

# THE GARDEN CLUB

A Garden 31 Newsletter



## RECENT NEWS



We hosted our final Community day of the Year!

What a beautiful way to close out 2025 and set our intentions for 2026. Thank you so much to all those who attended, and to USDA Next Gen at SDSU, San Diego Youth Services, and Tree San Diego for helping to make this event happen.



# THANKS TO YOU!



# LAS PATRONAS

PARTNERING WITH THE SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY SINCE 1946

In the fall of 2025, we were honored to be selected as a recipient of the Las Patronas bi-annual grant. The funds from this grant are designated for critically needed capital items with a long useful life and a significant, lasting impact on the San Diego community.

As an organization dedicated to educating youth and providing our community with fresh, organic food, we identified the need to expand our operations—and determined that a larger, more reliable mode of transportation was essential to that growth. We have been operating out of the trunks and backseats of employees' personal vehicles to ensure our high school interns can travel to and from our farms. We've also relied on these passenger vehicles to transport tools, plants, soil, tents, food, water, produce, and more between farms, events, and donation partners.

We are thrilled and deeply grateful to announce that the funding from this Las Patronas grant will be used to purchase a Garden 31 van later this month. This vital addition will ensure safe, efficient transportation for our students and interns, as well as our tools and supplies, as we continue to expand across San Diego County. Most importantly, it will allow us to transport and donate food grown on our farms to donation centers and farmers markets on a larger and more consistent scale. We are incredibly thankful to Las Patronas for helping us achieve this major milestone and for empowering us to reach even more of our community.

# STEWARDING A RELATIONSHIP IN BROTHERHOOD:

Chris Burroughs on his friendship with  
author, surfer, podcast host, and copywriter  
Kyle Thiermann



Chris met Kyle through his friend, Nell Newman, from the Nell Newman Foundation. She thought they would connect well, so she introduced them. They recorded a podcast together, and from there, a friendship sprouted. Chris speaks highly of Kyle, saying, **"Kyle's just a super cool dude, you know."** They live on opposite ends of Southern California, so—like so many of us navigating busy lives—they don't see each other often, but they make a point to stay in touch regularly.

Chris explains, "Sometimes it gets longer than it should be, but I think most recently **we're both doing a really good job of just stewarding the relationship**, and so we talk about real things. We talk about, you know, what's going on in our personal lives and how we can work together to build up the communities that we're seeking to empower, and **we always encourage one another to keep doing our thing.**"

In November of 2025, Chris joined Kyle on a book tour for Kyle's newly released and highly reviewed book, "One Last Question before You Go." In early November, Kyle called Chris and said, "Hey, I'm gonna do a book reading and signing at the Patagonia in Cardiff. Would Garden 31 like to come and be the official nonprofit," and Chris was happy to join in support of both his friend and his organization. What began as a single stop quickly grew into Chris joining a larger portion of the tour, including appearances in Cardiff with members of his own community in attendance, as well as stops at the Ventura and Santa Cruz locations.

Chris expressed deep gratitude for the trip and for everyone he encountered along the way: **"It was absolutely amazing. It was magical. The people at Patagonia were amazing.** For me, it was kind of surreal to even be associated with Patagonia in that light because I have such a high reverence and admiration for that company and that organization and what they do and their featured sustainability initiatives and endeavors for that kind of like lead the world as far as I'm concerned in what clothing companies and brands can do for our planet. You know, 1% for the planet... so that was amazing just to have Patagonia welcoming us and being able to align with their mission."

Each of the three locations they visited stood out in its own way, but the Cardiff and Santa Cruz stops were especially meaningful. In Cardiff, Chris felt deeply welcomed by the Patagonia staff and was moved to see his community show up for him and for Garden 31. One of his mentees, who had just been released from juvenile hall, was even able to attend. Chris shared, **"it was really his first event and to be able to show him that hey people are out here working so that you and others like you can have a good place was just really really special."**

Visiting Kyle's hometown of Santa Cruz was special in an entirely different way. Not only was their mutual friend—who started it all—Nell Newman able to be there, but it felt surreal to step fully into Kyle's world. **It's one thing to talk with someone and get to know them, but it's another to see them in their element—to watch them inspire others and witness the deep respect their own community has for them.** In that moment, Chris realized there were more similarities between their lives than he had ever imagined...

To read the rest please find our new Blog, "Tales from the Garden" at  
[garden31.org/blog](http://garden31.org/blog)

# MEET THE GARDEN 31 STAFF:



## RIVER MOLINA

River is a Garden 31 intern born and raised in Vista, CA. He is a boxer with aspirations of joining the Marine Corps who found out about Garden 31 while he was in night school. The community that Garden 31 provided him is what supported him in completing night school and keeps him motivated today.

To River, community is a necessity: “in a world that’s so divided, community is needed. People having each others’ backs in a world that people feel like others are going against them. We all live in the same country; we all know the problems going on and we’re all viewing them and we could come together as a community and just know that there is something we can do about it.”

Within this community he is most passionate about the lives that he sees changed through Garden 31. He described seeing someone come into the garden who may not have the best reputation or may not be making the best choices in their life and watching the transformation happen in the garden. He loves that the people at Garden 31 always talk about the changes made in peoples lives, but he never thought he would actually see it, so being able to watch the growth happen within the kids in this community is incredible.

From firsthand experience, River knows that just being in the farms amongst nature is so healing for your mental health. Being able to see critters on the farms while sitting in amongst the flowers and snacking on fresh fruit you just picked off a plant you grew surrounded by coworkers who are more like friends than anything; it’s not work, it’s a family reunion.

If he had to describe Garden 31 in three words he would say:  
Life Changing, Impactful, and Encouraging.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

As we step into a new year, the garden invites us to pause, reflect, and begin again. Winter may look quiet on the surface, but beneath the soil, so much is happening—roots strengthening, seeds resting, and the land preparing for what comes next. This season reminds us that reflection is not inactivity; it is a vital part of growth. Just as we clear spent plants and amend the soil, the new year offers us a chance to honor what we've learned, release what no longer serves us, and intentionally prepare for what we want to cultivate moving forward.

Starting fresh in the garden is an act of hope. Each seed planted carries possibility, shaped by care, patience, and community. At Garden 31, the new year is a time to recommit to nurturing people and the land together—centering equity, regeneration, and connection in all that we grow. As we welcome this next chapter, may we move into it grounded, curious, and ready to grow something beautiful together.



PLEASE REGISTER AT  
GARDEN31.ORG/VOLUNTEER



JOIN US

# FOR OUR FIRST COMMUNITY DAY OF THE NEW YEAR

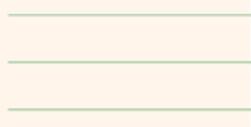


# 1-24-26

8:00AM  
12:00PM

WEAR STURDY, CLOSED-  
TOE SHOES AND BRING  
GLOVES, WATER, AND  
SUN PROTECTION

ALTA VISTA HS  
1575 BONAIR RD  
VISTA, CA 92084



# THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE GARDEN CLUB!

Please check out our website, follow us on all of our social media platforms, and reach out to us with any questions you may have at [community@garden31.org](mailto:community@garden31.org)!



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