

Janet S. Munt Family Room Final Report City Market's 2023 Seedling Grant for "Family Play at the Garden"

December 27, 2024

Dear City Market,

We are pleased to provide you with this report of how City Market's \$5,000 grant funds were used to support "Family Play at the Garden".

About The Family Room

The Family Room is a place that builds healthy, connected communities by supporting families and young children. The Family Room's mission centers on making sure families are safe, have their basic needs met, fostering social-emotional connections for families, and are supported. With our *multi-generational approach*, we focus on the health of the whole family, not just the children. Our services combat social isolation and postpartum depression, empower fathers to take an active role in their children's lives, improve school readiness in young children, prevent abuse and neglect, encourage better nutrition, and support those who suffer from substance misuse.

About the 2024 Season of Family Play at the Gardens

From May to October, *Family Play* brought families together at the Ethan Allen Homestead to grow food, connect with their community, and experience the joy of being outside. With your support, families—many from immigrant backgrounds—found a familiar way of life through gardening while learning new skills, sharing knowledge, and strengthening their well-being.

For families who live in apartments or have limited outdoor access, the garden provided space to grow fresh, nutritious food that supports physical and mental health. Parents and children alike learned how to garden, prepare meals, and stretch their food budgets through workshops led by partners like WIC, VT Garden Network, and VT Foodbank. Families made tortillas, spring rolls, pesto, smoothies, and more—transforming surplus crops into meals that nourished and saved money.

Your investment in *Family Play* also opened doors to other essential supports. As trust grew, staff were able to connect families to SNAP benefits, developmental screenings for children, and other Family Room programs. This program became a place not only

for food but for building relationships and providing wrap-around care that families need to thrive.

To ensure everyone could participate, we provided plants, compost, childcare, healthy meals, and transportation for those unable to access the garden on their own. Volunteers and partners like Red Wagon Plants, Arcana Gardens, and the Winooski Valley Park District made this work possible with their generous contributions of time and resources.

The 2024 season brought challenges—like concerns about mosquito-borne illness—but with creativity and care, we adapted programming to keep families safe and engaged by physically distancing participants, staff, and volunteers from the tree cover and bushes which tended to have more moisture.

Thank you for helping *Family Play* grow and flourish. Your support empowers families, builds resilience, and makes this work possible. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

(See photos on the next pages.)



