1) Describe your first interaction with City Garden? Was it an in-person experience? A story told by a friend?

- "I knew about City Garden because my next store neighbors, the Bayocs, were a founding family. Then I heard about it through the St. Louis City Chapter of MOMS (moms supporting other moms) Club. The parents in that group spent YEARS navigating and researching where they would send their kids to kindergarten. Some of the members told me '***you are so lucky that you live in your neighborhood where you can get into City Garden, the best grade school in the city***.'"

- "Probably helping my brother stuff envelopes for the first gala in the old church and seeing the kids heading out from the basement classrooms to recess."

- Four respondents, nearly half of our response pool, were either ***introduced to or engaged by Christie Huck***.

- Folks shared words like ***powerful*** and ***important***.

- One respondent met a group of City Garden ***students*** and was ***blown away by their openness and candor***.

- One respondent visited the website, read about the ABAR programming, watched a ***compelling video*** highlighting the ***holistic*** and ***cosmic*** approach City Garden takes to serving and teaching children.

2) Who was the first City Garden affiliated person you met? What was that experience like?

Seven respondents, more than half of our response pool, said they first met ***Christie Huck***. Their experiences included…

- Being ***excited*** to do the work.
- Being ***instantly connected*** to the mission.
- Anticipating that board service would be ***rewarding and fulfilling***, which has been true.
- Thinking, "it's astonishing really, how much work it takes to provide a ***good education to a marginalized community*** in St. Louis."
- Feeling grateful that there are people at City Garden doing this ***critical work***, because it's some of the most ***fundamental work*** any community anywhere could do, and to see it being neglected by our city and state institutions is soul-crushing.
- Thinking Christie was so grounded and committed upon meeting her.

Other respondents referred to Pat Garret when he worked in enrollment. Currently Pat serves as our Junior High History & Language Arts guide. Folks said he was the ***nicest*** and ***most welcoming*** person ever, that he was also ***generous, positive, and helpful.***

3) What was your first experience like being inside City Garden? Did you tour the building, did you meet any students?

- "I didn't tour the building because I didn't want to be crushed if we didn't get into the lottery. The first night of the kindergarten potluck was the first time I entered the school. I thought the school looked like a ***contemporary art college***."

- "My experience with St. Louis schools includes the Ladue District (my daughter has attended since K and is now a Senior) and De La Salle/La Salle. ***City Garden felt very different from both. More nurturing, more student centered***."

- "It was ***eye-opening***. I was blown away by the space and the ***high regard that the students and staff seemed to have*** for it and each other. I did tour the building and saw students in action."

- "I met Christie at the school building, and after seeing the classrooms and how the overall school atmosphere was ***completely different from traditional schools***, it was ***clear something special was happening***. I was also struck by the diversity of the student body and staff."

- "City is not just a school; it's a ***community organization***."

4) What captivated your interest about City Garden?

- "The way it was building an ***antiracist community that extended beyond the school walls*** and beyond the confines of traditional schooling."

- "That the student body was the ***most economically and racially diverse school around***."

- "City Garden proves that ***education can have a magical, transformative effect*** on people and communities."

- "My dissertation topic focused on racial inequities in the U.S. education system, and it was gratifying to see a school that takes seriously the charge to educate ALL children regardless -- indeed, because of -- racial disparities. I believe the Montessori method is well suited to this goal given its emphasis on educating the whole child, but the firm and resounding commitment to ABAR really gives fuller credence to the importance placed on addressing racial inequities in academic outcome and the lived environment of the student body. ***ABAR at City Garden is not window dressing***; it is the guiding principal and informs every facet of the school from teacher training to parent involvement to curriculum development to the board of directors."

- "The joyful and focused energy of the children, the sense that ***the school building was like a neighborhood that just happened to fit inside of a building.*** The loyalty, commitment, and compassion that the staff demonstrated toward their work and children."

5) Has City Garden taught you anything about yourself? Has your relationship with City Garden deepened your understanding of anything?

- "City Garden has strengthened passion about educational opportunities for all students. I have learned more about ***racial equity, gender expression, and ABAR***."

- "My understanding of myself as a ***white woman in the world has been challenged, deepened, and unpacked as a result of my involvement with City Garden***. I have been fortunate to attend a weekend Crossroads training workshop as well as ColorBrave sessions. But beyond those I have sought out other avenues and opportunities to examine my own biases and my awareness of how I operate in the world, and I have learned that this examination is never finished. I am so grateful to City Garden for ***offering me opportunities for this sort of reflection and for creating a welcoming environment in which to do so***."

- "I have done diversity and inclusion work since 1990. I have learned more about my identity, my understanding of the impact racial oppression has had on my family and my experiences in the world both professionally and personally in the past six years than all of the previous years combined. ***It is because the work is not an event, it has become an integrated part of my lifestyle and cosmic task."***

- "City Garden has taught me that ***dismantling racism and white supremacy is on a continuum, and that we will be forced to address our internal biases over and over and over again***. And that this the work. The work is being vigilant. The work is being patient. The work is showing up to serve community. City Garden has ***taught me what it feels like to be a part of a small, familial community and a contributor to global change at the exact same time***."

6) What do you think City Garden means to the greater St. Louis community?

- "It stands out as a ***possibility engine and a leader***. It shows that our schools can put equity at the center of their work and it enhances the school experience for everyone."

- "A ***spark of hope*** for a better us."

- "I think City Garden can be the St. Louis community's ***north star of antiracist, public education*** and its pilot for a new, dynamic, and innovative way of teaching and holding community."

- "It is and should be considered ***a model for schools that struggle with seeing each child as a whole person***. More than anything City Garden models the truth that the goal of achieving racial parity in educational outcomes is long and hard and does not end because it is so systemic, but that the goal is worth striving for every day without end."

7) How likely are you to recommend to parents that they send their children to City Garden (if possible)?

- 91% of respondents said Very Likely, and 9% of respondents said Likely.

8) Feel free to use the space below to expand on your previous answer.

- "This school will offer children the chance to ***become whole, dynamic, thoughtful, and compassionate people***. This school will empower children to find and use their voice."

- "I would love for my kid to be able to ***attend CG in the future***."

- "***It's my dream school***. My close friends who are not a part of CG would LOVE to go CG but don't live in the catchment. If I meet parents outside of my friend group who have interest I explain that it's MY dream school but they should go on a school tour."

9) How likely are you to recommend to folks that they should attend or engage with City Garden's community building and ABAR programming?

- 91% of respondents said Very Likely, and 9% of respondents said Not Likely.

10) Feel free to use the space below to expand on your previous answer.

- "So much care and thought go into the programs that are offered, and they are done so with the realization that no single program is going to lead to lasting change. The ***emphasis on the journey*** is one of the most valuable aspects of the programming and community building."

- "This programming is so important for St. Louis. It is very ***accessible and offered*** in a supportive environment."