

# ACE Weekly

07.24.08  
LEXINGTON'S **FREE** NEWSPAPER

# DIG IT!



Community Gardening Takes Root in Lexington  
By Jim Embry



# DIG IT

## Community Gardening Takes Root in Lexington—take the Tour.

By Jim Embry

*Everyone is invited and encouraged to join the emerging Lexington community gardening movement. Get your hands in the dirt.....grow food in your back and front yard.....meet your neighbors.....talk to your kids.....find your soul.*

“Since the E. coli scare with spinach and salmonella with tomatoes, people are making connections that most all of food is coming from one place,” commented Bruce Mundy of the Teen Center who has been engaging youth in gardening for many years in Lexington’s east end.” By raising our food locally (and how local is your own backyard?) then we avoid these troublesome food scares and reclaim our community...one plot at a time. Community gardens are a great place to involve our youth. Students from Martin Luther King Academy have worked in the Nelson Ave. garden, got their hands dirty and did not want to leave. Youth offenders assigned by the drug court have worked in the Winburn Garden and found a greater sense of community and responsibility. Gardens are a way to restore our youth and our community.”

Ryan Koch of Seedleaf, an avid gardener, sees the importance of growing produce personally, and advocates the use of corner lots, church grounds and other open spaces for gardens. He sees the Lexington Community Garden Tour as a good way to raise awareness, educate and hopefully build enthusiasm for using community plots as sources of food... for the body and mind.

“Most people don’t really realize how many community gardens there really are,” said Ryan, noting that the garden behind Al’s Bar is one of Lexington’s best kept secrets and could become a model for other local restaurants.

### What is a community garden?

Community gardens transform empty lots into green, living spaces. They are collaborative projects created by members of the community; residents share in both the maintenance and rewards of the garden. There are an estimated 10,000 community gardens within U.S. cities. During WW I and WWII community gardens called Victory Gardens

were promoted by the government, seen as vital to national security and provided 40% of the food needs of the country. This historical link with gardens has served recently as an inspiration to many communities.

In comparison to cities like Seattle, Boston, Detroit and even San Francisco, Lexington is lagging in the community gar-



dens department. We’re pretty far behind in terms of gardens per capita and support from the local government, but there’s lots of energy and momentum here. Gardening can help recharge urban energy and is a way to approach people about surface water issues, and educate people about not using pesticides. The Community Garden Tour is a way to connect the kernels of corn and the people who are involved around the city. We want to raise awareness of safe gardening practices, as well as the positive outcome gardening with other members of the community can have.

The simple act of planting a garden can

create positive environmental, economic, and social impacts on a neighborhood. Community gardens foster cultural understanding and an awareness of the environment around us. Children eat more fruits and vegetables as a result of participation in gardens, are more likely to try new foods and initiate discussions regarding eating habits at home and confirm the garden’s value as a learning environment.

Although community gardens are primarily used by people who don’t have access to their own gardens, they can also be a good networking opportunity for those who do have their own gardening space at home.

### JOIN US

The 2008 Lexington Community Garden Tour will include stops at: The Rock/La Roca Garden, London Ferrill Garden, Winburn Community Art Garden, Southland

donations are accepted!!! Sponsored by Sustainable Communities Network, The Rock/La Roc, Bluegrass Partnership for a Green Community and others.

The 2008 Lexington Community Garden Tour will include stops at these sites: The Rock/La Roca United Methodist Church 1015 N. Limestone; Gardens located behind Arlington Elementary (and gardens on Price Ave. and Todds Rd) Rev. Aaron Mansfield 859.255.0712; therockclaroca@alltell.net Members of the church and surrounding community began their garden together in April 2007. Since the original work days dedicated to planting, the garden was tended by neighbors from the community and in the spare time of those who work at and attend La Roca. The garden contains a variety of vegetables: tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and beans—AND includes a variety of community people. The Latino and African gar-

den members plant many vegetables that are culturally relevant to them and provide an opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity. Church leaders harvest vegetables and distribute them to neighbors. Community members are encouraged to harvest and use the vegetables themselves. Rev. Aaron and his congregation have invited other houses of worship to find God in the garden and to create Gardens of Eating.

Winburn Community Art Garden located at the Community Action Council at 1169 Winburn Drive is a collaborative effort among the Community Action Council,

Community Garden, drive by the garden behind Al’s bar and more. Dinner following the Tour (8-9pm) will be a time for sharing information, presenting awards and tasting the local harvest. Food for the dinner will come from local restaurants and potluck. Persons attending dinner are encouraged to bring a dish to share. People can choose to ride on the buses or on bike. Check in begins at 5pm. The Tour begins at 5:30pm at La Roca and the buses leave at 6pm for other sites. Pre-registration required at [sustainlex.org](http://sustainlex.org) or for more information call 859.312.7024. The Tour and dinner is free but

den members plant many vegetables that are culturally relevant to them and provide an opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity. Church leaders harvest vegetables and distribute them to neighbors. Community members are encouraged to harvest and use the vegetables themselves. Rev. Aaron and his congregation have invited other houses of worship to find God in the garden and to create Gardens of Eating.

Winburn Community Art Garden located at the Community Action Council at 1169 Winburn Drive is a collaborative effort among the Community Action Council,



Russell Cave Elementary, Sustainable Communities Network, the Northeast Lexington Initiative, and other individuals and businesses in the community. Children and adults are working side-by-side to create a beautiful edible and artistic space. Neighborhood residents work in the garden on Tuesdays (5-8pm) and Saturdays (1-3pm). A gazebo is being built as we write as an Eagle Scout project. Beautiful murals hang on the fence and are part of the Native plants in flower beds were furnished by Shooting Star Nursery. All art work and structures were completed using found objects stressing the need to recycle and reuse to the youth. Volunteers from the Dunbar Memorial Garden provided pavers that were placed around the trees. This garden has been a grand place for discovery by the children and a point for community connection. For more information, contact: Catrena Lewis 859.294.5249, CLewis@commaction.org, or Jim Embry 859.312.7024, jgembr0@cs.com

**London Ferrill Community Garden** located at 251 E. 3rd St., between the Old Episcopal Burying Ground and the Fire Department was created out of a joint partnership between Christ Church Cathedral, the MLK neighborhood association, and Seedleaf. This community garden offers a place for residents to grow their own food and meet one another. It is located on a site that was once segregated, a place that excluded the majority of those nearest to it, formerly enslaved Africans and more recently African Americans. For this reason, a primary focus of the garden is racial reconciliation and food justice. It is named after London Ferrill, an heroic clergyman who served in this area during the cholera epidemic of the early 1830s. At one time he had the largest church in Kentucky and he baptized both African and European Americans. He is buried at the adjacent Old Episcopal Burying Ground. Gardeners include residents of all ages from the sur-

rounding area, the Fire Dept, Christ Church, two Sayre classes and BCTC. In addition to the individual plots, the garden has a community portion which is installed and maintained by Seedleaf, an urban gardening nonprofit. The produce from this garden is distributed widely among places that feed people in the neighborhood and elderly residents. It is also a site for garden education. Sherry Maddock 859.559.3837. geoffandsherry@yahoo.com. Seedleaf (Ryan Koch) <http://seedleaf.typepad.com/>

**Southland Community Garden** sits in Hill N Dale Park(LFUCG) near Southview and Fairview Drs. With support from LFUCG City Council and Parks Dept., Neighborhood Association and community residents, The Southland Community Garden project aims to foster connections in the community and raise the profile of (sub)urban gardening. In addition to the 11 households participating, support and involvement has come from the city council, the parks department and a neighbor-

hood nursery school. The garden has proven to be a beautiful addition to Hill N Dale Park and a great educational resource for neighborhood kids, who come to play in the park and have a chance to see vegetables and flowers growing. We have also gotten community residents involved in composing the scraps from the Good Foods Co-op. For more information, Mason Colby [mason.colby@gmail.com](mailto:mason.colby@gmail.com). You can see pictures at

[www.flickr.com/photos/politicalhero/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/politicalhero/)

**Stella's Garden**—located on 6th St in the empty lot directly behind Al's Bar at 6th and N Limestone Sts. A major purpose of the garden at Al's Bar is neighborhood beautification. This garden is situated in an economically diverse section of Lexington. Neighbors have been initially surprised, then glad for its presence. The produce of this garden is harvested weekly and delivered to Stella's Deli, an eatery that features locally-sourced food. ■

## Benefits of Community Gardens

*Improves the quality of life for people in the garden*

*Provides a catalyst for neighborhood and community development*

*Stimulates Social Interaction*

*Encourages Self-Reliance*

*Beautifies Neighborhoods*

*Produces Nutritious Food*

*Reduces Family Food Budget*

*Conserves Resources*

*Creates opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education*

*Reduces Crime-Preserves Green Space*

*Creates income opportunities and economic development*

*Reduces city heat from streets and parking lots*

*Provides opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections*

## Get on Board

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lexington Community Garden Tour

**When:** 5:30-8pm July 31. Check in 5-5:30pm. Buses

leave at 6pm for other sites.

**Where:** starting and ending at The Rock/La Roca United Methodist Church, 1015 North Limestone across from Arlington Elementary School. Tour sites will include The Rock/La Roca Garden, London Ferrill Garden, Winburn Community Art Garden, Southland Community Garden, and a drive-by the garden behind Al's Bar and more!

