In the spring of 2017, Collective Roots came to Fresh Approach with an idea to merge into one effective and sustainable organization, while combining efforts to better serve East Palo Alto and the surrounding Bay Area. Here is a snapshot of the work they did.

COLLECTIVE ROOTS was developed to foster a robust, community-based food system in East Palo Alto.

Through programs like the Collective Gardening Network, educational gardening workshops, and the weekly East Palo Alto Community Farmers’ Market, the Collective Roots programs seek to foster the communal growing, sharing, and eating of fresh, local produce.

By facilitating a network of collaboration and sharing, Collective Roots supports community change from the ground up. This program was developed to create a strong, sustainable network of local growers who feed themselves, their neighbors, and friends — while helping other community members learn to do the same.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

GROW • SHARE • EAT WORKSHOPS are hands-on gardening education classes held at the Collective Roots community garden and at various community sites in East Palo Alto.

Through this workshop series, Collective Roots aims to help East Palo Alto families expand their gardening skills and learn to grow sustainable, edible, organic gardens of their own. Workshop attendees learn through hands-on gardening activities, while gaining knowledge about nutrition, healthy eating, and local food systems.

27 Community workshops

158 Total attendees at all community workshops

6 Community partners hosted our workshops
THE COLLECTIVE GARDENING NETWORK (CGN) is a community resource for gardeners in East Palo Alto, CA. The CGN program exists to foster more communal growing, sharing, and eating of fresh, local produce, by making it more affordable and accessible to grow food at home and in community gardens in East Palo Alto. Membership is free, and reserved for residents of East Palo Alto.

**Number of active CGN members in 2017**
157 participating at the Collective Roots community garden, and at affiliated gardens

**Volunteers involved in team-building workdays**
130 from local organizations

**New community gardens installed by CGN members, at the San Mateo County Library, Los Robles Elementary School, and Girls Club of MidPeninsula**
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THE EAST PALO ALTO COMMUNITY FARMERS’ MARKET is a crucial resource for ensuring affordable, healthy food access, while supporting local family farms. Every week, the farmers’ market creates opportunities for direct relationships between community members and food producers, filling a much-needed gap for healthy food.

**Total sales in 2017 for 6 vendors**
$69,600

**Unique shoppers attended the market**
1,395

**Fresh Checks matching transactions**
4,000

**In free produce distributed via the Fresh Checks incentive program**
$24,000

FRESH CHECKS is a fruit and vegetable incentive program at the EPA Community Farmers’ Market that offers qualifying customers a dollar-for-dollar match of up to $5 every week when they buy fresh produce. Participants can qualify simply by meeting the income requirements for CalFresh / SNAP, even if they do not participate in these programs – thereby creating an option for all lower income families to afford more healthy foods.