



EMORY | ROLLINS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Community Grant Program Impact Report



CHART
a healthy
climate future

Summer 2026

About the grant program



CHART's Community Engagement Core (CEC) invited Atlanta residents to propose innovative projects that respond to extreme heat and related stressors.



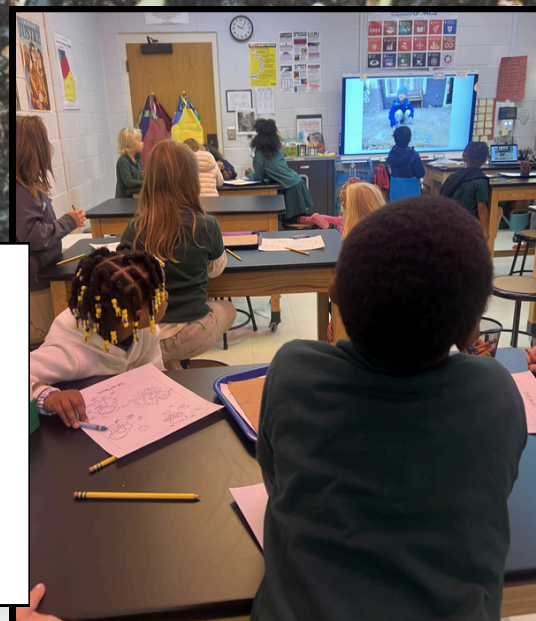
Across two grant cohorts, six grantees each received a \$5,000 award along with ongoing technical support from the Emory CHART team.

Together, grantees used these resources to foster lasting change across Atlanta by:

- creating hands-on learning opportunities,
- strengthening neighborhood networks,
- expanding access to native plants and fresh food,
- preparing households for severe weather, and
- connecting young people with outdoor education.

Grow Our Garden ATL: Growing Food for Health

Grow Our Garden ATL connects neighbors and schools through gardening, environmental education, and fresh food. As a community-based initiative, Grow Our Garden ATL primarily works with schools in East Atlanta and South DeKalb, where many families face environmental and economic challenges including food security and air pollution.



As a **CHART** grantee, Grow Our Garden ATL coordinated school-based environmental workshops and community events, including garden workdays and activities that helped students learn about growing food and the connections between food, health, and the environment.



At a glance:

- **Anchor School:**
27 students reached; 2 garden workdays & 1 workshop
- **Benteen Elementary:**
15 students reached; 1 workshop
- **Clifton Methodist Garden:**
8 community members reached; 1 volunteer day
- **Drew Charter Elementary:**
61 students reached; 6 workshops
- **Gresham Park Recreation Center:**
13 students reached; 1 workshop
- **Neighborhood Fall Festival:**
200 hot meals served; groceries distributed to 300 cars

Grow Our Garden ATL has also supported outdoor learning by providing schools with binoculars, seating, a composter, and raised garden beds.



"Students are excited to get out and get started with the tools they need for outdoor lessons."

~Drew Elementary School Newsletter

Looking ahead, Grow Our Garden ATL is continuing to partner with schools by supporting a new garden club at Benteen Elementary and a garden installation and fall planting at McNair Middle School.

Science for Georgia: Climate Survival Training with Communities in Southern Atlanta



Science for Georgia bridges the gap between scientists and the public through training and outreach.

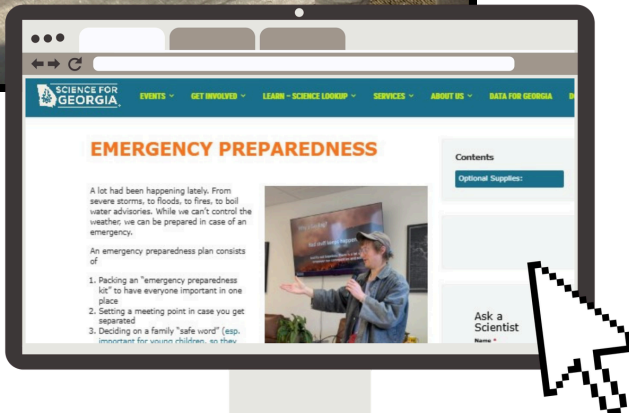
As a CHART grantee, Science for Georgia partnered with SEJA and Stonecrest Community Garden Club to host a series of hands-on community workshops on gardening, emergency preparedness, and vermiculture (worm composting). These events were designed to empower families with practical skills, resources, and the confidence to take action when disaster strikes.



25 attendees learned about the importance of composting and built their own vermiculture systems to take home!

"Honestly, when I signed up, I didn't realize they were actually going to provide the containers and the worms. That was a nice surprise, and it made starting so easy."

~Vermiculture Workshop Attendee



Anxiety about extreme weather events and rising temperatures is often fueled by a feeling of powerlessness. An effective way to combat this anxiety is by reinforcing our communities. Climate Survival Trainings provide practical training around solutions that build community resilience.

