



## A short report on 2018 and an outlook on 2019

God and so many good friends like you filled 2018 with more blessings than we can count!

It's hard to pick just a few things to share and even harder to talk about the difference they made. So, here are a few highlights that will give you a "snapshot" of what your support did in 2018.



- You helped host and support at least 500 people (most of them youth) at Hope House & Gardens programs and volunteer projects.
- You helped start an after-school program for K - 5 children.
- You supported an "extreme makeover" of our neighborhood garden.
- You helped make Hope House & Gardens more of a neighborhood asset:
  - New flower garden and "medicine wheel" in the "pocket park"
  - Neighborhood mural (thank you Summer in the City!)
  - Patio in the garden (thank you Father Kern Foundation!)
- Your support helped Christ the King Service Corps choose VEJ as the one-year placement for a full-time corps member. In June, Julia Hall joined our team as community program leader.
- You helped VEJ hire former intern L'Oreal Hawkes-Williams as our garden program leader.
- Your support inspired new people to join VEJ's board. We started the year with just three board members and now we are up to eight (with more joining in early 2019): Doris Allen, Bob Chapman (new), Sister Rebecca Hodge (new), Jeff Jenks, Erma Leaphart (new), Vito Rosolino (new), Terri Slaughter (new), and Sister Janet Stankowski.



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## Looking ahead to 2019



VEJ's mission is, in a nutshell:

***Prayer, education, and action on behalf of Earth.***

The hard thing about VEJ is not that we are such a *small* organization; it's that our mission is so *big*.

This year, the VEJ team put in months of work thinking about how to make a big mission so simple and small that a child can do it. The mantra we made for ourselves is "*Everyday Earth Justice.*"

You might say that *Everyday Earth Justice* is a way to make Earth Justice "bite size."

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That leads us to VEJ's new focus starting in 2019: **Food**.

- Did you know that 83 percent of humanity's total carbon footprint comes from what we eat?
- Did you know that 1.3 billion tons of food waste goes into landfills every year?
- Did you know that food waste costs \$940 billion a year? Imagine what that money could do!

***If the point of VEJ is to help more people of faith learn how to care for Earth and each other, the facts show that food is the way to do it!***



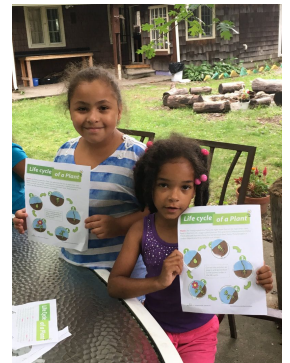
There's more: Eating brings people together. We are a faith-based organization that seeks to work with people of all faiths. It is often hard for people of different faiths to know where to begin when trying to understand each other. Since food is at the center of almost all faiths, we think that sharing food with each other is the heart of VEJ's interfaith work.

VEJ's new focus on food is really not *that* new. While Naim Edwards and Patty Gillis were with the organization, they made the neighborhood garden and neighborhood potlucks the biggest part of their work. We're simply building on what Naim and Patty did so well.

**In 2019, we want to reach and teach 1,200 people how to "eat for Earth justice."**

Those people will come from many communities, faiths, and walks of life. Many of them will be children and young people. We want to give them simple lessons and practices they can take back to their families, houses of worship, neighborhoods, and schools. This is how VEJ will make an impact.

Hope House & Gardens in Detroit will stay the hub of VEJ's work in 2019. At Hope House & Gardens, we will host our after-school program for children, classes and workshops, celebrations and community meals, and volunteers from all over southeast Michigan and beyond.



To reach and serve more people in 2019, VEJ will take some of its programs to houses of worship and schools in the southeast Michigan region. We are also hosting almost 20 tours that introduce people to Earth-friendly food organizations and southeast Michigan's natural wonders.

We believe these are the things we need to do for VEJ to be true to its mission and to make the best use of energy, money, and time.

We would be so pleased for you to be part of this. Whether you come to a program, donate, pray for us, share VEJ with a friend, or volunteer, people like you are the ones who bring VEJ's mission to life!