



GILROY GARDENS

2024 Annual Impact Report

Growing a Legacy of Learning, Community, and Impact

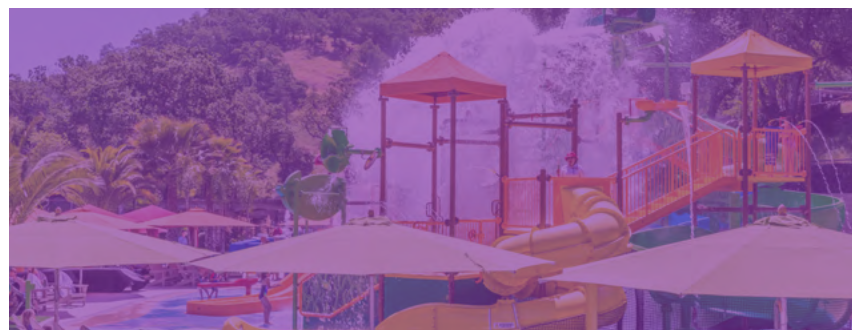


Table of Contents

- 03 Letter from the President
- 04 Letter from the Chairman
- 06 Rooted in Purpose
- 08 A Living Classroom Like No Other
- 10 Youth Development Spotlight
- 12 The Community’s Garden
- 16 An Engine of Economic Vitality
- 20 Branching into the Future
- 22 Get Involved
- 26 Board of Directors
- 27 Leadership Team
- 28 Our Supporters
- 29 Help Us Bloom Bigger

Letter from the President

FROM HOA MINH LE, PRESIDENT & GENERAL MANAGER

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Garden Family,

As I reflect on the milestones that have brought us to this inaugural Annual Report, I am filled with pride and gratitude. For more than 25 years, Gilroy Gardens has stood as a shining example of what a community can achieve when it invests in education, nature, and families.

From humble beginnings, a simple vision — to create a place that nurtures learning, fosters a love of nature, and brings families together — has flourished into something truly remarkable. Gilroy Gardens is not just a place for fun; it is a nonprofit community treasure — a sanctuary where generations come to laugh, learn, and create lifelong memories.

As a nonprofit organization, every dollar we earn is reinvested directly back into the park — to enhance our facilities, nurture our employees, enrich the guest experience, and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. We are not driven by profit; we are driven by purpose. And that purpose has made a profound impact.

Gilroy Gardens belongs to all of us. It is more than a theme park — it is a living testament to what can be achieved when a community invests in one another. While we have operated successfully as a nonprofit, our current model relies almost entirely on revenue generated at the gate. To ensure Gilroy Gardens remains sustainable for future generations, this model must evolve.

This 2024 Annual Report is both a celebration of all we have accomplished together and a call to action. We must work hand-in-hand with our city leaders, stakeholders, and community partners to build a more resilient and sustainable business model for the park’s future.

Our future is bright — but it will only thrive with the continued support of families, city leaders, businesses, and stakeholders who believe in the mission and magic of Gilroy Gardens.

Thank you for being part of our journey — and for helping us create the next chapter in our shared story. Here’s to the next 25 years and to all the memories still to come.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Hoa Minh Le

President and General Manager
Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park

Letter from the Chairman

FROM DAN HARNEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Gilroy Gardens is widely recognized as an important facility in our community for over 25 years. Through the support of our members, donors, sponsors and the dedicated commitment of our leadership, employee, and docent teams, we were able to create numerous memories for over 460,000 visitors in 2024!

Having served on the Board of Directors for the past seven years, in 2024 I was happy to serve as Board Chair representing a dedicated group of community leaders. I would like to recognize the outgoing Chair, Greg Edgar. Greg served as Chair for fourteen years and was instrumental in guiding the park through various challenges, including economic downturns and the global pandemic, ensuring financial stability. Our board and community appreciate his dedication to maintaining Michael Bonfante's vision and are thrilled to have his experience and guidance as an active member of the Board.

As a community board we are mission focused as we move into 2025. We will introduce or enhance many of our edutainment style program initiatives for our members and guests. We aim to expand the reach of our successful Natural Science Day program providing a living laboratory to K-5 students during the school year. A new Education Program position will be established as we begin our efforts to launch the upcoming Gilroy Gardens Foundation. In addition, we will be adding educational elements to some of our existing programs, increasing information about trees, horticulture and environmental preservation inside the park and launching a new agriculturally based signature event in June. Cherry Jubilee will focus on growth, harvest and culinary uses for one of Summer's favorite fruits and include multiple STEM inspired educational experiences for families to enjoy.

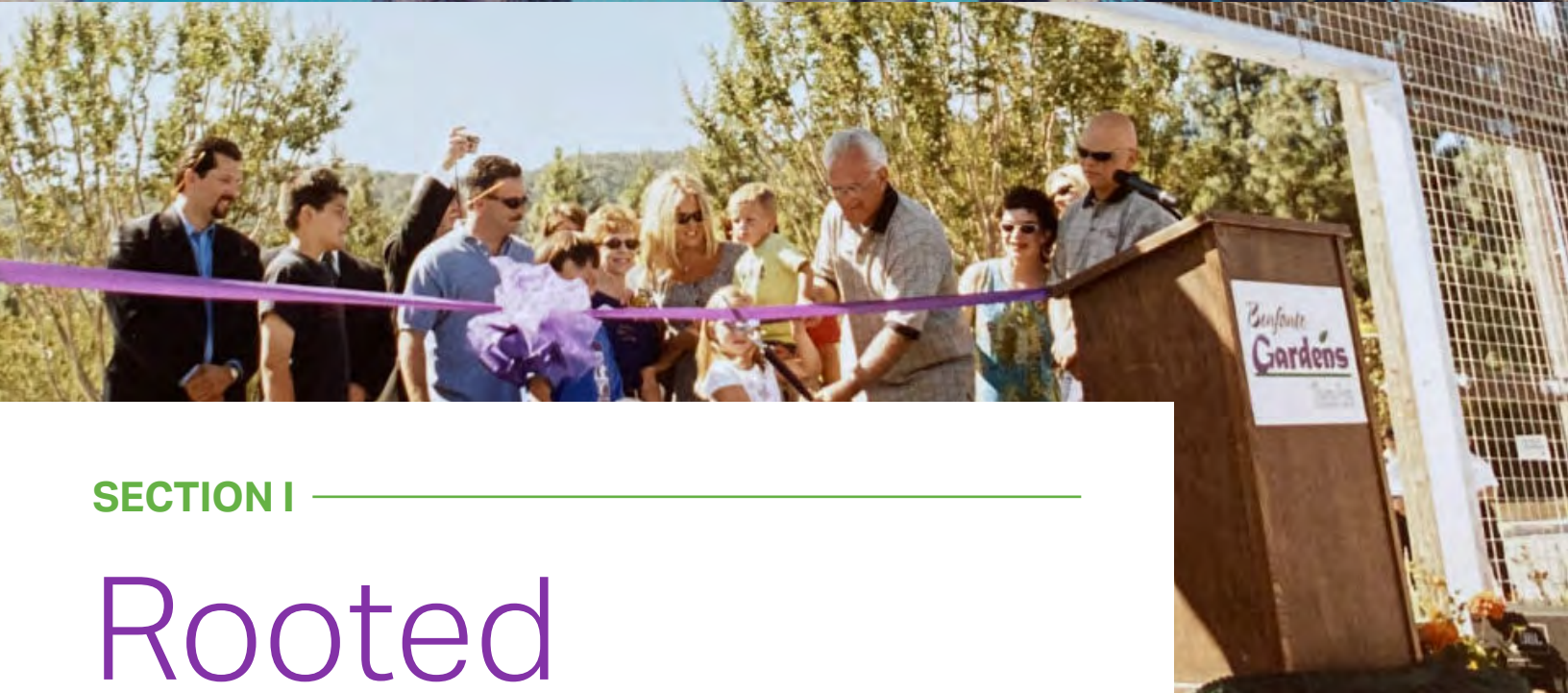
For years, Gilroy Gardens has survived and grown primarily through income generated by our park operations. However, with increasing costs it is more important than ever that we look to enhance other channels of support to be able to continue to provide Gilroy Gardens' unique style of education and appreciation of horticulture for generations to come. Within this inaugural Annual Impact Report, you will see our achievements over the past year, but also a call to action and ways to get involved to help ensure longevity of Gilroy Gardens. My hope is that you will join us in cultivating a brighter, greener future.