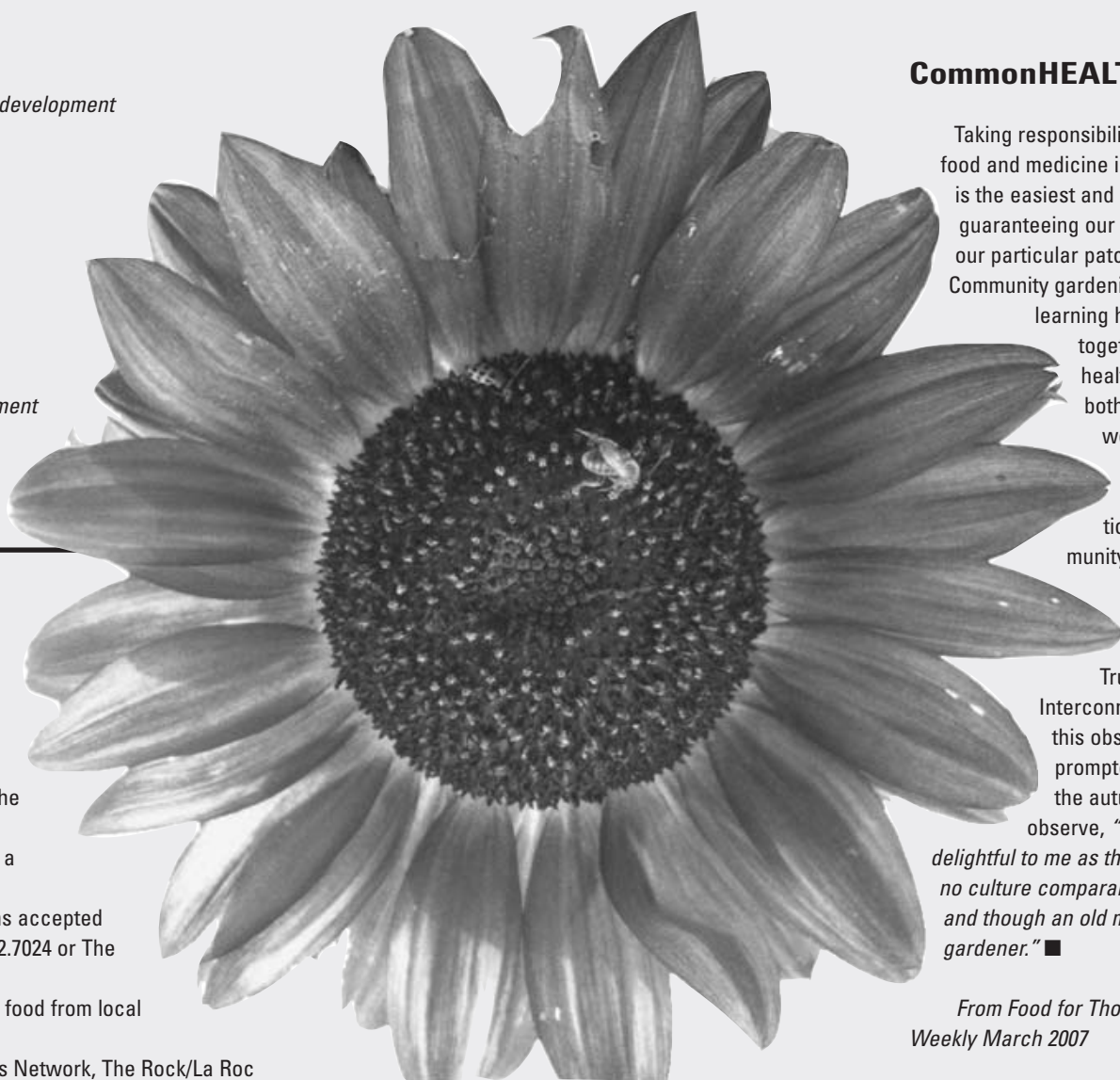
**Cost:** FREE, but pre-registration required and donations accepted

**Register:** at [sustainlex.org](http://sustainlex.org) or call Jim Embry at 859.312.7024 or The Roc/La Roca United Methodist Church at 859.312.7024

**Dinner:** begins at 8pm following the Tour and features food from local restaurants but also *potluck*, so bring a dish to share.

**Sponsored by:** Sponsored by Sustainable Communities Network, The Rock/La Roc U M Church, Bluegrass Partnership for a Green Community and others

**Online:** For more information about community gardens nationwide, go to [www.communitygardens.org](http://www.communitygardens.org), [www.kidsgardening.org](http://www.kidsgardening.org). [www.sustainlex.org](http://www.sustainlex.org) ■



## CommonHEALTH of Kentucky

Taking responsibility for growing our own food and medicine in our own neighborhood is the easiest and most effective way of guaranteeing our own health and that of our particular patch of biosphere.

Community gardening involves people learning how to live and work together for the common health and can serve as both a catalyst and a framework for reinventing ourselves and reestablishing our sacred connection with the earth community. Community gardening literally roots us in a common Truth, a Truth born of Nature, a Truth born of Interconnectedness. Perhaps this observation was what prompted Thomas Jefferson, in the autumn of his years, to observe, *"No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, no culture comparable to that of the garden, and though an old man I am but a young gardener."* ■

*From Food for Thought, by Jim Embry, ACE Weekly March 2007*

# April is Earth Month in Lex

Shovel Ready: Lexington Leaders need to re-think our food system

By Jim Embry

On Earth Day we remind ourselves of the sacred relationships between human beings and the entire Earth community that are woven into a web of interconnectedness and interdependence.

The sustainability movement allows us, human beings, the opportunity to restore our sacred connections with Mother Earth and all of her children while enhancing the manifestation of our own deeper humanity. The restoration and practice of our scared connections to the Earth is the Great Work of our time ala Thomas and Wendell Berry.

## Building a local sustainable Food System

In reading the stimulus package proposals that Mayor Jim Newberry and his local team formulated and which was designed to provide a listing of “shovel ready” projects, I found interesting the absence of any projects having to do with local food production. There were no new projects listed to support local farmers and producers short of a farmer’s market pavilion.

There was no mention of money to build much needed food processing plants. Where was the mention of support-

**“When I read about California experiencing a water emergency because of severe drought conditions I wonder which planet Mayor Newberry and his select committee live on because 90 percent of our food comes from California — and like Detroit — the ride of our destructive, unhealthy food system is over.”**

ing the shovel ready community gardening movement with green houses, fulltime staff, or hiring youth green corps members, aquaculture projects like Will Allen’s work in Growing Power in Milwaukee and Chicago? This exclusion left me wondering what planet do they live on? Don’t they understand that the food system is the foundation of all other human systems. Can’t they see that not only is the financial system—or better called capitalistic Greed System—in disarray and melting down, but our food system has been melting down for years now? The food system melt-down has been caused by the same people—greedy globalized gangsters or food system “bankers”and “investors.” They have “invested” in such schemes as: creating toxic chemicals that poison the Earth thus producing a very unhealthy ecosystem; hijacking local community food systems and “gifting” us with a globalized food system that moves people off the land, destroys forests, creates deserts, and produces poor quality “food,” unhealthy human beings, unhealthy soil that was once fertile lands and polluted air and water that all wind up in our bodies.

In Kentucky we don’t have to wait until the food system melts down before we restore our sanity and health.

When I read about California experiencing a water emergency because of severe drought conditions I wonder which planet the mayor and his select committee live on because 90 percent of our food comes from California — and like Detroit — the ride of our destructive, unhealthy food system is over. While in Kansas City in January attending Breaking the Silence-Building Sustainable Earth Community conference, I learned that the Ogallala aquifer which stretches from South Dakota to Texas (remember the US Breadbasket?) is ALSO drying up and creating all sorts of tensions between farmers and cities. These drought conditions in the US are just a small example of similar drought conditions around the world. These acute conditions should be seen as a national security issue and a local security issue. At last fall’s Governor’s Conference on the Environmental there was not one workshop or speaker that discussed our agricultural system. Is not growing food connected to the environment? It’s about time that Mayor Newberry and the Governor start thinking out of

the box and into the garden to get our state food system house in order ... and for goodness sake get a team of advisors who understand the critical need for a quantum approach to food systems.

I encourage them to call for a statewide effort around victory gardens, develop a food security master plan, establish food policy councils, finance food processing plants and distribution centers, get local foods in schools, restaurants, hospitals, get gardens in every school in KY, gardens in all parks, all community centers all government office buildings



AND support the hell ... *well the health* ... out of our breadbasket ... our Kentucky farmers and producers!

## Key Aspects of community food system

Four aspects that distinguish community food systems from the globalized food system that typifies the source of most food Americans eat:

- **Food security** is a key goal of community food systems. While food security traditionally focuses on individual and household food needs, community food security addresses food access within a community context, especially for low-income households. It has a simultaneous goal of developing local food systems.

- **Proximity** refers to the distance between various components of the food system. In community food systems such distances are generally shorter than those in the dominant or global food system. This proximity increases the likelihood



that enduring relationships will form between different stakeholders in the food system — farmers, processors, retailers, restaurateurs, consumers, etc.

- **Self-reliance** refers to the degree to which a community meets its own food needs. While the aim of community food systems is not total self-sufficiency (where all food is produced, processed, marketed and consumed within a defined boundary), increasing the degree of self-reliance for food, to be determined by a community partnership, is an important aspect of a community food system.

- **Sustainability** refers to following agricultural and food system practices that do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their food needs. Sustainability includes environmental protection, profitability, ethical treatment of food system workers, and community development. Sustainability of the food and agriculture system is increased when a diversified agriculture exists near strong and thriving markets, when non-renewable inputs required for every step in the food system are reduced, when farming systems rely less on agri-chemical fertilization and pest control, and when citizen participation in food system decision-making is enhanced. ■

## “It’s about time that Mayor Newberry and the Governor start thinking out of the box and into the garden to get our state food system house in order.”

### Terra Madre/Slow food ([terramadre2008.org](http://terramadre2008.org))

by Jim Embry

My first trip to Europe could not have been for a more glorious reason than to attend the fabulous Terra Madre gathering in Torino, Italy October 23-27 2008. What a grand, inspirational and educational experience it was.

