

Quality of Life Conference
Savannah, Georgia





Growing Healthy Food, People and Communities

Background

The Secretary of Agriculture launched the Initiative when he broke ground on the People's Garden at USDA Headquarters on February 12, 2009.

The Secretary challenges all employees to create similar gardens at USDA facilities or in their communities.





Growing Healthy Food, People and Communities



What is the goal of the Initiative?

The People's Garden Initiative establishes community and school gardens across the nation to unite neighborhoods in a common effort and inspire simple solutions to challenges facing our country – from hunger to the environment.



What is a People's Garden?





Growing Healthy Food, People and Communities



1 – A People's Garden is Sustainable



Growing Healthy Food, People and Communities

2 - A People's Garden is a Collaborative Effort





Growing Healthy Food, People and Communities

3 – A People's Garden Benefits the Community





Today:

- There are 1,358 People's Gardens, to view locations:

www.thepeoplesgarden.gov

- There is a garden in every state, 3 U.S. territories and 5 foreign countries.
- USDA is working with over 400 local partners to create and maintain gardens across the country.





People's Gardens Provide a Place for Community-based Agriculture

***To Grow Healthy
Communities and Neighborhoods***





Why Incorporate Agriculture into Communities?

We are facing a modern paradox of HUNGER and OBESITY

Both problems share a common cause: MALNUTRITION



MALNUTRITION





Why Incorporate Agriculture into Communities?

Diet- Related Disparities

Rates of obesity and diabetes are highest and have risen the most rapidly among people of color and in lower income neighborhoods (Health and Human Services).

- 1 in 4 Latino families struggles to put food on the table. Across our country, 26.9% of Hispanic families are food insecure as compared to the national average of 14.6% of families (USDA 2008).**
- African Americans develop hypertension at an earlier age, tend to have more severe high blood pressure and are less likely to receive treatment (American Dietetic Association).**
- Type 2 Diabetes is epidemic among American Indians. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness, non-traumatic limb amputation and kidney failure (Health and Human Services).**



Why Incorporate Agriculture into Communities?

Social Equity

Low-income families face numerous barriers, including:

- Lack of Safe Places for Exercise
- Lack of Access to Fresh Healthy Food, especially fruits and vegetables – Food Deserts
- Food Insecurity



Why Incorporate Agriculture into Communities?

- During the school year more than **21 million children** receive free or reduced price breakfast and lunch each day.
- During the summer months, when most schools are closed, many of these children lose that opportunity for a nutritious meal each day.



- Currently, the Summer Food Service Program only reaches **3 million children** on an average summer day.
- Our track record leaves much to be desired. This was true before the economic downturn and is even worse now as governments at all levels face budget constraints.
- At the same time, more families are struggling to stretch their budgets just to feed their children.





Share Your Harvest!

- Last year, USDA and its partners donated over **130,000 lbs** of fresh produce to local feeding assistance programs through our **Share Your Harvest** effort.





The SIMPLE
act of
planting a garden
can...





Enhance Physical and Mental Health



- People who have access to fresh fruits and vegetables eat more fruits and vegetables
- Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables improves nutrition especially for diet related diseases such as obesity and diabetes
- Gardening provides a low impact exercise for people within a large range of physical ability
- In many neighborhoods community gardens are one of few safe places for children and adults to play, relax or interact





Create Teaching Opportunities

Educate children and adults about a variety of topics
- agriculture, ecology, biology, soil science, nutrition,
and cultural traditions



- Children who garden have greater knowledge about nutrition and healthy eating habits
- Create the next generation of farmers and ranchers
- Develop healthy behaviors



Connect Races, Ethnicities and Generations

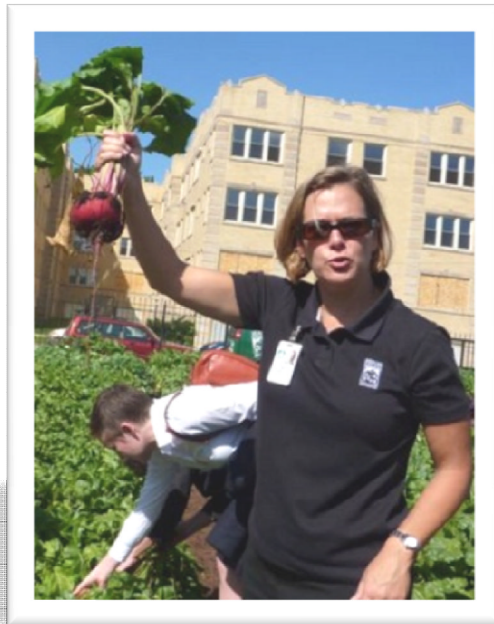
Expand the ability of citizens from all racial, cultural, ethnic and geographic backgrounds to share their traditions and beliefs.



They are a safe and neutral gathering place in communities and foster interaction.

Promote intergenerational interactions and mentoring.





Foster Pride

- Cultivate self sufficiency –and feeling of self worth
- Provide opportunities for accomplishment and success for a range of abilities
- Enable Empowerment





Help the Environment

- Improve soil health
- Create habitat for wildlife
- Improve water quality
- Promote sustainable practices



***The SIMPLE act of planting a garden can...
help make real and lasting change in communities
at highest risk and greatest need.***





Help Us

Grow Healthy Food, People and Communities

- Start a **People's Garden** in your Community. For more information visit www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden
- USDA has new online tools (www.endhunger.usda.gov) to assist those who want to help. The Stakeholders' Guide has great information specifically on **Summer Food Service Program**.
- Ensure families know to call the **National Hunger Hotline** to find a site in their community. (1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE)
- Support Lets Move! www.letsmove.org

REGISTER your Garden a www.thepeoplesgarden.gov



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“More grows in the garden than the gardener sows.”