Respectfully,

Dan Harney

Chairman of the Board
Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park





SECTION I

Rooted in Purpose

For 25 years, Gilroy Gardens has nurtured a unique mission—combining education, horticulture, and play to inspire generations of families and foster a deep appreciation for the natural world.

Our Guiding Purpose

Gilroy Gardens, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational institution whose mission is to educate and inspire families—especially children—to appreciate horticulture and the importance of trees in our lives by providing fun and memories in a beautiful garden setting.

Seeds of Our Mission

Gilroy Gardens was created and built by Michael Bonfante. In the mid-1980s, Michael began transforming the land surrounding his Tree Haven nursery into a living classroom—a place where nature, learning and joy would come together. He carefully curated extraordinary trees, including the iconic Circus Trees, and recognized that to make his vision sustainable, it would need to engage families through education and entertainment.

Shaping Tomorrow Through Learning

Michael Bonfante’s vision—his love of plants and trees and his commitment to pass this appreciation on through the generations—continues to inspire everyone who works, volunteers, and visits Gilroy Gardens.

Growing with Intention

In this age of environmental urgency, educating youth in science and stewardship is a **national priority**. *Gilroy Gardens intends to be a leader in that mission.*



Park Legacy

Growing minds and memories for 25 years.



A Living Collection

The park is a home to over 10,000 trees.



Welcoming Millions

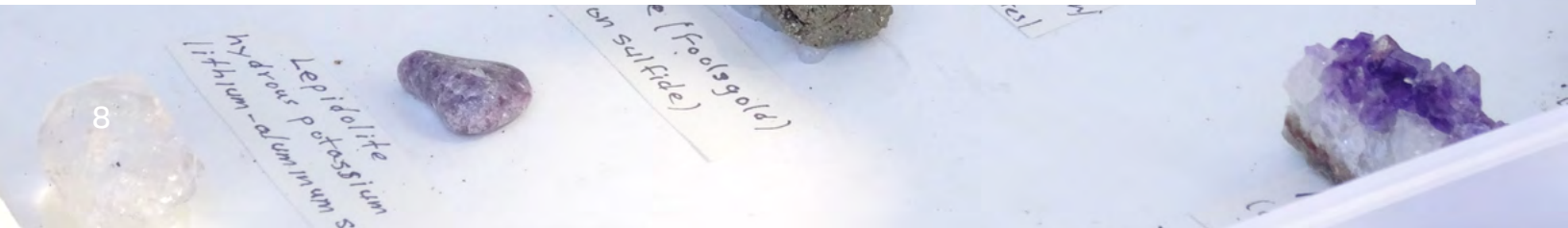
Since opening, the park has hosted more than 9 million visitors.



SECTION II

A Living Classroom Like No Other

Through immersive field trips and hands-on science experiences, Gilroy Gardens brings education to life—engaging thousands of K–5 students each year and cultivating the next generation of curious, confident learners.



In 2024, **3,556** students participated in Natural Science Day—bringing the total to **25,556** students since its inception. These hands-on learning days align with California’s educational standards and bring science to life for K–5 students.



Learning exhibits like The Green Barn, Monarch Butterfly exhibit, Watershed station, and Hydroponics showcase science, conservation, and creativity in a park setting.



Gilroy Gardens is a youth training ground and we pride ourselves in developing local youth and young adults to become the next generation of community and business leaders.

We are expanding with additional educational field trip opportunities throughout the entire year with the addition of the Explorer Field Trip program.



3,556

Students participated in
Natural Science Day 2024

25,556

Total students
participated



It’s all hands-on. Kids look through a microscope and discover things they’ve never seen before. The excitement they feel seeing animals in such a beautiful setting—it’s an experience they just can’t get in a classroom.



Susan Mister
Gilroy Gardens Docent
for 18 Years

Youth Development Spotlight

Gilroy Gardens is proud to be a **training ground for the next generation of leaders**. Over the years, more than **14,200 youth jobs** have been created—**600 in 2024** alone.

“

I first joined Gilroy Gardens as a Food Service Manager [...] but looking back, I realize now that my time there laid the groundwork for everything I’ve accomplished in my career. [...] Managing restaurants, kiosks, and special events taught me how to lead and build strong teams. [...] The most valuable thing I gained [...] was a strong work ethic. [...] The skills you build here—teamwork, leadership, business savvy, and a strong work ethic—will stay with you for life. I started at a theme park, and now I build worlds. Wherever you dream of going, your journey can start right here.



