



# Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department

Web: [health.hamiltontn.org](http://health.hamiltontn.org)

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

September 22nd, 2023

## **Health Department’s Step ONE Program Announces the Ten Organizations Selected for the 2023 - 2024 Teaching Garden Grants**

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department’s [Step ONE program](#) is pleased to announce the ten organizations selected for the 2023 - 2024 Teaching Garden Grants. Step ONE received a record number of 28 applications this year for the ten \$1,000 awards. It was a tough decision as community organizations had creative and well-thought-out plans for their garden programs. The Step One program selected the ten grantees based on which organizations best fit the criteria, such as the strength of garden vision and design, plans for sustainability, identified leadership, educational goals, creativity, and geographic diversity.

### **2023-2024 Step ONE Garden Grantees:**

1. The Bethlehem Center- *The Farm at the Beth*
2. Chattanooga Room in the Inn- *CRITI Kids Teaching Therapy Garden*
3. East Ridge High School- *East Ridge High School Garden*
4. Ivy Academy- *Ivy Academy Teaching Garden*
5. LifeSpring Community Health- *Addressing Family Food Insecurity and Encouraging Healthy Eating Through Gardening*
6. Lookout Valley Elementary School- *Lookout Valley Teaching Garden*
7. MoMentum Network- *MoMentum Village Garden*
8. The Mountain Arts Community Center- *The Mountain Arts Community Center Teaching Garden*
9. North Hamilton Elementary School- *NHCE Teaching Garden*
10. Orange Grove Center- *Garden of Eden*

In addition to the ten new projects, Step ONE is honoring the unspent funds from 2019-2020 grantees who could not complete the garden grant cycle due to the pandemic.

### **Those gardens are:**

1. Ooltewah High School- Agriculture Club
2. Thrasher Elementary School- Seasons of Sustenance: Exploring History, Health, and Harvest

“I am very excited to support this newest cohort of applicants in implementing their vision of a healthier community,” says Step ONE Public Health Representative Christopher Marinello.

“We have seen the positive impact a teaching garden program can have on children and the community,” said Step ONE Program Manager Renee Craig. “We have watched children become leaders, seen community members work together, and raised awareness for the importance of growing fresh fruit and vegetables for the overall health of our County. We highly encourage any organization not receiving an award this year to reapply for the next grant cycle in August 2024.”

The Step ONE Teaching Garden Grants Program focuses on creating involvement and awareness of the connection between quality of diet and quality of health for children and their families. In addition, teaching gardens provide opportunities for people to learn valuable skills such as communication, responsibility, teamwork, and leadership. With

this year's grant awards, the Step ONE program has invested in 79 teaching garden programs throughout Hamilton County since the initiative began in 2004.

Additional resources

- Questions? Call the Health Department's Step ONE Program at 423-209-8247.
- For Health Department information, visit: [Health.HamiltonTN.gov](http://Health.HamiltonTN.gov)
- To read this information in Spanish, visit the Health Department's Spanish Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN>