

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority

33 Las Colinas Lane
San Jose, CA 95119

Attention: Megan Dreger, Grants Administrator

May 29, 2020

Dear Ms. Dreger,

On behalf of the UC Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County, we are writing to express support of Sacred Heart Community Service's proposal for the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority's Urban Grant. The grant would benefit Sacred Heart's La Mesa Verde program, which has had a tremendous impact on the community.

La Mesa Verde's program model, based on the principles of agroecology, connects individuals with organic gardening education, promotes cultural diversity and values, and fosters active life in the community. Furthermore, their model invites individuals to drive the program design and movement-building efforts. Through this novel approach, they have created a strong network of allies, volunteers, and community leaders who take action for greater social change. La Mesa Verde is truly leading the movement for food sovereignty, helping Bay Area residents reclaim their food system.

In 2009, our organization began partnering with La Mesa Verde through their "First-Year Gardening Program". We have led workshops to help strengthen members' gardening skills and have served as mentors for new gardeners, working together to achieve a successful harvest. Our relationship with La Mesa Verde has helped expand our reach to multicultural communities in San Jose. The program has also supported our Master Gardeners in learning and practicing different teaching methods, like popular education, that bridge the ancestral knowledge of our community members with the scientific knowledge of UC Cooperative Extension. La Mesa Verde is a unique space that fosters the creation of collective knowledge and community between experienced gardeners and new gardeners.

We fully support Sacred Heart's application to fund the La Mesa Verde program. We believe that Sacred Heart will help Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority achieve its goal of enhancing access to healthy food, through urban farms and gardens, and connecting a diverse community to green space.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Katherine Uhde

Katherine Uhde
Master Gardener Program Manager
UCANR Cooperative Extension of Santa Clara County