

# ACE Weekly

07.16.09  
LEXINGTON'S **FREE** NEWSPAPER



## Lex Grows



Community  
Gardening  
in the  
Bluegrass

What Lex Needs: Rob Morris and CM Doug Martin  
have a few ideas

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# GROW LEXINGTON

## More Gardens for a Greener Tomorrow

### By Jim Embry

When Michelle Obama made front page news with the White House garden back in March, our phone was busy for several weeks with so much unanticipated interest and excitement. This year we have had the divine blessing to be involved with these new gardens: 1) Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program with the keen leadership from **Diane Fleet** has developed a small garden and has their sights on cultivating their 40 acres into a working farm with edible orchards, greenhouses, animals and much more; 2) Nelson Ave. Art Garden has been adopted by the youth from the Drug Court who work in the garden every week. **Judge Lucinda Masterson** who recognizes that continuing to lock up our young people is not a sustainable practice has pulled off her black robe and has joined the youth in getting her hands in the soil — good and dirty — to grow food. 3) **Eudocia Jones** of Green Ares Park Garden and Sherrie Muhammad of Malboro Park have been the key organizers for these community gardens in LFUCG parks. 4) the Gainesway Community Center hosted its garden opening on April with African drumming leading the way, use of a Tibetan singing bowl to invoke sacred connections and a prayer to dedicate the space. 5) located on Columbia Ave. this new garden brings renewed life to an empty lot 6) several churches have begun Gardens of Eating and they include Central Baptist, Beaumont Presbyterian, Centenary; 7) William Wells Brown Elementary School received a Startup Kit from attending the April School Garden Workshop and has a garden organized by **Lindsay Feazell** with the after school and summer program, 8) the UK Gaines Center and Transylvania have begun a community garden, 9) the Dunbar Memorial Garden consisting of native plants, flowers and trees is simply a knock out this year! 10) Videographer Cynthia Bryant is working on a documentary of Lexington community gardens with its premier this fall. ■

[See page 14 for the July 30 Community Gardens Tour.]

## Digging In

### Meet Lexington's Compton Mentor Fellow

### By Miranda Hileman

I'm Miranda Hileman, 2009 Compton Mentor Fellow, and have just arrived in Lexington. I am ready to get my hands dirty and grow some food!

Since graduating from Berea College in May with a degree in Sustainable Agriculture, I have been fortunate enough to work in partnership with Jim Embry, founder and director of Sustainable Communities Network.

For the next year, I will be working with Jim and others to create and sustain community and school gardens all over the city. I chose Jim as my mentor for this fellowship because of his passion for creating a sustainable community and because he focuses on food production and consumption. We share the conviction to educate people about the sources of their food and share the joy of growing and eating our own food.

My fellowship proposal entitled, "Grow Lexington! Nurturing Young Minds on Common Ground for a Greener Tomorrow," focuses on providing food security for low-income residents of Lexington. I hope to provide a hand in enhancing the existing community gardens, and supporting the development of school gardens and educational programs in and around the city. I believe that food security is a basic human right. I want all people to have access to affordable, fresh food and to be able to take part in food production.

Improving the local food system of a community is one way to increase the resilience of the city to some of the environmental and economic pressures headed our way.

Through working in the schools with teachers, I hope that we can reach the children of Lexington, teach them about



Miranda Hileman

the importance of good food grown in a local economy and ultimately educate students to allow them to make just, sustainable choices in their lives and their communities.

**Gardening with Class ...  
join the Movement.**

Spring garden season arrived in Lexington as usual this year, but some new ideas about where to till up the Earth and sow seed accompanied this re-birth. Some of us thought 'What better place to plant than a schoolyard?' Gardens are a great way to teach more than just science. History, language arts, responsibility, economics, poetry, math, teamwork, languages, world culture and art can be taught in a garden and integrated into the standard curriculum in schools.

A school garden is a place that harbors creativity and brings it to life.