37 families created emergency preparedness kits – crucial tools in response to extreme weather events!



info@Sci4GA.org

Native Outfitters: Plant Adoption

Native Outfitters promotes native plants through community education and plant distribution. Presentations, events, and workshops highlight practical benefits like erosion control, soil health, improved biodiversity, healthier pollinator habitats, and better air quality.

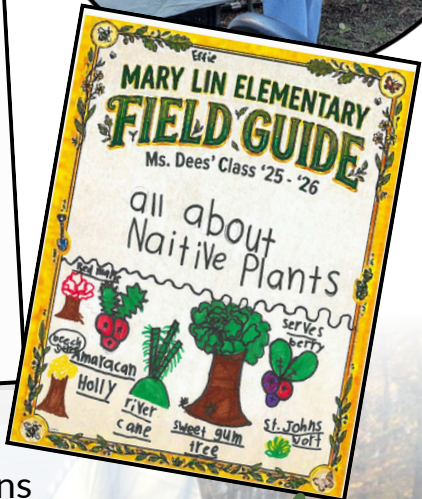
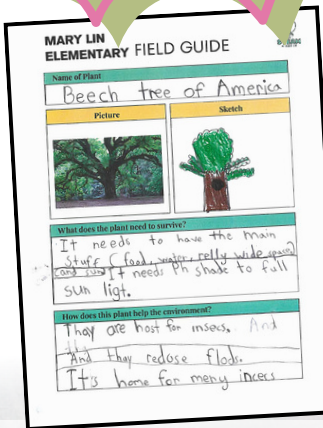


Southwest Atlanta faces air pollutants, flood risks, and rising temperatures making it an ideal area to introduce native species that can adapt to big temperature changes and help these landscapes combat extreme heat.

89% of attendees indicated they are likely to or definitely will be incorporating native plants into their yards!



As a CHART grantee, Native Outfitters hosted a plant swap and shared meal in SW Atlanta to distribute **90+ plants** including **18 different species**. Participants got to take home plants suited to their homes and interests, and learned about the many benefits of native plants and their role in pest prevention for agricultural production.



The CHART-sponsored plant adoption event also became a starting point for broader partnerships, supporting connections with schools, educators, and other organizations.

Planned future events include more plant swaps paired with fun activities like pilates!



  info@native-outfitters.org



Midnight Riot:

Cleaner Neighborhoods, Stronger Communities

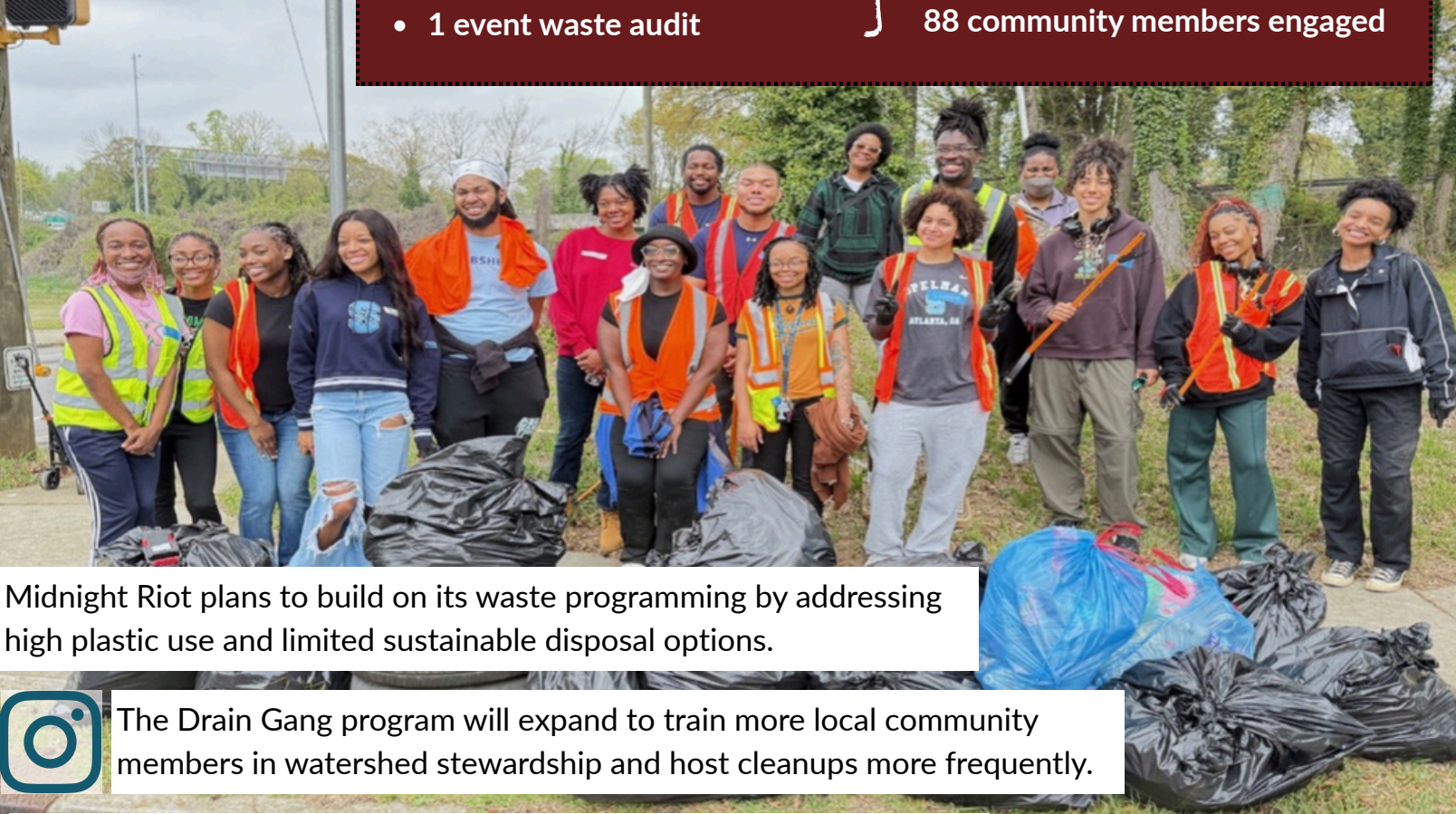
Midnight Riot brings artists, students, community members, and organizers together for neighborhood stewardship and environmental education.



