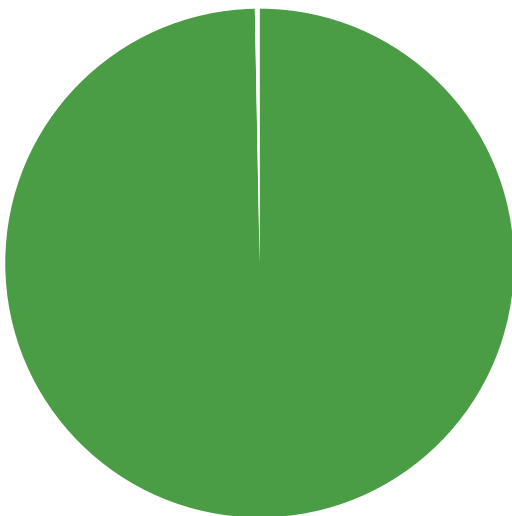
Through our unique partnership with State Parks, we are able to make a direct investment into the work we do. 97% of our expenses go toward program expenses and salaries.

TOTAL REVENUE

VS

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures Comprise
99.7% of Total Revenue



99.7%

DIRECT EXPENSES

VS

INDIRECT EXPENSES

Programs & Salaries Expenses: 97%
Administration Expenses: 3%

97%



3%



Donor List | A special thanks to our supporters for 2019-2020!

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Aimee Campbell
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Alexandra and Robert Lindsay
All Volunteers
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Thank you for your continued support.
Literacy for Environmental Justice



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