School gardens teach children learn where food comes from. Research show that children will taste and eat food that they grow and will develop better nutritional eating habits.

So school gardens like the one at the White House begun by Michelle Obama are a no-brainer for Kentucky besieged with obesity and many health problems related to food consumption.

California usually in the forefront of progressive legislation passed a state law several years ago requiring every school to have a garden that is integrated into the entire curriculum. Our children in Kentucky deserve no less.

This spring we collaborated with the Kentucky Green



Judge Masterson in her garden

The Compton Foundation annually sponsors ten Compton Mentor Fellowships, the program is based on the belief that life-changing experiences occur when formal learning becomes transformed by action. They believe that complementary learning, creativity and a serious commitment helps one see and appreciate the entire world through different eyes and a broadened perspective. The Fellows create their proposals alongside Mentors and through the self-directed nature, the Fellowship is meant to deepen and enrich knowledge, and guide Fellows to apply new understanding of themselves and the world in original ways.

Info [www.comptonmentorfellowship.org](http://www.comptonmentorfellowship.org).



how we can nurture the young minds that we teach about our sacred connection to the Earth.

One highlight was watching a short video of 15-year-old Sam Levin's presentation at Terra Madre 2008 in Torino, Italy about his school garden in Massachusetts. (Sam will be in Louisville this November speaking at the Local Farms Healthy Foods Conference).

The workshop included a tour of the Arboretum led by Roberta Burns. At the June 12 workshop, Josh Radner, a teacher at Yates Elementary School in Lexington, spoke about his use of a garden in his work at Yates and the Day Treatment Center.

Jim has been working throughout Lexington for several years now to help create community and school gardens and knew it was important to give school teachers resources to support their efforts. The California School Garden Manual was given to each participant and served as the primary resource material for the workshops. Fifteen schools that participated in the workshops received a School Garden Startup Kit valued at \$400 and included such things as a garden cart, tools, books, plant, seeds and soil to jump start their school garden efforts. Each participating school also received a copy

and Healthy Schools Initiative, the UK Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment and the Kentucky School Garden Network to offer workshops that educate and inspire the movement to develop gardens in every school in Kentucky.

Word went out around the state about workshops being held in Lexington on April 18 and June 12 and nearly 200 teachers, parents, volunteers and community members registered to attend these two workshops.

We did not anticipate the tremendous interest coming

**California passed a state law several years ago requiring every school to have a garden that is integrated into the entire curriculum. Our children in Kentucky deserve no less.**

**—Miranda Hileman**

from every corner of our state. Folks came from the west—Paducah and Bowling Green area; from the north—Erlanger and Covington area; from the east and south—Hazard and Corbin area; from the central-Berea, Lexington and Frankfort area and Louisville.

“Gardening with Class—Creating and Sustaining your School Garden”, designed by Jim Embry of Sustainable Communities Network was an exciting and inspiring experience for all.

He served as the workshop speaker/facilitator and organized a thoughtful and enriching presentation, about

of The Edible School Yard by Alice Waters for their libraries. ■

Join the newly formed Bluegrass School and Community Garden Network and the Kentucky School Garden Network! Info [www.sustainlex.org](http://www.sustainlex.org) or 859.312.7024.

*There will be a reception, July 23, 2009 from 4pm to 6pm at 112 N. Upper St. to welcome Miranda to Lexington. Food and drinks in the KCCJ/CKCPJ office building, 112 North Upper Street; afterwards Thursday Night Live at Cheapside Park for great music and community spirit.*

worms) each and will be fed weekly with vegetable food scraps from Fresh Approach.

The ambition is to create an enterprise that sells worms, worm castings and worm tea and provide an educational experience for children.

The worms are on a schedule of eating food scraps during the day and making babies at night so we should have about 1 million worms in six months. God's Worms project will also provide support for other community efforts to set up worm composting bins in schools, homes and businesses.