Trung Trinh
Senior Vice President of Product Development at Infinigods

“

As a child, I spent many summer days enjoying the rides and treats at Gilroy Gardens. [...] Working in cash control there, I developed valuable skills [...] that laid a strong foundation for my nursing practice. [...] I am confident these foundational skills will support my professional growth for years to come.



Grant Stephens
RN, BSN, PCCN

“

Gilroy Gardens will always hold a special place for me. It was my first job during my final year of high school. [...] I remember the joy of working there during the summer, getting to interact with customers, and getting to know coworkers. [...] I worked in Park Security and, after [...] support from management, I got a position in Group Sales. [...] It was through the recommendations of former managers and co-workers that helped me so immensely during my career. [...] A decision I will always be proud to have made.



Nathan Doyle
Seventh Grade English Teacher, Green Valley Middle School

“

I have worked in law enforcement for 12 years, and my experience at Gilroy Gardens prepared me for the next chapter of my life. [...] In the Marketing Department, I learned to adapt to a rapidly changing and fast-paced environment [...] and develop public relations skills [...] I served as a manager in the Admissions Department, where I interacted face-to-face with the public every day. [...] I created lasting memories and friendships [...] which I still cherish.



Daniel Martinez
Police Officer at Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety



SECTION III

The Community's Garden

Through inclusive programming and strong community partnerships, Gilroy Gardens continues to provide meaningful access to nature, learning, and family fun for all residents of Gilroy and beyond.

**49,907**

active members in 2024

**8,318**

guests participated in Gilroy Appreciation Day

**855**

guests gained free access through Gilroy Reads

**4,484**

Gilroy residents received discounted admission



The park has become a place for learning, literacy, and legacy—for every generation.



Jane Howard
Board Member

Through partnerships with the Gilroy Unified School District, Santa Clara County Library, and numerous organizations, Gilroy Gardens provides meaningful access for diverse communities.

Inspiring a Community Through Literacy

Since 2012, **Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park** has proudly partnered with the **Santa Clara County Gilroy Library** to launch **Gilroy Reads**—a community reading initiative that celebrates literacy and rewards participants with free admission to the park.

Over **8,400 community members** have earned complimentary tickets through their commitment to reading.

Beyond incentives, Gilroy Reads brings literature to life through **librarian-led storytimes** at The Green Barn in Gilroy Gardens, fostering imagination and a love for storytelling in young readers.



The Green Barn – Nature Meets Imagination

Located near the Panoramic Wheel, The Green Barn is an interactive space that blends science, art, and literacy through hands-on experiences—all included with park admission.



Nature Exchange
Kids bring in natural finds like leaves or rocks to explore under a high-powered microscope and learn more about the environment.



Art Studio
Nature-themed art activities include rubbings, collages, coloring sheets, and displays of kids' creations.



Reading Nook
A cozy spot with pillows, a grassy rug, and a library of storybooks and field guides for quiet reading or family storytime.

The Green Barn inspires discovery and creativity while offering a peaceful break during a fun-filled park day.



