



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Valley Verde's Plant Your Garden, Grow Your Food Project
(Vegetable Seedling Giveaway)**

To prevent and contain COVID-19, efforts, such as shelter in place, closing non-essential businesses, using face covers/masks have continued to increase. While these efforts are helping contain COVID-19, they are also leading to financial struggles for many families across the nation. The families that are struggling the most are those who have lost their jobs, and live in food insecure neighborhoods.

These families were already facing challenges with providing healthy and affordable food for their family, but now these challenges have increased even more due to a loss of employment.

As an essential business, and an organization that serves low income families, Valley Verde would like to assist the struggling families living in food insecure neighborhoods in Santa Clara County in these times. Valley Verde launched a Vegetable Seedling Giveaway on April 20th. Seedlings will be available to pick up on Friday, May 8th and delivered to families that are unable to pick-up on Saturday, May 9th by the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.

The seedlings that we will be providing to families, will not only provide the families food at this time, but will also teach them the skills needed to grow their own food in the future as well. Food grown in their own backyards will benefit them in the long run by providing them easily accessible and healthy vegetables.

Families can register by sending a text message to: 408.831.1481 with the following information: Full name, home address, email address, phone number and if they will pick up the seedlings or if they will need them delivered.

We will provide the following seedlings: 2 tomatoes, 1 zucchini, 1 cucumber, 1 bell pepper, padrón, or jalapeño. In addition, the following seeds will be provided: green beans, green onions, spinach, lettuce, carrots and radish.

The Seedling Giveaway will begin Friday, May 8th at 10:00 a.m, and families will be asked to register by text by May 1st. Staff will place a box of vegetable seedlings in the trunk of the family's car once they arrive to decrease contact.

Each box will contain a set of instructions for how to care for the plants, and an email will also be provided on the instruction sheet if anyone needs further clarification. Walk-ins will not be accepted.

The Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition is partnering with Valley Verde to deliver seedlings on bikes to families. The bicycle volunteers will deliver the seedlings on Saturday, May 9th to families that can't drive to pick up their seedlings.

Partnering with Valley Verde on this project:

- Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition – Shiloh Ballard, Executive Director
- Stanford Farm – Patrick Archie
- The Forge Garden at Santa Clara University – Katharine Rondthaler, Garden Manager
- Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County

We will be following the social distancing guidelines and take precautions by having staff wash their hands with soap consistently and sanitizing work areas after use. The staff will wear face covers/masks and gloves to place the seedling in each car, and minimize contact with the families by preparing a box of seedlings ahead of time and providing all the instructions the family will need to grow the seedlings. We will be providing seedlings to 400 families, we are planning on a second giveaway TBA

Valley Verde is dedicated to building healthy and resilient communities by providing low-income families with educational programs, edible gardens and micro-entrepreneurship opportunities that create food security and lead to self-sufficiency.

Valley Verde envisions a Silicon Valley that has reconnected with its agricultural roots and resources, where there is food access and a healthy lifestyle for all.

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition's purpose is to create a healthy community, environment, and economy through bicycling for people who live, work, or play in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition envisions a community that values, includes, and encourages bicycling for all purposes for all people.

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