Call to conduct workshops or provide materials and support. Worms are hugely important in our ecosystems. They can help to decompose literally tons of organic material each year. So when you think of “reduce, reuse, and recycle” don't forget to feed the worms! Volunteers are needed and are welcome to get involved in this wonderful warm worm poop experience! ■

*Contact info, [embryjim@gmail.com](mailto:embryjim@gmail.com), 859.312.7024.*

## God's Garden

Feeding Our People In Need

By Ginny Ramsey, co-director Catholic Action Center

God's Garden is a new project of the Catholic Action Center that will help feed those in need in our community by utilizing the gifts of our land, our people and community volunteerism. This project is a collaboration of Bluegrass Community Technical College's PeaceMeal Garden and the Catholic Action Center. By utilizing the expertise of the BCTC Organic Garden organizers and bringing together community volunteers, our homeless who have many agricultural skills, and over 3000 youth who come to Lexington on mission projects this summer, God's Garden has become a catalyst for learning, volunteering and production of two acres of organic produce that will be shared with groups and organizations who feed the homeless in Lexington and with families in need.

God's Garden is not only about feeding those in need with organic produce, but also giving the knowledge and training to others so they too may “grow their own” in backyard and neighborhood areas. An educational component for our community youth and youth from across the country who participate is included in their volunteer time. Jessica Ballard, the Farm Manager, has added the educational component by explaining the process of organic farming to the youth groups so that while they are the workers in the field, they also are gaining knowledge of how to use the land to produce the best crops. Some of the Mission Groups from across the country have been inspired to take this project to their home states and plant a God's Garden to feed their own families in need.

In this difficult economic time, we at the Catholic Action Center see the face of those in need daily. In the past 10 years we have served over 2.8 million meals to men, women, and children who would otherwise go without. We are an all volunteer ministry that depends on volunteers and donations of food.

None of the produce will be sold: it is a project to feed those in need and to give those in need a way of helping, learning and having the dignity that giving back to the community brings. God's Garden will not only capture that volunteer spirit but be an opportunity for urban volunteers to help feed the hungry and improve the health of many families in need with wholesome produce.

This project began in late April with the agreement of land use from the PeaceMeal Garden. Catholic Action Center volunteers have been able to help PeaceMeal grow their scope of their garden for this year while developing God's Garden. With the help of Blackburn Correctional Facility, the plowing and tilling of the ground made God's Garden become a reality in mid May. Since then, the Catholic Action Center has been able to provide: the help of over 4,500 volunteer hours, over \$10,000.00 in donations for the deer fencing, built a shed for tools, supplied donated hoes, rakes, wheelbarrows, straw, mulch, hay, 1400+ organic plants and thousands of seeds that have grown into plants.

Fresh Approach, a workshop for the handicapped, will be helping with the processing of the produce so that the most good will come from the harvest.

God's Garden is an example of how a community can come together to feed those in need with good wholesome food. Info, [godsgarden@insightbb.com](mailto:godsgarden@insightbb.com) or call 859.514.7210.

## God's Worms... 30,000 worms invade Lexington!

On June 25 in the early morning, 30,000 worms were seen leaving Louisville and crawling up interstate 64 heading to Lexington. Yes that's right 30,000 red wigglers were seen crawling on the highway with no clothes on naked as jaybirds, and they seemed very excited about their destiny of eating up parts of Lexington. These worms did not have a police escort but did arrive safely and came with an enormous appetite for Lexington garbage. Well the worms were in fact truly crawling up I-64, but they were riding in the back of a truck and crawling around in plastic bins. And yes their destined work is eating up a part of Lexington-the food scraps being sent to our landfills.

God's Worms is a new collaborative project between the Catholic Action Center and Sustainable Communities Network to create a worm farm business and reduce the food waste going to our landfill which is like throwing dollar bills into the garbage heap.

