



## SMMUSD School Garden Program

# History

In 1995 the City of Santa Monica and the University of California Cooperative Extension Common Ground Garden Program partnered to create sustainable student gardens in Santa Monica public schools. Common Ground had previously developed a unique volunteer-based student gardening program called “Gardening Angels” which recruits and trains adult volunteers to teach young people about organic gardening.

The Santa Monica School Garden Project was led by Bonnie Freeman a devoted “Gardening Angel”. Through Bonnie’s leadership twelve gardens were developed on twelve campuses after just five years with the strong support of community business and a substantial \$200,000 on the part of the City. In 2000 a greenhouse at Santa Monica High School to be used as a resource center district wide was completed.

In 1997 Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District, Food and Nutrition Services, launched the Farmers’ Market Salad Bar Program which purchases locally grown, seasonal fruits and vegetables from the Santa Monica Farmers’ Market. By 2001 salad bars had become a daily lunch offering at all 14 schools in Santa Monica and Malibu. Today they serve an average of 800 salads per day in the district.

The goal of the Farmers’ Market Salad Bar Program is to increase students’ consumption of fruits and vegetables. To that end nutrition education in the classroom and tours to the Farmers’ Market are made available to teachers district wide.

With the retirement of Bonnie Freeman in 2001 it seemed only natural that Food and Nutrition Services should incorporate the school gardens under the umbrella of the award winning Farmers’ Market Salad Bar Program which the American Restaurant Association awarded their *Best Kids’ Menu In America*.

Beginning September 2002, under the direction of Food and Nutrition Services, the school gardens became known as ***Farmers Market Salad Bar Gardens***. The Farmers’ Market Salad Bar Garden Program is supported by the City of Santa Monica.