I encourage everyone reading this to learn some Italian, save those pennies and consider attending the next gathering in 2010 ... because our beloved state of Kentucky needs the help... and you will have a wonderful time. In the meantime learn even more at the website [www. Terramadre2008.org](http://www.Terramadre2008.org)

About 20 of us kindred spirits from Kentucky and 800 from the USA were among the 6,300 delegates who attended the third edition of the international Terra Madre gathering that included more than 4,000 small-scale farmers, breeders, fishers and artisan producers, 800 cooks, 300 academics, 1000 young people and 200 musicians representing 1652 food communities and 150 countries as well as hundreds of volunteers and observers. Terra Madre brought together people from different climates and cultures to share innovative solutions and time-honored traditions for keeping small-scale agriculture and sustainable food production alive and well. Terra Madre-meaning Mother Earth- the largest international gathering of small scale farmers and food producers is a forum for those who produce, purchase, cook, and educate in an effort to promote a more sustainable local and global food system. The gathering is based on the concept of food communities which encompass the long and diverse chains of people involved in bringing our food from field to the table. “Terra Madre is a forum for all who believe that good, clean and fair food should be available at every table,” said Erika Lesser, Director of Slow Food USA.

First organized in 2004 and repeated in 2006, this year Terra Madre grew even stronger thanks to 1,000 youth delegates from around the world who came as college and high school students,

culinary students, young farmers, cooks and activists. My impression was that this organization very clearly understood that to strive towards sustainable development means we MUST involve our youth! As an expression of this understanding, the Opening Ceremony that included colorful and inspiring cultural performances,



speeches by Carlo Petrini, Vandana Shiva, Prince Charles and Alice Waters also included a speech by Sam Levin, a 15-year-old student at Monument Mountain High School in Massachusetts. Sam rocked the house with such words as these: “What all of you have started is an unbelievable beginning to a powerful revolution. But I know that all of you are wondering if my generation will be able to continue that revolution, and carry it to the extent of its mission.... I’m here today because I want you to know that we get it. We will be the generation that reunites mankind with the earth.”

Sam and his classmates will be here in Kentucky November 6-7 to speak in Louisville at the Local Food Healthy Farms conference organized by the Sierra Club. He is the real deal! Other prominent U.S. delegates to Terra Madre included Will Allen, a 2008 MacArthur Genius Award winner and founder of Growing Power. Will speaks in Lexington on April 13 6pm at the Downtown Public Library; Wanona LaDuke; Chef Tory Miller of L'Etoile of Madison, WS; the Coalition of Immokalee Workers; and faculty from the New

Hampshire’s ground breaking new “Eco-Gastronomy” program.

Terra Madre this year ran concurrently with Salone del Gusto, one of the most important international fairs dedicated to high quality, sustainably produced artisan food from around the world, also organized by Slow Food International. The unification of these two events opened discussion to Salone’s 180,000 visitors on topics important to sustainable food production. For example in the Salone, Vandana Shiva presented the Manifesto on Climate Change and the Future of Food Security by the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture to a packed auditorium. This document co-authored by Wendell Berry outlined why it is vital to consider agriculture in analyses of climate change and discussions of possible solutions. Slow Food believes that both events will continue to build bridges from the farm to table and inspire solidarity among sustainable producers, supporters and advocates.

Education was a key theme of the gathering’s forty Earth Workshops, 28 regional and national meetings, walks through the Journey to the Origins of Taste exhibits, hundreds of daily cultural performances, the captivating international Marketplace, the long bus rides to and dinners back at your hotel and the many hugs shared between kindred spirits. The message being spread by Terra Madre is gaining momentum on every level — from food producer to global policymaker. In a clear sign of the political strength it has gained, at the Closing Ceremony the Italian government invited a Terra Madre delegation to serve as an interlocutor to the G8 meeting next year in Sardinia, Italy. This unprecedented invitation will give significant voice to a representation of the 450 million smallholder farmers of the world who do not typically have the opportunity to influence global policy decision-making.

Terra Madre was without a doubt one of the liveliest and most practical international gatherings that I have ever attended. It is difficult in these few words to describe and for you readers to even imagine such a magical and profoundly important event. In those few short incredible days, international friendships were developed, exchanges established, our world’s cultures were tasted, lis-



tened and danced to, seen and appreciated, hugged and kissed... our lives were vastly enriched and connected. Terra Madre invites and reminds us to return to the terra — Earth; and madre — the Earth as mother. ■

*The 20 delegates from Kentucky are available for speaking engagements about our experience at Terra Madre and the international movement for local foods systems.*

*During April check out our Terra Madre photo exhibit April 5-30 and slide presentation on April 11 2-4 pm ... all at Third Street Stuff Coffee. More info at [www.slowfoodbluegrass.org](http://www.slowfoodbluegrass.org), [www.terramadre2008.org](http://www.terramadre2008.org), [www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com).*

## Grow Lexington ... Create Victory Gardens!

By Obiora Embry

The "Victory Gardens" of World War I and II were the first nation-wide call to action for gardening/farming. Almost 100 years later, we are embarking on another community gardening movement, this resurrection, if you will, of "Victory Gardens" has been brewing over the last 4-5 years locally as a means to combat some of the problems created by our industrialized, technologically "advanced" and globalized food system.

Some of the problems include a lack of food security (Kentucky was ranked 9 in the nation in 2006 for food insecurity. Between 2004 and 2007, a food assessment was done by Dr. Patrick Mooney and Dr. Keiko Tanaka that concludes that locally there is an issue of food scarcity and food inequality in various zip codes, particularly in low-income areas), an increase in the number of children that have poor eating habits and/or are obese, an increase in the diagnoses of ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), an increase in food prices over the last 10 years, an increase in crime by the youth, and 1-2 generations of people that do not know where their "food comes from."

(Richard Louv will discuss nature deficit disorder, ADD, and getting kids outdoors on April 28 at Sayre School see events listing.)

To combat these problems and others, we are in the process of creating a local network of activists, community organizers, houses of worship, community organizations, gardeners, farmers, concerned citizens, local businesses, universities, local government, and others. The name of the local network is BUGS (Bluegrass Urban Garden Society) and it was an acronym suggested by Bruce Burris of Latitude Arts in 2005. We have been meeting monthly as an organization since the "Closing the Food\_\_ Gap Conference" in October 2008 and are in the process of becoming an organization can be a local resource to create the future "victory gardens" in Lexington (info [www.sustainlex.org](http://www.sustainlex.org)).

The Lexington victory gardens that we envision include community gardens everywhere. In diverse locations such as: front and backyard gardens; local family farms; gardens at or near (public and private) schools, on university properties, homeless shelters, local businesses, and houses of worship; gardens on vacant lots; and gardens at neighborhood or community centers, including parks; gardens in front of the new courthouses on N Limestone; gardens on hospital grounds

and at the back door of restaurants.

It is our desire that the existing gardens and the ones that have yet to be created will bring a new vision, sense of hope, and purpose to our community; improve our health and well-being; give us a chance to interact with people of different cultures and generations; (re)connect with Nature; reduce crime; create life and job skills; increase one's knowledge of ecology, math, science, and botany; get exercise and Vitamin D for F-R-E-E; preserve our food heritage (use non-hybrid and non-GE seeds); protect our natural environment—the air that we breathe, the land from which we harvest our food, and the water we drink; and give those that cannot afford to buy food a chance to eat fresh, locally grown, and healthy/nutritious (organic) food.

The community gardening movement will also lead to a positive urban transformation in Lexington, as we resurrect the "Victory Gardens" from last Century. ■

*Obiora Embry is a Lexington native who has been active in the local community gardening movement since 2005. He is a member of BUGS and hopes that by 2011, there will be a garden at all local schools.*

## Earth Month in Lex

### April 9

6-10pm Evening with the Mountain Keepers, UK Student Center Grand Ballroom. <http://www.uky.edu/~afma222/MountainKeepers.htm>

### April 5-30

Terra Madre & A Taste of Italy Photography exhibit by Jim Embry 7am-11pm daily Third Street Stuff, 257 N Limestone

### April 11

2-4pm Sustainability Lecture Series *Bringing Italy & Terra Madre Home to the Bluegrass* ... Third Street Stuff.

### April 11

Reforest the Bluegrass 9am-2pm Shillito Park. More than 5000 trees will be planted. Info, John Saylor, Program Coordinator, 425-2820

### April 11

Bluegrass Urban Garden Society (BUGS). Organizational meetings April 11 and May 9, 10am-12 noon Community Action Council 1169 Winburn Dr. [www.sustainlex.org](http://www.sustainlex.org), 859.312.7024.

### April 13

6pm, 2008 MacArthur Fellow, Will Allen, Founder/CEO of Growing Power speaks, Downtown Central Public Library.

### April 18th & June 12

Gardening with Class! Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden A one-day workshop for developing school garden programs. Info [www.sustainlex.org](http://www.sustainlex.org) 859-312-7024.

### April 19

11am Unitarian Universalist Church *Earth Day Homily* Jim Embry speaking on: "Restoring Sacred Earth Connections"

### April 22

6:30-7:45 p.m. BCTC Spring 2009 Speaker Series ... Presentation by Jim Embry Oswald Auditorium (OB 230), BCTC Cooper Campus. BCTC's Peace and Justice Coalition 859.246.6319

### April 25

7pm-11pm Butterflies and Birthdays, a fundraiser for the Chrysalis House youth garden project and Sexagenarian Party for eco-activist, Jim Embry. Food, art sale, music, poetry and fun. Unitarian Universalist Church. RSVP [embryjim@gmail.com](mailto:embryjim@gmail.com) or 859.312.7024.

### April 28

7pm Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods* Sayre School. Sponsored by Sayre School and the Lexington School.

### University of Kentucky Earth Days in the Bluegrass

<http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Recycling/earthDays.htm>  
EDBG is a promotion of sustainability, responsible global citizenship and the power of local action. A full month of workshops, community service, films, presentations, music and more. ■

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# Artists & Youth Create Community Together

## Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) Mural Project

By Jim Embry

One hundred fifty youth from across the state of Kentucky are coming to Lexington June 5-7 to participate in the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Seminar (HOBY) being held on the Transylvania University campus.

Part of their leadership development program while in Lexington will be the experience of creating a hands-on public art project.

The HOBY youth will be divided into 15 groups (11-13 kids per group) with 15 local artists to help—one local artist per group. Each group will be painting a vision of community on plywood that will be attached to the outside of buildings on N. Limestone upon completion.

The HOBY groups will be encouraged to come up with creative/design concepts during the weekend, and there will also be the opportunity for the artists to talk with them about design concepts during lunch at Gratz Park.