Thirty worm bins have been set up with 1lb. of worms (1,000

# Lexington Grows

## 3rd Annual Lexington Community Garden Tour

By **Jim Embry**, Director of Sustainable Communities Network

The diversity and potential of five community gardens across the city will be showcased July 30 in the 3rd annual annual tour sponsored by Sustainable

the grounds of 1st United Methodist Church. These gardens contain a variety of vegetables: tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, watermelons, squash, beans and even peanuts. The gardens



Carrie Berend and Ginny Ramsey

Communities Network which serves as a resource and a support for community gardens in the Lexington area and throughout Kentucky. The purpose of the tour is to promote community gardening in Lexington and celebrate the efforts of community gardens in the area. The tour will give participants the opportunity to see what plot holders are doing to save on grocery bills, feed their families better tasting and more wholesome food, and in many cases contribute fresh vegetables to those in need in our community.

The 2009 Lexington Community Garden Tour will include stops at these sites: **The Rock/La Roca United Methodist Church** 1015 N Limestone. Church members and residents from the surrounding community began their garden together in April 2007 behind Arlington School but because of constructing the new addition to the school this site is no longer a garden. But you can't keep Rev. Aaron Mansfield from digging in a garden. They moved the garden location to an empty lot in front of the church along N Limestone. The church also has a big garden on Todds Rd on

also include a variety of community people. The Latino and African garden members plant many vegetables that are culturally relevant to them and provide an opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity. Community members are encouraged to harvest and use the vegetables themselves. Rev. Aaron and his congregation have inspired other houses of worship to find God in the garden and to create Gardens of Eating. On March 7th the church kicked our spring growing season into high gear with an Heirloom Seed Sale. Rev. Aaron Mansfield 859.255.0712; therocklaroca@alltell.net **Winburn Community Art Garden** (Community Action Council 1169 Winburn Drive) is a collaborative effort of Community Action Council, Russell Cave Elementary School, Sustainable Communities Network, Northeast Lexington Initiative and other community residents. This summer community member, Ella Wilson, re-organized the Youth Green Corps with six teenagers employed through the Mayor's Summer Youth Program. They work in the garden weekly and support several other gardens and projects. Bettye



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**Kilbern's** Inside Crowne Plaza The Campbell House at 1375 Harrodsburg Road. 859.519.1329. Experience Lexington's finest tradition of Southern Hospitality.

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Simpson who founded Knowledge is Power also brings her 15 young children to the garden each week. Linda Stamps of Commerce Lexington, arranged for the 45 high school members of Youth Leadership Lexington to spend their graduation day in the garden planting, mulching, painting murals and painting themselves. The Winburn Art Garden includes a gazebo built as an Eagle Scout project, beautiful murals hanging on the fence, a rain garden, herbs and perennials, lots of vegetables, 10 fruit trees, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, grapes and lots more. The fruit trees planted in fall 2007 are now bearing deli-

Ballard, Jessica.peacemeal@gmail.com, Rebecca Glasscock, rebecca.glasscock@kctcs.edu, 859.246.6319, Ginny Ramsey godsgarden@insightbb.com 859.514.7210.

**Chrysalis House** 1589 Hill Rise Ct. This year Director, Lisa Minton with the encouragement of Family Court Judge Lucinda Masterton, invited Weed Buster, Jim Embry of Sustainable Communities Network to create a fun garden experience with the children. Since March the weekly garden experience has been a discovery for the children and the garden now sports 5 raised beds with corn, beans, squash, tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, herbs, perennials,



Jim Embry and Ginny Ramsey

cious plums. Info, Roy Woods 859.294.5249, roy.woods@commaction.org, or Jim Embry 859.312.7024, emrbyjim@gmail.com.