SECTION IV

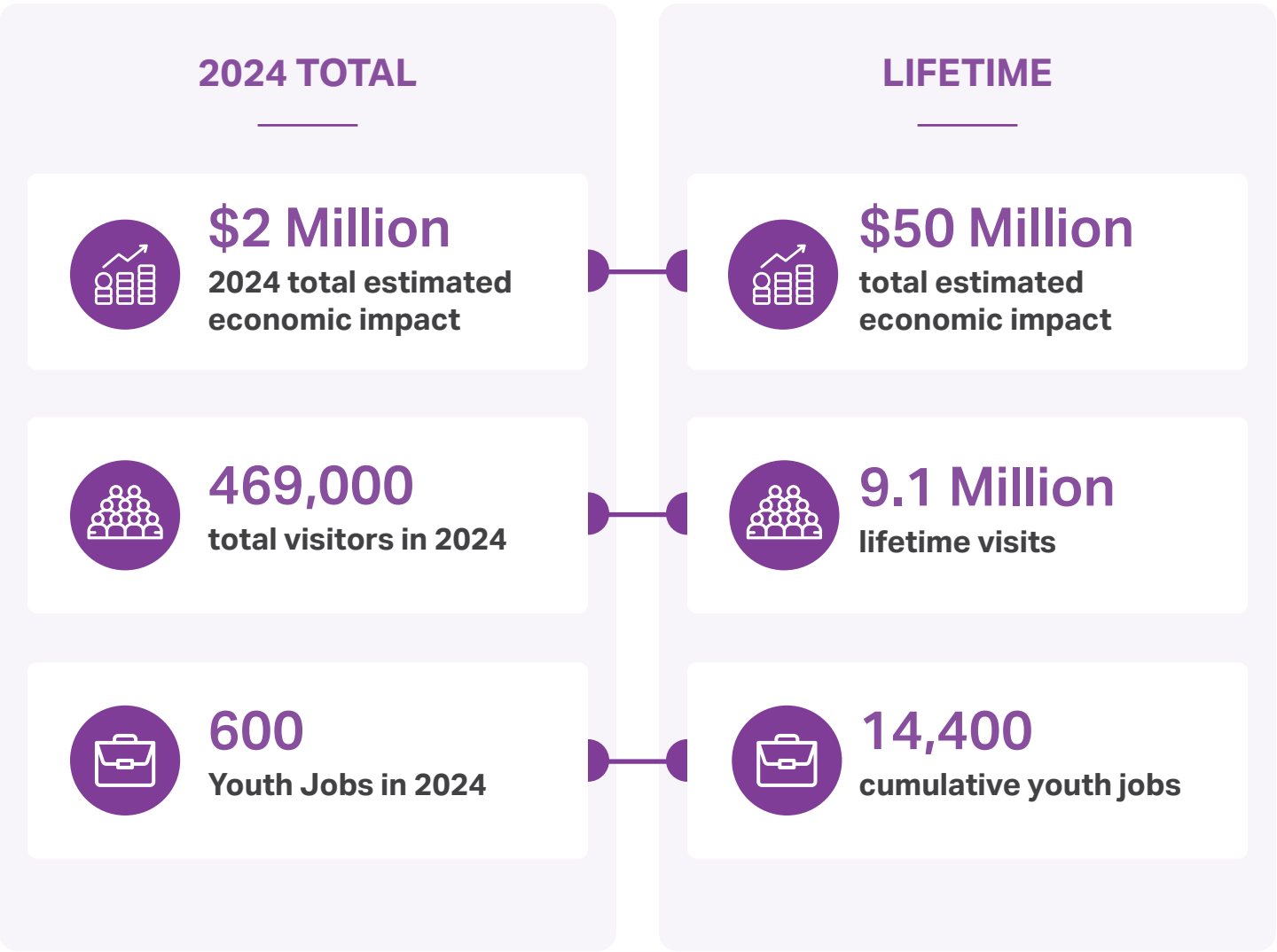
An Engine of Economic Vitality

As a beloved regional destination, Gilroy Gardens drives economic growth, supports local businesses, and creates jobs—welcoming nearly half a million visitors annually and contributing millions to the local economy.

Gilroy Gardens is not only a destination for families—it’s a vital economic engine for the region.