This is a collaborative project of Kentucky Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Seminar, Leadership Lexington, and Sustainable Communities Network.

Local artists involved include George Moorman, Diane Kahlo, Joann Strunk, Robert Gundy Jr, Roxane Poskin, Sundiata Rashid, Katherine Shaw, and Chris Huestis.

It's an interesting concept: Local artists working with high school leaders on a public art project, where both groups will have something to learn from one another and there's an opportunity for everyone involved to experience art, and realize its impact on the community.



Artists and youth will be creating their mural 1 pm to 5 pm onsite at 756 N. Limestone. This mural project will be a festive experience and will include other graffiti artists, break dancers, music, spoken word and more. ■

Reach Jim Embry at the Sustainable Communities Network, [Sustainlex.org](http://Sustainlex.org) and 859.312.7024.

### Red. White. Blue. And Green.

Join the Parade

By Bruce Burris

Complain all you want to about Lexington's annual Fourth of July parade, I do and I do it because this parade really does stink every single year! Truly! I am not kidding! I wish anyone only the best in his or her attempt to change it for the better, for this parade will resist you and ultimately crush your spirit. I know this because I have tried.

That said, I have to admit that I really look forward to it every year and it is fun as heck, especially I think as a participant.

This year we are encouraging those who support the notion of community gardening to join in and help us to spread the message of the importance of creating community gardens.

**Be in Lexington's Fourth of July Parade  
and Celebrate Community Gardening!**

Calling all Community Gardeners (and friends of community

gardening and parades). We want you to participate with us in Lexington's Fourth of July Parade.

#### Parade Info

The Theme: Celebrate Community Gardening!

#### Parade ideas

Please create and bring anything that communicates the idea of community gardening...plants in a decorated wagon...plants in flower pots in a decorated wheelbarrow...a colorful sign or poster with the name of your community garden on it (don't be shy)...painted bikes with a basket of flowers...whatever...anything goes except...please no gasoline powered vehicles.



#### Times

The parade begins at 2pm. We ask that those marching with us assemble at Third Street Stuff Coffee (open on July 4th) 257 N. Limestone between 12pm and 1pm. Free grilled soy burgers, nasty hot dogs and other refreshments. At about 1pm we will make our way to our appointed space in the parade line.

#### A word about walking in Lexington's parade:

Remember this is generally not a pedestrian/walker friendly parade dress comfortably; bring plenty of water and feel free to exit at anytime before conclusion of parade.

#### Contact

Please notify Bruce Burris, [latitudearts@yahoo.com](mailto:latitudearts@yahoo.com) by July 1st of your intention to participate—you get two points for your artistic temperament and maybe a free cup of coffee!

#### Sponsors include

Latitude Artist Community, Southland Community Garden, Third Street Stuff, Burris-Pease Family, Sustainable Communities Network, Ace Weekly ■



# ROLL OUT THE BARRELS

Bluegrass Pride Greens up the Bluegrass with Annual Rainbarrel Auction

By Michael Porter

Getting sued by the EPA isn't a bright spot in any city's green status, but Lexington is slowly making environmental eco-friendly inroads.

Even in the face of some pretty grim local statistics (the Brookings Institution just last week released a study, finding that Lexington had the biggest carbon footprint of any of the 100 largest metro areas in the country), Franklin County substitute teacher Carla Phillips remains upbeat about the direction of local green awareness, saying that "there is a consciousness building."

To participate in that building process, she is contributing her artistic rendering of a rainbarrel will be included in Bluegrass PRIDE's annual Rainbarrel Reception and Auction this Saturday.

Going green is an incremental process for most of us—switching out lightbulbs; reduce-reuse-recycle; increasing walking and cycling and decreasing the reliance on gas at \$4 bucks a gallon; or adding a rainbarrel to the family yard.

That last one just became an easier—and considerably more aesthetic option—thanks to Bluegrass PRIDE'S Saturday auction AND reception.

Rainbarrels have long been an eco-friendly addition to the landscape (storing rainwater and preventing runoff), but that addition has often been a little unsightly (institutional orange and hospital blue come to mind).

This is where green-minded homeowners need an artist's touch.

Local artists are going green with their renderings and interpretations of rainbarrels, and those will be showcased at the Lexington Green reception this Saturday.

## Let it Grow

Although she's relatively new to the area, Phillips hasn't let any grass grow under her feet (so to speak) when it comes to greening the bluegrass. She participated in the Art Bus Shelter design competition last year [profiled in a Kim Thomas Ace coverstory last summer], and says "it was a green design that won-featuring recycled Ale-8-One bottles...I love that!"

Describing her barrel, she says, "My message is 'borrowed' from Eric Clapton's lyrics on the chorus of 'Let it Grow.' I visually depicted the cycle of a bulb being planted by hand, rooting, sprouting, growing, and blossoming in sun, rain, and snow as the lyric says...I believe Love is like a seed/bulb that needs to be planted, watered, and tended—'let it grow' in any season of life. Plant your love and let it grow."

She thinks that Bluegrass PRIDE is the perfect organization to showcase her rain barrel: "I appreciate what Bluegrass Pride does to increase awareness of environmen-

tal issues in positive and imaginative ways."

A grad of the Art Institute of Chicago, Phillips just received a Lincoln Bi-Centennial Grant Award with the Bluegrass Railroad Museum in Versailles where she volunteers as a design and display artist.

In addition to the Rainbarrel reception, this weekend she has a booth at the Capital Expo Festival in Frankfort. She'll be doing a Mural Demonstration of a Lincoln Family Portrait and will have paintings for sale in the Capital Area Arts Guild Tent. In July, she'll be doing another Lincoln Mural Project with Jennifer Zingg Studio and Gallery in Frankfort that will involve local children. And in the fall, she'll begin a Lincoln Mural depicting his train connections at The Bluegrass Railroad Museum in Versailles.

Artist LaNora Long has a rainbarrel in this year's auction and says, "my commitment to Bluegrass Pride is to provide a way to help our environment through the arts." She has a degree in both music and art and is an elementary art teacher in the Fayette County school system.

Describing her rainbarrel, she says, "I wanted to convey... a sense of peace in a sometimes crazy hectic world.

On part one of the barrel you find a young lady taking advantage of her serene surroundings, enjoying a good book. On part 2 you find a still life."

She adds, "I find nothing more beautiful than a vase full of freshly cut flowers and having a garden to cut them from...flowers appeal to all of our senses, even though it is only temporary."

As for Lexington's sustainability, she says, "I feel it could be greener! I think we have lost sense of the beautiful land that we have in Kentucky," adding, "One thing that really bugs me is when the countryside is torn to pieces only to construct massive pieces of cold steel for buildings and ESPECIALLY parking lots. There just seems to be a lack of respect for land. One of my goals is to Recycle more, and try to use ego friendly products."

Another featured rain barrel artist, graphic designer Ashley Davis, agrees, adding, "the purpose of Bluegrass PRIDE is to make central Kentucky the best living environment that is possible for all citizens. I think that being involved in projects such as the rain barrel are great additions to making our environment send positive messages about our heritage."

Locally, Davis thinks that Lexington is starting to make big strides in going green, but the effort is not nearly enough. "The recycling program established by the city is very progressive but as we build new buildings we need to use new and innovative ways to use alternate sources for heat and electricity, put gardens on rooftops to generate

more oxygen in the air" among other things, she said.

On a personal level, featured rain barrel artist Niah Soult (photographed on this week's cover) is trying to come to "clarity in heart and mind regarding climate transformation and access to clean water" and wants to convey with her rain barrel that "we need to think about more than ourselves."

Meadowthorpe Elementary School art teacher and featured rain barrel artist Miles Johnson last year even went so far as to paint a handful of the city's mini recycle bins with the goal of bringing art and environmental awareness together on a local level.

It's this desire to bring green to the Bluegrass that some of the featured rain barrel artists are turning to our most distinctive appeal, horses. One of the recurring themes in the featured rain barrels is Kentucky's horse culture, and the need to preserve it. Johnson's barrel was inspired by horses and Davis thinks that "as a horse driven community we need to be proactive or we'll lose our states biggest appeal: our horses and horse farms."

Rainbarrels are one step among many. As Phillips puts it, "commitment to local sustainability manifests itself in a variety of ways." She adds, "I simply try to do my part to be a good, albeit not perfect example. I think I can affect my sphere of influence that way. Sermons we see speak louder than sermons we hear." ■

*Bluegrass PRIDE's Rain Barrel Reception will be held on Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> in the lower atrium of Lexington Green on Nicholasville Road. You can see all of the 2008 artistic rain barrels for free from 5pm -7:30pm. View the barrels and vote for your favorite at [www.bluegrassPRIDE.com](http://www.bluegrassPRIDE.com)*



## Take PRIDE

Bluegrass PRIDE (Personal Responsibility In a Desirable Environment), founded in 2002, provides environmental resources and information to schools, community groups, local governments and citizens residing in 18 central Kentucky counties. Bluegrass PRIDE's most recent campaigns have focused on, among other things, water quality and sewage issues in the area and environmental education in K-12 schools.

Rainbarrels, according to Bluegrass PRIDE, "connect to your downspout, decreasing the amount of rain that runs off your property. Reduced runoff helps prevent water pollution and flooding. Every time it rains, unabsorbed water rushes to storm drains and directly to local waterways. This water carries with it pollutants such as pet waste, automotive fluids and fertilizer.")

Bluegrass PRIDE is a sponsor of the WasteBuster program for apartments, schools and businesses, which help start or expand their recycling programs and help educate students on the importance of recycling and waste management. They also have a Lawn Care Audit on their website, [www.bluegrassPRIDE.com](http://www.bluegrassPRIDE.com), so you can take stock of your water management. You can also view tips on how to reduce waste in your own home.