As a **CHART grantee**, Midnight Riot hosted six community cleanups and four storm-drain cleaning events, removing litter from streets, storm drains, curbs, and greenspaces. The organization also held workshops on environmental conditions in Southwest Atlanta neighborhoods and conducted a waste audit of the SpelHouse tailgate event during Homecoming.

By the numbers:

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 community clean-ups• 4 storm drain cleaning events• 2 educational workshops• 1 event waste audit | } | 891.6 pounds of trash removed |
| | | 262.6 pounds of materials recycled |
| | | 88 community members engaged |



Midnight Riot plans to build on its waste programming by addressing high plastic use and limited sustainable disposal options.

 The Drain Gang program will expand to train more local community members in watershed stewardship and host cleanups more frequently.

The organization is also exploring installing mutual aid boxes which would provide period products and other essential health supplies across SW Atlanta. Midnight Riot sees this as an opportunity to pair waste reduction with a practical community resource.



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Movespot: Climate Awareness Field Days

Movespot is a social media app aimed at connecting youth offline and reducing screen time by combining wellness, outdoor activity, education, and community connection.

As a CHART grantee, Movespot held field days at Arabia Mountain High School and Cedar Grove High School.



Field days provided opportunities for safe outdoor exercise while educating students on how extreme heat can affect physical and mental well-being.



Students learned about proper hydration during outdoor activities, discussed gratitude for the environment and their community, and planted trees on their high school campuses. Movespot also connected students with additional outdoor experiences, including tickets to the Atlanta Botanical Garden.



The project's emphasis on hands-on learning was reinforced by strong school relationships.

Looking ahead, Movespot hopes to expand to additional DeKalb County schools!

"We just wanted to make sure everybody could walk away with just more knowledge than they walked through the door with."
— Carl, Movespot Founder & Arabia Mountain Alum



SEJA: Building A Sustainable Community Through Gardening

SEJA is a South Fulton community organization focused on education and practical action around local environmental and health concerns. SEJA has built a network of community gardens to reduce harmful, heat-trapping emissions and grow community connections among neighbors.

As a CHART grantee, SEJA partnered with Pangea Garden Collective and Natural Nik Naks to host two gardening workshops.

"We partnered with Natural Nik Naks to highlight the culinary aspects of home-grown food - differences in:

Taste!

Cost!

Quality!

Versatility!

The first workshop focused on growing and using herbs. The second focused on growing plants in the fall. The workshops paired gardening instruction with food preparation so participants could immediately connect growing food with cooking and eating it.



"The culinary dishes provided a 180-degree learning experience and supported the goal of building self-sufficiency by growing your own food and enjoying it."

Looking ahead, SEJA plans to expand its community education projects to include data centers and their impacts on communities.



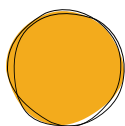
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About the CEC

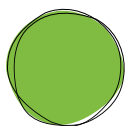


The CHART Community Engagement Core (CEC) works with Atlanta residents and community partners to identify and address local concerns related to extreme heat and health.

We do this by:



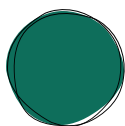
Building relationships among community members, researchers, and partner organizations.



Supporting community-led projects through the Community Grant Program.



Providing technical support and connections to resources, expertise, and partners.



Creating opportunities for community knowledge and experience to inform research and education.



The Community Grant Program is one part of a broader effort to connect community experience with education, research, and practical action. The projects highlighted in this report reflect the knowledge, creativity, relationships, and resilience of residents and organizations across Atlanta.

Thank you to the grantees, community partners, participants, students, families, volunteers, and Emory CHART team members who made this work possible.