



# UPLIFT COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

JUDGES' CHOICE AWARD WINNER



## THE PROJECT: PLANT TEAM!

Uplift's green team worked to green their school through gardening and increasing the presence of plants throughout the building. They inventoried plants, took orders, grew various herb species, and delivered them to classrooms, including a special activity for Mother's Day and an Earth Day seed ball-making session. Through this work, her students practiced their communication and motor skills, and developed deeper connections with the school communities.

**Project Type:** Horticulture

**Students Involved:** 8

**Staff Involved:** 3

**Location:** Chicago

**Grade Levels Involved:** 9 & 12

**Number of Students Impacted:** 33



The work that the students did in this project was inspiring and uplifting to the many adults in our school community. Sometimes students with disabilities are not afforded the same opportunities to participate in projects like this so to see them engage like they did was a huge success.

- Karen Zaccor



## PROCESS

While teaching a horticulture class for cluster (low incidence disability) and SPH (severe and profoundly handicapped) students, educator Karen Zaccor saw an opportunity to provide hands-on learning opportunities while continuing her work to bring touches of nature into her school building. First, the green team inventoried plant-life in rooms across the school and took orders from staff for additional plants. The students then worked to prepare pots with soil, plant seeds, and water them regularly. The team divided up tasks and practiced communicating the planting process to each other. Once plants were grown, the team engaged the school community by providing staff with a catalog of herbs to choose from and then delivering the orders to each classroom. On Earth Day, the students ran a lunchtime opt-in activity to include other students in the creation of seed balls to be gifted to students and staff.

## OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Due to the hard work of Karen Zaccor's horticulture class, Uplift is now significantly greener, with more than 25 new plants delivered throughout the building. Along the way, students developed their communication skills, learning new vocabulary words and practicing instructing others on planting procedures. This work brought joy not only to the participating students, but also inspired and uplifted other members of the school community and prompted conversations about future environmentally focused actions the school could take. Uplift plans to include raised beds in the design for their upcoming courtyard update, and hopes to someday install a greenhouse on the school grounds.