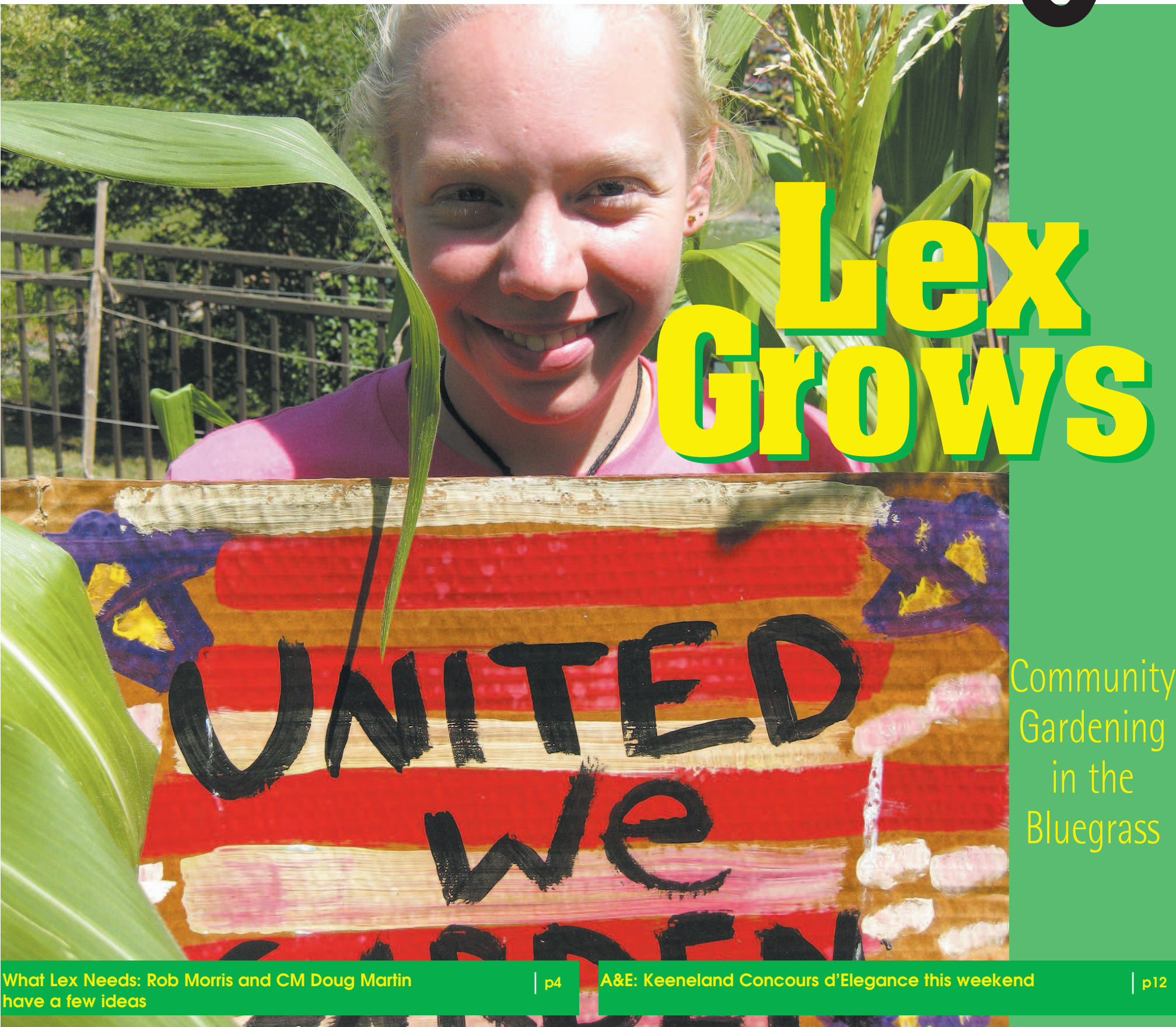
PRIDE also sponsors a yearly Kentucky and Licking River Sweep. The next one in Lexington will be held on June 21 from 8:30am. to 2pm. More information is available by calling LexCall at 311.

Fayette County, Clays Ferry Boat Dock  
June 21st, 8:30am - 2pm  
Breakfast and Lunch provided  
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# ACEweekly

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

| p4

A&E: Keeneland Concours d'Elegance this weekend

| p12



# 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).





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

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

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.*

### 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

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.



# 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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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.*



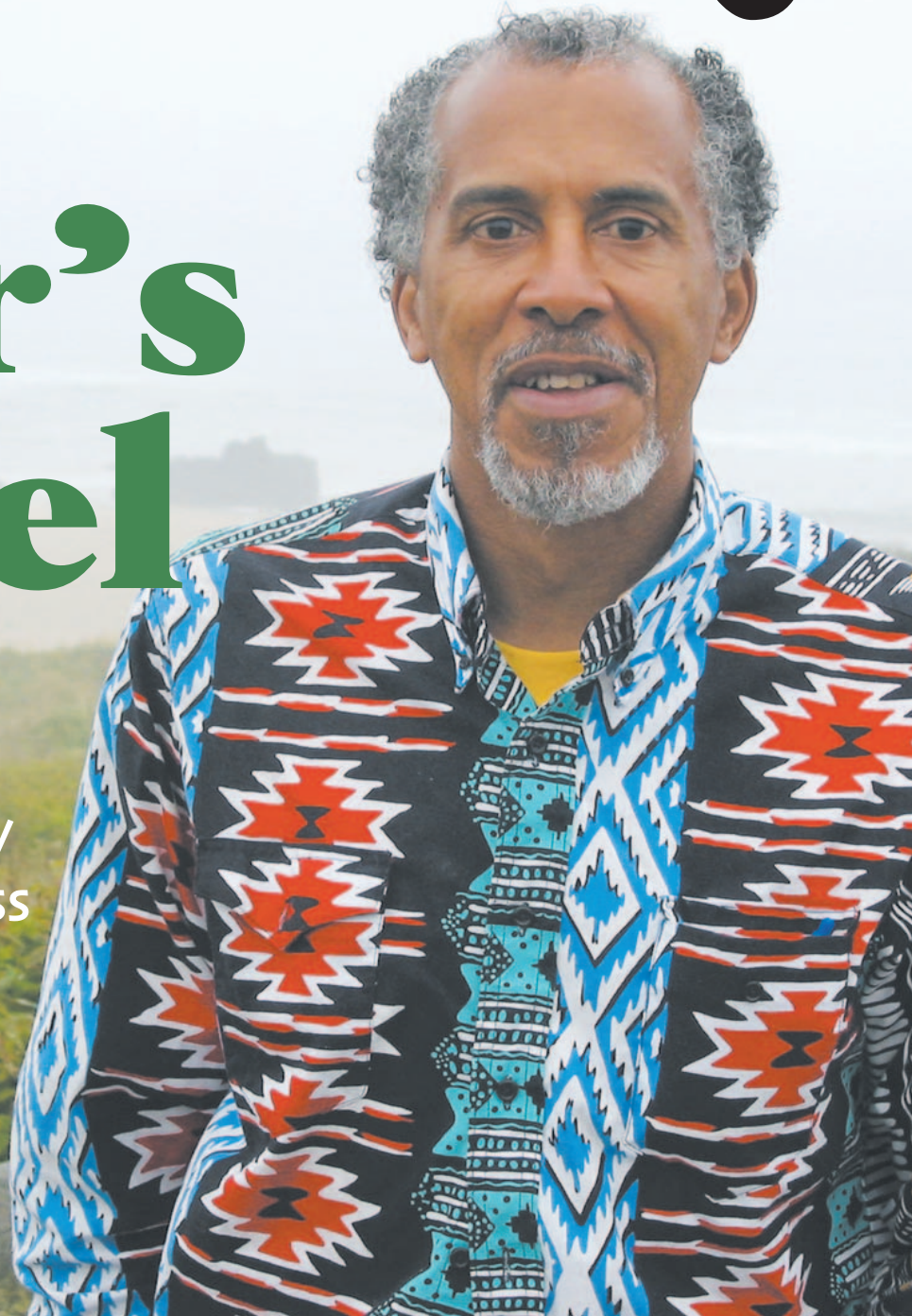
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LEXINGTON'S **FREE** NEWSPAPER

# ACE Weekly

## This Year's Model

Eco-Activist Jim Embry  
greens up the Bluegrass





# This Year's

Jim Embry greens up the Bluegrass

# Model



**W**ords on the page never seem to do justice to Embry. Ben Perry, director of Appalachia—Science in the Public Interest (2001-2005), recalls, “when I began organizing the Bluegrass Energy & Green Living Expo, my work became more Lexington-centric and the name Jim Embry started coming up on a regular basis. People kept telling me about this guy who was creating neighborhood gardens on the north end and that I should contact him. As we began exchanging emails, I pictured a laid-back, pony-tailed hippie with a green thumb and a passion for the environment. Then I met Jim.”

And he was surprised, explaining “Well the green thumb and passion part were true enough, but the rest

**R**ick Gersony, director of GreenLex.org, begins by counting down a partial list of Embry’s contributions to the community, “Jim’s projects include helping create the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden (Recently selected by the Knight Foundation and LFUCG as a Key “Gateway” for the Bike trail from the Horse park to Downtown Lexington.) He is a Key member of the Bluegrass Partnership for Green Community steering committee that includes representatives of UK, LFUCG and Fayette School system. He also is a key organizer for Winburn Neighborhood Art Garden; Sustainable Communities Network; Youth Green Corps; NorthEast Lexington Initiative; 2010 rain gardens; Green design workshops; Green map systems, School Gardens, Recycling & Composting. Making the Farm/School

He is a true friend to the bluegrass of today and more importantly to the Bluegrass of the future and we are lucky he makes this part of the world his home.

—Rick Gersony, director, GreenLex.org



was a little off. I was not prepared for the dynamo of an environmentalist/community organizer who is as steeped in philosophy as he is in composting. His skin was also a shade or two darker than I had imagined and he has more ‘pony tails’ than you can shake a stick at!”

Perry says, “Jim has found a way to channel the fire from the center of the earth and bring it to bear in his daily work. He is motivated by the vision of a just, sustainable and ‘truly’ prosperous world and if you spend any time around him, he’ll share it with you. When others get bogged down in the dirty details, you can count on Jim to share his vision of the big picture and what the daily struggle is all about.”

