

Green Garden Bakery

Youth from the Heritage Park neighborhood in North Minneapolis were in the kitchen long before Green Garden Bakery, fondly known as "GGB," was established. The neighborhood, home to 700 youth, began offering cooking classes as educational after-school and summer programming. During this time, youth congregated in a community room and kitchen attached to the main leasing office; they practiced cooking skills and learned about accessibility to healthy foods using ingredients grown in nearby community gardens. The creation of their first signature dessert, a green tomato cake, helped the youth leaders establish the program's tone and values. It wasn't until 2014 that they first began selling desserts to raise money for a friend who was harmed in a car accident. After a successful first sale, the youth decided to focus more intently on forming a clear vision of what this program could be; Green Garden Bakery was the result.

Green Garden Bakery still strongly identifies with its community roots and reinvests a third of its profits back to the community. Involved youth also benefit from their community-focused design that provides opportunities for leadership, communication, professional development, public relations, and other learning experiences. As a youth-led business formed on eco-conscious, and green initiatives, GGB packages its vegan and veggie-based desserts in compostable boxes decorated with plant-based inks. GGB is also almost 100% paperless, only using business cards made from seed paper that patrons can plant and grow into tomato plants once used.

Today, GGB serves a variety of vegetable-based desserts at various venues year-round. They are available for presentations and pop-ups at local shops, sales, and cafés and are always working towards their goals for the future. The recent completion of a commercial kitchen in the Heritage Park neighborhood will allow for larger quantities of product and space for indoor planters, which will help them produce more vegetables throughout the cold Minnesota winters. Youth are excited to get started in their new space, already dreaming of the next endeavor, a permanent storefront. For information visit www.greengardenbakery.org.