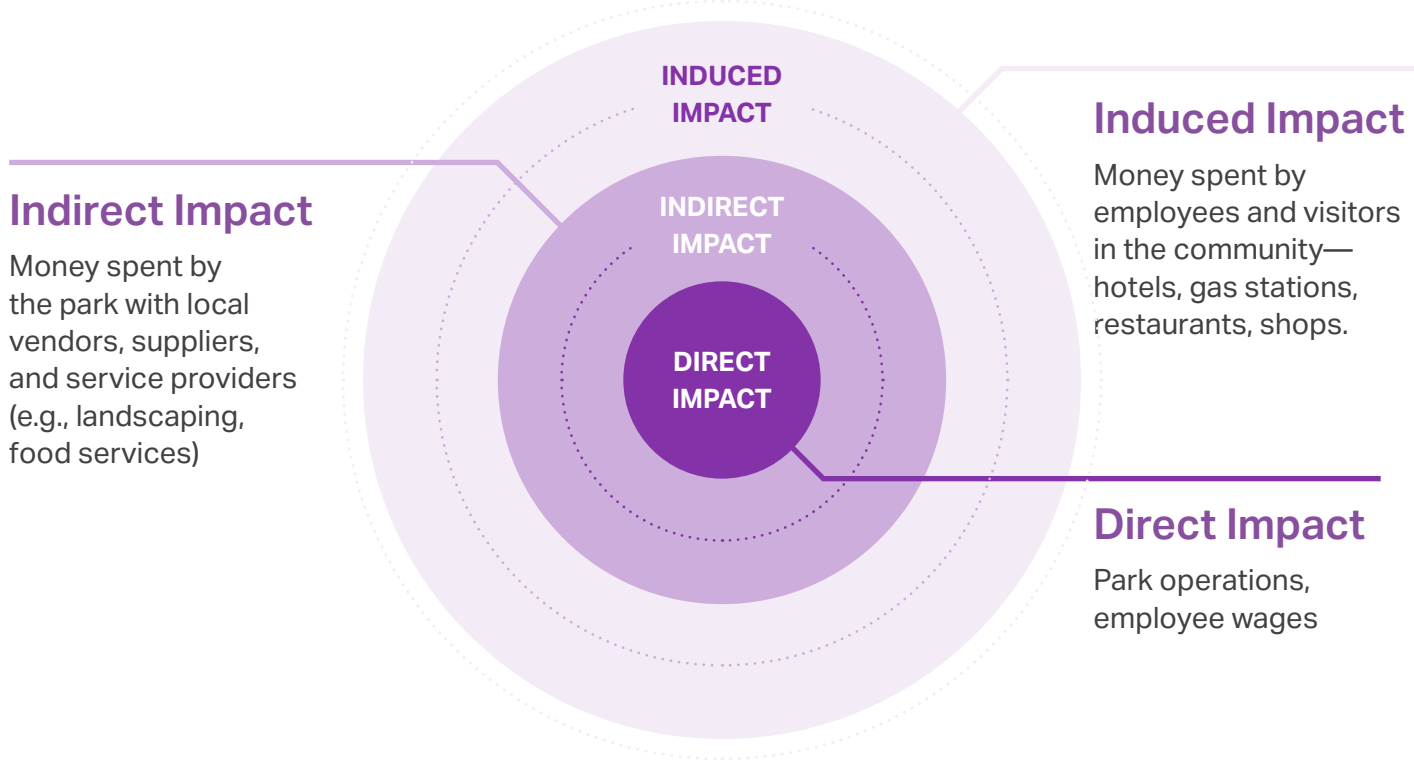
With 93% of its nearly half a million annual visitors coming from outside Gilroy, the park drives consistent tourism spending across hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and local shops. In 2024 alone, the park contributed an estimated \$2.13 million in economic impact, with a cumulative total of \$50 million since opening.

Gilroy Gardens also creates hundreds of seasonal and youth employment opportunities, develops local talent, and strengthens civic identity. As both a beloved attraction and an anchor for regional growth, the park plays a key role in shaping Gilroy’s economic landscape.



Ripple Effect

The economic impact of Gilroy Gardens extends well beyond the park gates, fueling local employment, supporting small businesses, and driving regional growth through a powerful cycle of direct, indirect, and induced spending.



Tourism Breakdown

As a premier destination in the region, Gilroy Gardens draws the vast majority of its visitors from outside the city—boosting tourism revenue and amplifying Gilroy’s presence on the regional map.





SECTION V

Branching into the Future

With a focus on equity, innovation, and impact, Gilroy Gardens is expanding its role as a horticultural learning lab—bringing nature-based education to more students, schools, and communities across California.

Gilroy Gardens is preparing to expand its impact as the premier horticultural learning lab in California.

With the foundational programs and partnerships now in place, the next chapter will focus on expanding access, deepening educational impact, and reaching more students year-round. With additional support, the park intends to scale its outreach to more school districts and enhance curriculum integration for broader grade levels.

Key Goals



Mature our
Education
Programming



Strengthen
partnerships with
schools and colleges

In 2024, Gilroy Gardens expanded its educational reach with the launch of Explorer Field Trips—designed to bring year-round, self-guided science experiences to more students. With additional support, the park could further broaden its reach by increasing participation from underserved schools throughout the region.



Get Involved

Support Gilroy Gardens and be part of something truly meaningful. Whether through donations, sponsorship, or volunteering, your involvement helps preserve a unique community treasure dedicated to education, nature, and family fun.