Connection, Healthy lunches-local food; Seminar for faith leaders; Green school design and more! Jim also collaborates with the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, Russell Cave Elementary School, Community Action Council, Dunbar Memorial Garden, Art Miles Project and other local and national organizations.”

Gersony adds, “His optimism is infectious and his heartfelt commitment to human life and environment is expressed in his beautiful Fine Art, Poetry, his kind personality and is seen in the mind-boggling amount of wonderful projects he is involved in that are part of the green transformation of Lexington day by day.”

“I have learned from his elegant words and his actions that sustainable solutions to our environments problems must



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—Ben Perry, coordinator Bluegrass Energy and Green Living Expo

involve many types of community engagement as well as political and technology changes. He is a true friend to the bluegrass of today and more importantly to the Bluegrass of the future and we are lucky he makes this part of the world his home."

**W**hen Jim Embry won Good Foods' "Cooperate for Community!" contest to honor local community members for their work in sustainable foods earlier this fall, they said at the time, "Jim has exemplified his ability to cross barriers of age, race, and culture by establishing working relationships with youth to senior citizens, African American and Latino populations, uniting diversity with a common ground of food and gardening. With love for the community, Jim accomplishes sustainability and diversity through grants, private donations, collaborative efforts and volunteerism which motivates him by the

synergy of people working together creatively and cooperatively to improve their own lives, as well as the vitality of their community by establishing common bonds and mutual gain."

Sue Weant, who works toward sustainable family farming, says "Jim Embry is an ideal Model. His work toward a greener community are surely a benefit for all of us and I am happy to see someone share what he does [with] all the citizens of Lexington."

**B**ruce Burris is happy and honored to pass the baton of "This Year's Model" (he was selected this time last year in the issue headlined "Bruce Almighty") to Jim Embry, even if it does (technically) mean that now makes Burris "last year's model." Burris is a tough act to follow — having used his power for good and not evil all year long — now it's time to pass the torch.

Burris, an artist in a unique position to know, is candid about the fact that life as an advocate/activist is not an especially easy one in the bluegrass.

"I believe that having a voice as an average citizen or community advocate in Lexington is a very difficult thing—moreso than in most places—this despite what our leaders and professional boosters in the business/political/cultural communities would like us to believe."

"What impresses me most about Jim is how gracious he remains and in particular how he manages to move so seamlessly between the incredibly varied array of groups and constituents he necessarily interacts with. What he has accomplished in the last few years is really staggering and yet with Jim I get no sense of an ego needing to be massaged; he is truly dedicated to service and to creating the sort of community which works for all of us." ■

### Knight Foundation Legacy Award

When the Knight Foundation selected a Jim Embry project as part of the \$2.5 million 2010 Legacy awards, it came as no surprise to Ace readers, where the local activist/advocate is already a long-time familiar face, as both a story subject and a byline.

Embry is the chair of the proposed Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden, which was included as

part of revitalizing the Third Street Corridor.

In response to the announcement of the award, Embry told the *Herald-Leader*, "It was not just where Isaac Murphy lived, but the racetrack was there...Over the last 40 years, that community has lost its vitality, its businesses, schools, part of its heart and soul." And he spoke a central truth that all of Lexington needs to take to heart when he said, "If the city is to be vibrant, then the entire city has to be that way, not just segments." ■

# The Great Turning

Jim Embry's Diary in 2007

*Editor's Note: Every year, Ace selects an individual to highlight as "This Year's Model"—a model citizen who typifies what Ace stands for—Active, Committed, Engaged (in the environment, the culture, the community, and so on). The Award is meant to be a surprise, but we did ask this year's Honoree, Jim Embry, to share a few words with the Ace readers about how he'd spent 2007. What follows is an excerpt.*

**O**ur beautiful city of Lexington is interwoven into a global quilt...some call it a global movement...that interconnects us with our earth community as we move towards creating a more sustainable human culture. This sustainability movement has been characterized most recently by the work of two Nobel Prize winners, Wangari Mathai from Kenya with the Green Belt Movement and Al Gore with his award-winning movie, *The Inconvenient Truth*. These two agents of change are among thousands of community and business leaders who are inspiring and organizing millions of people to get involved in this paradigm shift that some call The Great Turning...and others The Great Work. Thomas Berry and Joanna Macy say "our great work is to support a new pattern of human presence on the planet."

All around the world within this Great Turning, vortexes of change are spinning earthwise with renewed wisdom towards a more sustainable future. There are many vortexes of change present in Lexington and this year I have had the divine pleasure to have been actively involved in many of these local spinnings of this quilt. My efforts have been to find ways to connect the dots...to integrate the efforts...to help create local synergy...of the various government, business, education, religious, and community efforts. I realize that an integrated systems approach is THE way of thinking that we need as a guide for this work of creating a sustainable future.

**As 2007 comes to a close** I take a look back at the pieces of quilt that I have been fortunate to touch. My efforts have been channeled primarily through the Northeast Lexington Initiative and the Sustainable Communities Network.

This year the Northeast Lexington Initiative (NELI) worked primarily in three areas: 1) organizing the Youth GreenCorps, 2) collaborating with Leadership Lexington on developing the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden and 3) supporting neighborhood associations.

The Youth GreenCorps which is a grassroots effort to transform lives and landscapes was organized as a way to involve youth directly in transforming their communities' landscape while their lives were

also being positively affected. The YGC began meeting inside in February every two weeks on Saturday mornings with practical indoor activities such as constructing bird houses and bird feeders from recycled material, constructing and painting raised beds, painting and distributing garbage cans, participating in design charettes for the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden. When the weather turned warm our work moved outside and included cosponsoring Trash Cantina on Earth Day at Woodland Park with Green Thumb and TERRA, establishing the Nelson Avenue Art Garden and participating in the Health Fair at Lexington Traditional Magnet School.

**Youth GreenCorps Summer 2007:** in collaboration with the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program and Partners for Youth, YGC was led by five young men and one young woman (all teens) who worked all summer at various work sites. In and around Third Street Stuff on N. Lime the YGC planted trees and flowers, created art sculptures from recycled wood, constructed a straw bale bench, worked with youth from the Living Arts and Science Center, cleaned the patio at LTMS, planted perennials at Saint James Apartments, harvested vegetables at The Rock/La Roca Methodist Church garden behind Arlington School, supported the Nelson Avenue Art Garden, cleaned gravestones and learned the history of Cove Haven Cemetery, interacted with 70 children at the Westend Community Empowerment Project (WECEP) to construct a turtle from straw bale and to plant vegetable and flower gardens, provided paint and rain barrels for the Hill n' Dale Park naming ceremony and organized the Lexington Community Garden Tour. The garden tour held on August 2 included stops at Third Street Stuff, The Rock/La Roca Methodist Church garden, the Nelson Avenue Art Garden, the WECEP turtle and garden projects, the gardens at Ballard Place and the Senior Citizens Center.



**This Fall** the YGC collaborated with Russell Cave Elementary School and Community Action Council to establish a community art garden in the Winburn neighborhood. The Winburn Art Garden involves 30 plus youth and adults transforming an empty lot to a colorful, fun and edible landscape that will include murals and art from found objects, perennial flower gardens and rain gardens, vegetables, berries and fruit trees as well as benches and tables made from straw bale construction. We also collaborated with Booker T. Washington Elementary School to establish a school garden in which students were able in November to harvest and eat greens, lettuce and radishes. Some children had never before planted nor eaten anything out of their own garden! With a kind donation we were able to plant over 100 flower bulbs in front of the school. This spring daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, crocuses, irises and alliums will serve as a beautiful entrance into the school.

**The Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden (IMMAG)**, a half-acre of vacant land at the intersection of Midland Place, Nelson Avenue and Third Street, is a community collaboration with NELI and Leadership Lexington aimed at commemorating the lives, stories and contributions of African-American horse industry members from Lexington's East End neighborhood. Plans for the area include transforming the land into a teaching art garden, with native plants and trees, horse-themed art from recycled material, historical markers, rain gardens and a home to small community theater productions. The art aspect put us in touch with the deeper essence of who we are as human beings...that is the need to be creative. And the garden aspect provides us the opportunity to experience our sacred connectedness to the earth. IMMAG has been included as part of the Legacy Projects funded by the Knight Foundation in preparation for the World Equestrian Games.

NELI attends the meeting and supports the work of the William Wells Brown, North Limestone and Martin Luther King neighborhood associations. The garbage cans painted by the Youth GreenCorps were distributed to these neighborhood associations.

My work in Sustainable Communities Network (SCN) brought me into contact with many other pieces of this quilt. SCN organized on **Feb 28** a Green Sanctuary seminar in conjunction with the Unitarian Universalist Church held at Good Foods. This movement to create sustainable communities provides the opportunities for faith-based institutions to transform interior sanctuaries into energy efficient and environmentally healthy buildings and exterior sanctuaries into **Gardens of Eating** and natural habitats.

**March 13 - 14** I represented SCN at the "Growing Kentucky II: Land, Food and Culture—Creating Sustainability Where You Live" symposium held at UK. This gathering represented a one creative synergy between UK's College of Agriculture and College of Fine Arts explored opportunities for Kentuckians to develop more sustainable food systems. The conference featured Kentucky authors Bobbie Ann Mason and Wendell Berry, garden designer Jon Carloffist and Professor Marion Nestle of New York University who is the author of several books including *Food Politics* and *What to Eat*. In her presentation, Marion addressed national food systems, food equity and health problems especially in communities of color. However Scott Smith, dean of UK's College of Agriculture and his conference organizers for some reason could not find any people of color to serve as conference speakers or performing artists and there were only two or three of us in the audience. However the University proclaims that diversity is a priority!

On **March 30** I was a panel member at the "Lexington, the

Bluegrass and the Future of Planning: Beyond Adversarialism, Towards a New Paradigm" conference held at the Kentucky Horse



Jim Embry, featured in the "Until the Violence Stops" billboard



The garden tour stopping at the Nelson Avenue Art Garden. Jim Embry and Rakim Baker presented to the tour participants



The Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden

Park and sponsored by Center for Sustainable Cities. Ian Smith from Vancouver, B.C. in giving the keynote address described an exemplary model of city planning where sustainability principles are the guiding tools. I was disappointed at the lack of diversity at this event as well. This lack of diversity was prevalent throughout the year in so many conferences and events.

