

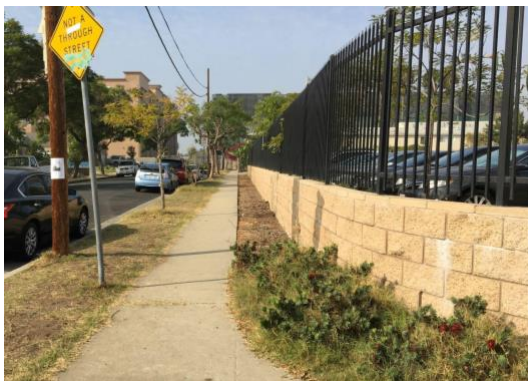


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

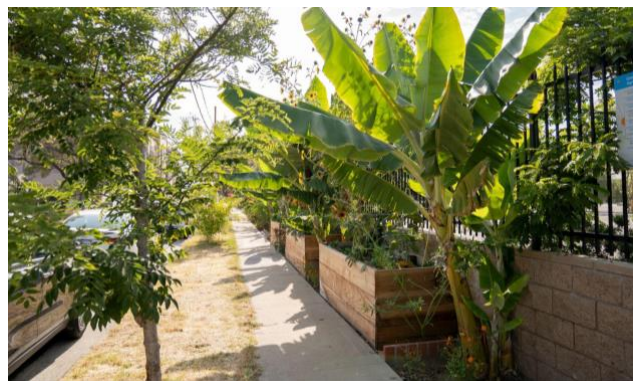
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## **Inglewood School Community Garden Provides Food Forest, Environmental Benefits for Community**

*A Success out of Covid, The Bay Foundation and Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood Celebrate 1 Year Anniversary of Garden*



*Before (Photo: The Bay Foundation)*



*After (Photo: Laura Doss)*

Inglewood, CA (February 10, 2022) The Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood (ECMSI) Community Garden, located just outside of ECMSI's campus on West 115th Street, Inglewood, CA, is a year old and thriving. Established in partnership with [The Bay Foundation](https://www.santamonicaBay.org) (TBF) in 2020 with U.S. EPA Environmental Justice Small Grants Program funds, a previously barren parkway is now a food forest with over 300 students contributing to its success and 10 community members co-maintaining it on a monthly basis.

"I am so elated that we can work together to provide a garden for our school and community. Additionally, it is heartwarming to work together with our partners and community to maintain this project. This opportunity helps our partnership, relationship, community, and plants thrive," says Dr. Geneva Matthews, Principal, ECMSI.

This garden serves the city of Inglewood, a city with roughly 108,151 people and according to the [Los Angeles Times](https://www.latimes.com), a large percentage of the population identifies as Black (46.4%) or Latino (46%). Urban greening reduces heat absorption and provides

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spaces for recreational use and [overall wellbeing](#); but according to the [Inglewood Health Profile](#) prepared by Los Angeles County in 2018, Inglewood's available recreational space is less than one acre per 1,000 residents, far less than Los Angeles County, which is 8.10 acres per 1,000 residents. The ECMSI community garden provides an open green space where individuals participate in physical activity through gardening, witness wildlife species such as monarch butterflies, plant fresh produce, learn new skills, and harvest nutritious foods.

"It's kind of cool how relaxing you feel walking down this sidewalk. It's like we created this oasis," says ECMSI eighth graders Josue and Javier. Adds a group of eight grade girls, "I love that [we] are responsible for making sure this garden stays healthy," as they admire the size ("they are huge!") of the banana tree leaves.

To date, the garden has grown over 100 plants, ranging from bananas trees, fava beans, kale, chard, eggplant, tomatoes, bok choy, amaranth, cilantro, and more. One year in and the garden has sequestered roughly 200 kilograms of carbon emissions, the equivalent of 503 miles driven by an average passenger vehicle.

"This idea was dreamed up by an Environmental Charter School student in 2019. To see it come to life, during a pandemic, truly showcases the powerful impact one individual can have. Only one year in and this garden serves a multitude of vital community and environmental benefits. We look forward to continuing our partnership with ECMSI, which began in 2016, to support the community and garden for years to come," says Georgia Tunioli, TBF's Community Engagement Program Manager.

Interested individuals of all skill levels or no experience are welcome to get involved with planting, harvesting, and/or volunteering at a monthly Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood Community Garden Volunteer Day. For details visit [santamonicabay.org/events](http://santamonicabay.org/events) or contact [info@ecsonline.org](mailto:info@ecsonline.org).

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#### **About The Bay Foundation (TBF)**

The Bay Foundation (TBF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit environmental group founded in 1990 to restore and enhance the Santa Monica Bay and local coastal waters (from the LA-Ventura county line to the Palos Verdes Peninsula). The Bay Foundation is a partner in the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program along with the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and many other organizations. TBF works collaboratively with a broad group of stakeholders, including government agencies, industry, environmental groups, and community members. TBF engages scientists and conducts research while mentoring student interns and volunteers in conjunction with the Frank R. Seaver College of Science and Engineering through the Coastal Research Institute at Loyola Marymount University. (TBF: [www.santamonicabay.org](http://www.santamonicabay.org), CRI: [lmu.edu/cri](http://lmu.edu/cri))

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**About Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood**

Environmental Charter Middle School Inglewood (ECMSI) is a free, public middle school in South Los Angeles that offers students a small, caring school environment supporting their transition from elementary school to a college preparatory high school. ([ecsonline.org/ecms-inglewood](http://ecsonline.org/ecms-inglewood))