Support the Park

Your investment in Gilroy Gardens goes beyond the gates—it nurtures a legacy of learning, conservation, and joy for generations to come.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



CASH DONATIONS (ONLINE)

Make a direct impact with a secure online gift. Every donation supports vital programs, preservation efforts, and educational experiences.



IN-KIND DONATIONS

Provide valuable resources and services that help the park grow. From supplies to professional expertise, your generosity strengthens our mission.



DONATE STOCK

A smart way to give—donating appreciated stock can benefit you and Gilroy Gardens. Consult your financial advisor to learn more.

Volunteer Opportunities



DOCENT PROGRAM

Inspire Young Minds and Share Your Passion for Nature!

For over 25 years, more than 3,000 incredible Docents have contributed over 227,000 hours of volunteer service. In 2024, we are proud to have 130 active Docents continuing this legacy of education, enrichment, and community engagement.



STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Step Into Science and Nature!

Join the Student Volunteer Program to gain hands-on experience in environmental education and guest engagement. Learn new skills, make friends, and make a difference—while having fun every step of the way!

Become a Sponsor

SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

Brand Visibility

Reach a diverse audience of families, students, and tourists year-round.

Community Impact

Support a nonprofit that champions conservation, education, and family-friendly entertainment.

Marketing Opportunities

Benefit from digital promotions, on-site activations, and creative ad placements.

Custom Packages

Tailored sponsorships to meet your goals and reflect your brand’s social responsibility values.

SPECIALIZED SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Event Sponsorships

Feature your brand at signature events like Cherry Jubilee, Carnival Nights, The Great Big BOO, and North Pole Nights.

Attraction Partnerships

Align your name with beloved rides, gardens, or educational exhibits.

Media & Digital Promotions

Gain visibility through our website, email campaigns, and social media.

In-Park Activations

Create memorable experiences through branded giveaways, installations, and visitor engagement opportunities.



Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors and leadership team are united by a shared commitment to preservation, education, and community impact. They ensure that a meaningful portion of annual revenues is reinvested into sustaining the park’s natural beauty and long-term viability—enhancing Gilroy Gardens as a treasured public asset for future generations.



Dan Harney
Chairman



Jay Baksa
Treasurer



Jane Howard
Secretary



Greg Edgar
Community Director



Steve Peat
Community Director



Frank Johnson
Community Director



Kurt Michielssen
Community Director



Mayor Greg Bozzo
Council Director

We welcome new Board Member Kurt Michelsen. Our board expresses thanks and gratitude for the 13 years of service of outgoing board member Rob Onetto.

Leadership Team

The leadership team at Gilroy Gardens, led by President and General Manager Hoa Le, is focused on driving revenue growth while enhancing the guest experience. The team works to maintain Gilroy Gardens’ unique position as both a beloved entertainment destination and a valuable educational resource, ensuring every visitor enjoys a memorable experience while learning about nature and conservation.



Hoa Minh Le
President & General Manager



Alex Villalobos
Vice President & Assistant GM



Trevor Wilson
Vice President of Marketing & Sales




Sandy Le
Director of Revenue




Michael Fulcher
Director of Operations

Our Supporters

Every achievement in this report is rooted in the generosity of our supporters. From corporate partners like AWS and Coca-Cola to local families and volunteers, these champions help bring our mission to life. Their investments—whether through grants, donations, sponsorships, or in-kind gifts—have expanded access, enhanced programs, and created unforgettable learning experiences for thousands of children.




AWS via ChangeX
"The Modern Nature Detective" program




Coca-Cola
Sponsorships and rebates

KRAMER FAMILY
Kramer Family
Natural Science Day supporter


In-Kind & Additional Support



\$11,215
in corporate donations



\$5,000
in individual donations



\$38,929
raised through recycling and docent contributions

Help Us Bloom Bigger

Every tree starts with a seed—and every transformed life starts with opportunity. At Gilroy Gardens, we believe that nature, education, and joy should be accessible to all children, regardless of background.

With additional support, we can expand our field trip programs, build deeper partnerships with schools, train more young leaders, and bring hands-on environmental learning to communities that need it most. Together, we can grow something bigger than a park—we can grow a generation of curious minds, compassionate citizens, and stewards of the natural world.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



DONATE



VOLUNTEER



PARTNER



ADVOCATE

Join us in cultivating a brighter, greener future.





*"It's about children. It's about learning. It's about
planting something that lasts."*

Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational institution

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