During **April Earthdays in Bluegrass** events offered an entire month of speakers, films, seminars, and hands on projects educating and promoting sustainable living ideas and practices.

SCN conducted a workshop on "the Philosophy and Practice of Sustainability" at the Peace and Global Citizenship Fair held on **May 19** at BCTC Cooper Drive campus which featured Kentucky foods, music, art, children's activities, dance and other workshops on sustainability.

Devorah Brous, Founder and Director of BUSTAN in Israel/Palestine, was on tour this summer and SCN was fortunate to get her for few days in Lexington. BUSTAN is a partnership of Jewish and Arab eco-builders, architects, academics, and farmers promoting social and environmental justice in Israel/Palestine using the principles of permaculture and non-violent direct action across ethnic divides. While in Lexington **June 4 - 6**, Devorah provided a closer look at the sustainability issues in Israel/Palestine during presentations at Temple Adath Israel and the Downtown Arts Center. The Arts Center evening also featured visual art, Rumi and slam poetry, breakdancing, jazz music and singing. It was such a grand evening of informing words and inspiring cultural expressions.

**June 8 - 9** I attended the Earth Spirit Rising conference held in Louisville which attracted more than 400 people featured Star Hawk, Margaret Wheatley, Kilpatrick Sale, Michael Pollan and Michael Dowd. SCN was able to connect with many other sustainability activists from around the country.

On **July 31** as member of the food, education and greenspace committees of the Bluegrass Partnership for Green Community, I

helped organize and present at the professional development workshop "Local Food and Sustainability" designed for area school teachers. The teachers learned how to cook with solar ovens, how to integrate gardens into their curriculum, were taken on a tour of the Farmer's Market and received information about local food systems.

The **September 29** Healthy Farms-Local Food conference sponsored by the Sierra Club and held in Louisville featured Alice Waters and Wendell Berry. SCN conducted a workshop on *Community and School Gardens*. Students from Montessori Middle School of Kentucky here in Lexington also featured presenters on their land-based curriculum at their outdoor classroom on Stone Road.

**August 9 - 12** attended the American Community Gardening Association Conference in Boston along with 300+ gardening activists from around the US, Canada and Europe.

On **September 7** I attended the Rain Gardens Seminar sponsored by LFUCG. This seminar has inspired the **2010 Rain Gardens by 2010** citywide campaign which is similar to the 10,000 Rain Gardens campaign in Kansas City. Rain gardens will become an important part of storm water management and Lexington.

**October 6-7** at the Bluegrass Energy and Green Living Expo conducted two workshops on "Sustainability Principles and Practice" and "Community Gardening."

**November 12** I was recognized for community service at the Environmental Commission Awards Luncheon.

#### Other green efforts include:

SCN organizes meetings with Councilmember Linda Gorton, architects, teachers and city engineers to strategize about encouraging greenroofs on government and school buildings.

One of the exciting and fun ways to involve youth in sustainability efforts is to get them involved in designing green maps for their school, neighborhoods and communities. We are presently organizing the Green Map System Competition and Challenge that will culminate in green maps by Earth Day 2008.

Cool Cities Project organized by the local Sierra Club seeks to establish a baseline and develop strategies to reduce CO2 emissions in Lexington and get us in alignment with the Kyoto Protocol.

SCN community interactions include working with Dunbar High School, Tates Creek Middle School, Booker T. Washington Elementary, Lexington Traditional Magnet School, Providence Montessori, Lexington Universal Academy, Lafayette High School, Martin Luther King Academy to develop outdoor classrooms, memorial gardens, greenroofs, rain gardens and curriculum integration.

During the year I was invited to speak at UK, BCTC and Transylvania classes on sustainability and environmental justice.

I serve on the board of Goodfoods. Our manager, Anne Hopkins, traveled to Oaxaca Mexico in January to get a close look at fair trade coffee production. Good Foods serves as a community recycling center and this fall was awarded the Energy Star award for energy efficiency. Our board of directors is presently engaged in a yearlong study of local and national food systems and sustainability action plans.

During March my nature photography was part of an exhibit, "Glories of the Garden" held at UK Singletary Center and the Arboretum.

Looking ahead to 2008, Sustainable Communities Network in collaboration with other community partners such as Fayette County Public Schools, UK, Sierra Club, and state government is presenting **Green Tools for Green Schools**—community forum and regional summit. On February 21 from 6pm - 8pm the **Greens Schools 101—Community Forum** and on February 29 & March 1 from 9-4pm the **Green Schools-Regional Community Summit** will be held.

Info, contact Jim Embry at 859.312.7024, [jgembr0@cs.com.sustainlex.org](mailto:jgembr0@cs.com.sustainlex.org) ■



# HOBY Down 3rd Street

## Sustainable Gallery Hop

By Jim Embry

For the last Gallery Hop of 2009, take a guided tour and stroll down the re-emerging Third Street entertainment and arts district. The guided tours (5pm & 7pm, \$5, kids free) will last about one hour and allow everyone time to enjoy many of the other great exhibits ready to satisfy the hunger of your eyes for visually delicious and spicy art. The HOBY Hop Down 3rd Street Tours will begin at no better place than the bodacious Pat Gerhard-owned and painted Third Street Stuff (257 N. Lime) and will end at the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden (Third and Midland). This HOBY Down 3rd St. Tour will be guided by yours truly, the Ace Weekly-crowned eco-activist, and will feature the 2009 HOBY murals.

More than 180 youth came to Lexington June 6 for the second rendition of “Artists & Youth Create Community Together,” the community service project conspired by Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY), The Knight Foundation and Sustainable Communities Network. These young folks who came from all around Kentucky to Lexington as part of HOBY teamed with local artists for this outstanding community art service project. This year’s



"East End Emancipation"

theme was Eastend neighborhood history, sustainability and sacred Earth connections. Eleven (11) of these beautiful and inspiring murals are now located along 3rd St and have created lots of conversation and questions. What is the meaning of 54? What is the Trail of Tears? When will East End be emancipated? ... are a few of the David Chappelle-type questions that I will answer Friday night.



The murals pictured are (left to right): “Racing Through Time,” “Only Yours,” “Creation,” “East End Emancipation,” “Reborn,” “It’s Our Choice,” “United at the Mason-Dixon,” “Community Strength,” “The Road to Success,” “The New View,” “Come Together,” and “Change.”

Other stops along the Tour will include the London Ferrel Community Garden, the funkadelic Artsy Bus Stop, the Lyric Theatre growing from ashes and the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden now adorned with a holy-day tree. If you hop down to Al’s Bar Friday or any night check out the other 14 murals from 2008 HOBY that hang on the exterior wall at 758 N Limestone owned by community activist, Marty Clifford.

The HOBY murals shine with radiant colors and sacred symbols the murals speak of love, harmony and peace. The murals proclaim diversity, respect and environmental health. The murals inspire recycling, new music, and eyes on the future. The composition and color of these murals are but a



small attempt to reflect our ONENESS. Our connection with

"It's Our Choice"

the Earth Community. Our inter-dependence ... our need to develop sustainable communities. EveryONE is invited to come by and see the murals ... feel the inspiration. Listen to the murals. Let them speak to you ... feel the resonance within you. Enjoy their rhythms and colorful feast ... may your eyes dance and dine as did ours.

Photos of the murals along with a listing of all HOBY youth ambassadors, local artists and mural concept description are available on line at: <http://kyhoby.googlepages.com>.

*Jim Embry, Sustainable Communities Network (sustainlex.org extends “lotsa thanks and hugs to Dawn Brockman, Harmony Little, Vitale Buford, Knight Foundation, the crew at the Hugh O’Brian Kentucky Youth Leadership Seminar, the business folks that let us crazy-glue these murals to their walls and all of the color-mixing HOBY youth and local artists that used palettes as turntables.” Contact him for additional tours times this year.*



# WINBURN GARDEN OF EATIN'

## Sustainable Communities Network

By Jim Embry

From a longtime vacant lot in the Winburn neighborhood, a Garden of Eatin' is emerging literally out of the ground. Begun last fall and located at 1169 Winburn Drive next to the Community Action Council, the Winburn Community Art Garden is a collaborative effort between the Community Action Council, Russell Cave Elementary School, Sustainable Communities Network, the Northeast Lexington Initiative, neighborhood residents and support from various other groups. Children and adults are working side-by-side to create a beautiful space that nourishes the mind body and spirit, respects diversity, and is fun!

Art pieces can be found throughout the garden on our painted raised beds, garden-sign and numerous recycled objects. All artwork and structures were completed using found objects as we stress the need to recycle and reuse to our youth (and ourselves!). Our beautiful mural is the product of the UNESCO Art Miles Project coordinated locally by Jarah Jones and our native plants were furnished by Shooting Star Nursery. We received pavers from our kindred friends of the Dunbar Memorial Garden and placed these around trees to use as raised beds for spring bulbs.

The Winburn Community Art Garden is very much part of the national urban gardening movement that strives to reclaim empty lots, restore our health, provide a space for intergenerational and multicultural dialogue and appreciation and foster a much needed sense of human sacred connection with Mother Earth.

This spring we have had diverse folks coming to the garden from the Bluegrass Community and Technical College, UK Green Thumb, the Dunbar Memorial Garden, youth with drug offenses assigned by the court to do community service, people from the neighborhood, people originally from Egypt, Mexico, Africa and South America have all blessed our table. Young children are finding red wigglers or huge night crawlers and squealing with delight and discovery. Neighborhood residents who walk by are invited into the space linger, put their hands in the dirt and also find community.

