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For Immediate Release

Open Space Authority Urban Grant Program Awards over \$200,000 in Measure Q Funds to Local Community Organizations

San Jose, CA (September 28, 2020) - The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority's Board of Directors has awarded \$206,324 in Measure Q grant funding to five nonprofits and a school district as part of the Small Grants category for the 2020 cycle of the Urban Grant Program. The Urban grants fund a variety of programming, including environmental education on the topics of food and agriculture, as well as environmental stewardship, with the goal of providing access to nature within the urban areas.

This latest grant round increases the total number of Urban grants awarded by the Authority since 1999 to 64, amounting to over \$12.5M in grant funding that the Authority has provided to community organizations to connect people to nature in the urban areas. Creating opportunities for urban communities to interact with nature and participate in environmental education programming has been a high priority for the Authority, and the grant program is one method for achieving this goal. [Measure Q](#), overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2014, is one source of funding for the Urban Grant Program, increasing the Authority's ability to provide greater investment in nature and better serve the communities it represents. Measure Q also funded [Understanding Our Community](#), a two-part study to help the Authority fully understand the demographics and nature-based needs of residents in its jurisdiction. These projects work towards the Authority's larger goal to help urban communities overcome barriers of accessing nature, and to make this access as equitable as possible.

"This Urban Grant Program helps us diversify our work," said Megan Dreger, Grants Administrator for the Open Space Authority. "We do a great job in supporting the areas uninhabited by humans, which is so important, and the Urban Grant Program helps further our mission and connect people to nature near home. We want to protect nature, and we want to bring nature to people, too."

The Urban Grant Program, launched in 2016, is divided into Small and Large Grants to help provide a variety of opportunities for worthy community-based projects to be supported. Up to \$1M in funding is available in the 2020 cycle. The latest awardees are recipients of the Small Grant awards, the first subset of grantees to be chosen in this cycle. These smaller grants, which involve year-long contracts, help the Authority increase the number of programs that can be funded, and use a streamlined process to make it easier for applicants, thereby increasing delivery of programs to communities.

One Small Grant recipient is Environmental Volunteers, a nonprofit with the goal of creating opportunities for environmental education, stewardship, and leadership.

“We are so grateful for the Open Space Authority’s grant to power nature access and science education for thousands of kids,” said Diana Garcia, a Board Member for Environmental Volunteers. “We will be using our award from the Urban Grant Program to help fund new nature programs and resources for Santa Clara Valley Schools. This funding will help us give youth in the community the opportunity to learn about the natural world.”

Another recipient of the grant awards is Sacred Heart Community Service for their program, La Mesa Verde. This program, connecting urban gardeners and community members in San Jose, works to create leaders in food justice.

“We are working to provide equitable access to healthy food in San Jose and cultivate leaders in this mission,” said Roberto Gil, a Director at La Mesa Verde. “And the funding from this grant will help us achieve this goal.”

The importance of the Urban Grant Program has been underscored by the difficulties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant funding has allowed many of these programs to continue providing environmental education and supporting staff throughout these difficult times.

“We are so proud to be making direct investments in local communities and connecting all people to nature,” said Andrea Mackenzie, the General Manager of the Authority. “Through the Urban Grant Program, we’ve brought nature to many urban communities across the jurisdiction that lacked it, by greening neighborhoods, seeding community gardens, teaching families to grow their own food, creating parks, and connecting children and families to nature through environmental education programs.”

The Authority looks forward to the positive impact the 2020 grantees will make in their communities over the coming year. We will be working closely with the grantees, regularly sharing progress and outcomes with the public through the Authority’s website and monthly Urban Open Space Corner articles. Those interested in receiving updates can register [here](#). A list of the 2020 Small Grant awards can be found on our [website](#). The 2020 Large Grant awardees will be announced in December of 2020.

2020 Urban Grant Program - Small Grant Recipients

Organization Name	Project Title	Grant Amount
Saved By Nature	Cultural Competency Project	\$ 39,950.52
Environmental Volunteers	Environmental Education for Santa Clara Valley Schools	\$ 32,063.00
Sacred Heart Community Service	La Mesa Verde Program	\$ 39,900.00
Earth Island Institute and Bay Area Wilderness Training	Diversifying the Outdoors through Outdoor Leadership Trainings for Teachers and Youth Workers	\$ 24,959.50
Santa Clara Unified School District	Pomeroy Elementary Garden Connections Experience	\$ 31,750.00
Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful	Community and Virtual BioBlitz Events	\$ 37,701.95

Photos and videos can be found [here](#).

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About the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority

The Open Space Authority was created by the California state legislature in 1993 to conserve the natural environment, support agriculture, and connect people to nature by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations. The Authority has protected over 28,000 acres of open space, preserving the region's scenic beauty, protecting open space, wildlife habitat, water resources and agricultural land, and providing outdoor recreation opportunities for Santa Clara Valley residents. Visit [openspaceauthority.org](https://www.openspaceauthority.org) for more information.