Peace Meal Gardens/God's Garden (Leestown Rd. campus of the Bluegrass Community and Technical College). This 20 acre site which became available in 2008 is an evolving project designed to link together a number of groups within the Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) and the greater Lexington area in order to build a working, educational farm space for students and members of our community. Peace Meal Gardens will offer an opportunity for students, children, and members of the community to develop a healthy association with local food production by becoming involved in the process. Future plans are to develop the space into a dynamic organic farm, community garden and educational outreach center. Jessica Ballard who recently graduated from UK in Sustainable Agriculture serves as the Farm Manager and Rebecca Glasscock is the BCTC faculty sponsor. Though still in early planning phases of organization and production, this summer with the support of Ginny Ramsey of the Catholic Action Center, Peace Meal Gardens took a huge leap forward. (See story p 7.) Jessica

annuals and several fruit trees. The kids have eaten snow peas, lettuce and greens right off the vine and have fun just digging holes in the ground. Art pieces donated by Latitude and others made by the children adorn the fence and complement the colors in the garden. The children are working on a few surprises for those bold enough to take the tour! Lisa Minton, Nettie Appleby.

www.chrysalishouse.org. 859.977.2502.

**The Croft: A Community Garden at Beaumont Presbyterian Church, 1070 Lane Allen Rd.** The genesis of this community garden began the summer of 2008 when Jim Deleo, a church member and friend of Jim Embry read the July 2008 issue of *Ace Weekly* that featured the Lexington Community Garden Tour. The church had been talking about more direct ways to reach out into the community and a community garden seemed like a great idea with so much open and flat land that was not being used. Erica Horn, who heads The Garden Squad, the committee that developed the garden, says "the land was a former tobacco farm, so the soil was excellent. The Croft garden has 24 plots, each measuring 15' x 20' with 4 perennial plots for berries and

other plants. The gardeners include 15 families from within the congregation and 9 from the community, including Boy Scout Troop 279. The garden boasts a large 3 bin compost structure, which was built and donated by one of the scouts as an Eagle project.

The garden has become a focal point for the neighborhood in various ways. While the gardeners are growing food mainly for their own use, contributing a portion of the harvest is encouraged as part of the garden contract. Bins have been set up for donations, which are taken to the Kids Café on East Seventh Street and the Hope Center. "This community garden has far exceeded our expectations," says Erica. "The opportunity to meet folks from the neighborhood, the amazing way our plants are growing and the chance to contribute to the local need for food has made it a very rewarding experience." Jim Deleo jdeleo@nosonline.com

**Lexington Day Treatment Center Garden** (1177 Red Mile Place) established in 1998 by Josh Radner and Janet Daner is now one of the premier gardens in Fayette County and a showcase for youth involvement and empowerment. **Fred Reed** who has been in charge of the garden for the past 2 years says this garden is a model for what school grounds should look like in every school. He says "This garden has been a beautiful experience for kids, to get them involved in food production and to come to a better understanding and appreciation of nature—students find that food grows and does not just show up on a shelf. The experience also provides an opportunity to get the kids working with their hands, doing manual labor outside! " This year the garden is especially bountiful with a little bit of everything—potatoes, tomatoes, squash, beans, peanuts, greens, flowers for cutting, watermelons, cantaloupe, herbs, perennial flowers, raspberries, peppers, gourds, corn; apple, peach, pear, cherry trees; a beautiful grape arbor with grapes from KSU. Some food is used in the home economics classes, the rest is taken home—not able to feed the students yet, because of Health Department regulations. The kids are hoping to cut and sell flower bouquets this summer. Fred Reed 859.246.4370.

*The 3rd Annual Lexington Community Garden Tour is Thursday July 30 (5-8pm, rain or shine). Dinner following the Tour (8-9 pm) will be a time for sharing information and tasting the local harvest. Food for the dinner will come from local restaurants and potluck. Bring a dish to share. Check in begins at 5pm., transportation is provided and buses will leave at 5:30pm for the garden sites. The Tour begins at The Rock/La Roca United Methodist Church 1015 N Limestone.*

*Pre-registration is required at [www.sustainablelex.org](http://www.sustainablelex.org) or for more information call 859-312-7024. The Tour and dinner are free but donations are graciously accepted.*