A monoculture of simply green grass is fast becoming a symphony of color and size, a palette of different tastes and smells and a library of nomenclature and cultural expressions. Daffodils, hyacinths, crocuses and tulips planted last December are in bloom and are proclaiming that spring is here. Four weeks ago we planted snow peas and they're jumping like acrobats out of the ground. So far this spring we have also planted fruit trees, blackberry bushes, grapevines, strawberries, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli and different herbs. We are preparing space and for warm weather crops which will include a Three Sisters Garden, a Native American tradition of planting corn, squash and beans together. Of course with our Latino community friends cilantro, tomatillos and hot peppers will soon follow. Okra, collards greens, green beans and squash will soon be ready for the pot. I think Martha and the Vandellas would agree that it will be a joy to see all these plants "dancing in the streets" of Winburn!

The Winburn Art Garden serves as an outdoor classroom



and extension of the school learning environment for students at Russell Cave Elementary School. This past December I visited Alice Waters and the Edible Schoolyard in Berkeley California where the state law requires that every school must have a school garden that is integrated into the entire curriculum. Some states but not yet Kentucky recognize the importance of school gardens and outdoor classrooms to student achievement and mental well-being.

### School gardens offer numerous benefits to children

School gardening has been shown to increase self-esteem, help students develop a sense of ownership and responsibility, help foster relationships with family members, and increase parental involvement.

School gardening promotes higher quality learning. Students tend to learn more and better when they are actively involved in the learning process.

School gardening promotes higher quality learning. In a project that involved integrating nutrition and gardening among children in grades one through four, the outcomes went well beyond an understanding of good nutrition and the origin of fresh food, to include enhancing the quality and meaningfulness of learning.

School gardening enhances learning for all students. Children with learning disabilities, who participated in gardening activities, had enhanced nonverbal communication skills, developed awareness of the advantages of order, learned how to participate in a cooperative effort, and formed relationships with adults.

School gardening fosters parental involvement. Parents who are highly involved at school are more likely to be involved in educational activities with their children at home.

Diversity and Cultural Appreciation. Gardening can be an ideal vehicle for introducing elements of multicultural education. Gardening helps young people understand the

value of diversity by exploring historical contributions from cultures worldwide to what we eat today.

After gardening, kids possess an appreciation for working with neighborhood adults, and have an increased interest for improvement of neighborhood appearance.

"Nature-deficit disorder is not an official diagnosis but a way of viewing the problem, and describes the human costs of alienation from nature, among them: diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses. The disorder can be detected in individuals, families, and communities. The real measure of our success will not be in the number of programs created or bills passed, but in the creation of a new cultural atmosphere, in everyday life, that will make such decisions second nature—in every family, every school and every neighborhood."

—Richard Louv, "Last Child in the Woods"

School/ community gardens should be a no brainer. Our ultimate goal is deep cultural change, connecting children to nature, so that they can be healthier, happier and smarter. I think that the best hope for our species lies in learning new patterns of attention to each other and to the biosphere, patterns that grow out of curiosity and respect and allow for wonder and learning. ■

*You can see more pictures of the Winburn Community Art Garden as well as other community garden projects at [www.sustainablex.org](http://www.sustainablex.org). We meet every Saturday from 1pm - 3pm. and welcome volunteers. Friends of Winburn Art Garden are encouraged to donate funds, help write grants, bring veggie plants, trees and flowers and much more! For more information, contact: Catrena Lewis 859.294.5249, [CLewis@commaction.org](mailto:CLewis@commaction.org), or Jim Embry 859.312.7024, [jgembr0@cs.com](mailto:jgembr0@cs.com).*





## *Back 2 Nature Youth Green Corps*



### *2009 Community Art Garden Project*



## *Northeast Lexington Initiative Sustainable Communities Network*





## ***Back 2 Nature Project at Winburn Community Art Garden*** **2009 Report**

### **Northeast Lexington Initiative(NELI), Sustainable Communities Network**

**Back 2 Nature** is a collaborative community program that involved Northeast Lexington Initiative(NELI), Community Action Council, Winburn Neighborhood Association, Russell Cave Elementary School, Sustainable Communities Network, LFUCG and many other individuals and community groups. The Back 2 Nature project is a continuation of the Youth GreenCorps program begun by NELI in 2007 in the eastend neighborhood and was designed to involve youth in green-ifying their community. The Back 2 Nature community garden project designed to give youth and the residents in the Winburn neighborhood a meaningful garden experience was begun April '09 and will conclude April 2010.( The Winburn Community Art Garden Project began November 2007). The Back 2 Nature project site was originally set for Wesley United Methodist Church on Russell Cave Rd.

Back 2 Nature found a new home and subsequently was re-located to the Winburn Community Art Garden at 1169 Winburn Drive home of Northside Community Action



Council. While the Wesley site provided ample land, it did pose problems with various aspects of accessibility. The Winburn Community Art Garden site however provides several benefits such as: 1) available water, 2) close proximity to neighborhood residents, 3) easy access by delivery trucks, 4) quick access to a meeting room, 5) quick access to storage for tools and supplies, 6) a community atmosphere rather than at a church, 7) steadfast agency

support and 8) a location that is centered directly in the heart of the community. This location provides an ideal environment for the overall success and operation of this project without taking away from any of the project objectives and outcomes. Back 2 Nature at the Winburn Community Art Garden has been an exceptional educational and collaborative experience for many residents, volunteers, organizations and especially youth. This location has provided gardening experiences for many residents, youth groups and organizations. Neighborhood residents have come into the garden on a daily basis to gather very local, fresh and nutritious food while also just sitting in the garden to enjoy the company of family and friends. Back 2 Nature has also been an inspiration to other neighborhoods, the topic of a short film documentary and has been discussed at national conferences.

Ella Wilson and Jim Embry served as the primary adult mentors for our Back 2 Nature Project along with support from Cathy Sutphen (Family Resource Coordinator at Russell Cave Elementary School), Miranda Hileman (Compton Foundation Fellow), Sherrie Muhammad(Malboro Park Community Garden, Roy Woods(Community Action Council), Cynthia Bryant(filmmaker w/LFUCG) and Carolyn Benford (Winburn neighborhood resident).





### **Back 2 Nature & School Garden Workshop**

Adult and youth volunteers in the Back to Nature project were involved in the School Gardening training workshops held April 18 and June 12 that included classroom sessions and hands on demonstrations at the Arboretum. Back 2 Nature adult volunteers, Jim Embry, Miranda Hileman and Obiora Embry were the lead organizers and speakers for each School Garden Workshop. Back 2 Nature adult volunteers, Ella Wilson,

Cynthia Bryant, Karen Napier, August Mapp, Sherrie Muhammad, Eudocia Jones and her daughter, Genae Jones, all attended these workshops and were able to get information on all aspects of gardening, hot composting, worm composting, rain gardens and community involvement and resources. Eight (8) Back 2 Nature volunteers- adults and youth- participated in these two School Garden workshops and were better equipped to serve as adult mentors and leaders at our Winburn site.

### **Back 2 Nature & Leadership Lexington**

The Leadership Lexington Youth Division chose to spend their day of service at the Winburn Community Art Garden and participated in the **Back 2 Nature experience**. On May 4 from 11 am to 4pm, 45 youth, 5 adult mentors, 6-8 neighborhood residents and Back 2 Nature adult volunteers interacted together. Some of the projects that day included:



1) **Mosaic Tile** - Using recycled ceramic tile pieces gleaned from the “garbage” headed to the landfill to make a beautiful mosaic tile board. These young folks demonstrated that what we call trash can become art. Using the theme of environmental connection the mosaic tile captured the image of flowers, the ground and the Sun. Many of these youth had never created a mosaic tile piece, but they caught on to the process very quickly.

2) **Rain Garden**. The youth worked to add plants, mulch and rocks to the existing rain garden. All of the youth were given an explanation of the use, the benefits of rain gardens, the EPA Consent Decree imposed on LFUCG, the Bluegrass Rain Garden Alliance and the encouragement to establish rain gardens at their schools, houses of worship and homes.



- 3) **Fruit Trees**. The youth planted vegetables, fruit trees, grape vines, raspberries, and flowers in the orchard and garden space.
- 4) **Murals**. Another group painted 3 murals that now hang on the Winburn Community Art Garden gallery wooden fence
- 5) **Painted self**. Some youth got carried away and coated their hands in paint to make hand prints and one student had the back of his hair painted to look like a ladybug.





- 6) **Rain barrels** were also painted along with explanations to the entire group about the use of rain barrels in water conservation



- 7) **Community involvement.** Neighborhood residents, Community Action staff, Back 2 Nature adult volunteers and fellow gardeners from Malboro Park and Green Acres Community Gardens also participated in this day long experience.
- 8) This Leadership Lexington Youth Division day of service with Back 2 Nature at Winburn Art Garden was filmed by Cynthia Bryant of LFUCG who is preparing a documentary on the community gardening movement in Lexington.

During our wrap-up discussion at the end of the day, the Leadership Lexington youth proclaimed that this last session of their year- long study was “the best session of all”. They recognized that getting Back 2 Nature was important for our future efforts toward a sustainable community.

This hands-on session for the Leadership Lexington class of 2009 with Back 2 Nature was a continuation of an on-going partnership.

Particularly noteworthy, in 2008 we were invited to speak to the Leadership Lexington-Youth class, but without any hands-on experience. One of the students who participated in 2008, was very inspired by our presentation and used the inspiration as the impetus for further research and study. This student, Lucy Hartley- a student at Bryan Station High School, recently entered and won an essay contest sponsored by the Kentucky Council of Churches. Her winning essay described the framework for establishing a green school at Bryan Station High School. The insightful and comprehensive nature of this essay by Lucy reaffirms the understanding that these experiences can have a profound impact on our youth. Thus we are confident that the 2009 class of Leadership Lexington who participated in Back 2 Nature will also be inspired to become advocates for sustainability!



### Compost Delivery

On May 12 our compost was delivered in 3 truck loads and this was also a time for kids to learn and PLAY. This mountain of compost was a perfect play area for the



neighborhood kids...and adults! We found large grub worms in the compost and this was a treat for all! 6-8 adults and 4-6 children worked over the next several days working to spread this mountain of compost around the garden area



### **Terrapin Hill Farmer**

On May 19 farmer Pete Cashel of Terrapin Hill Farms and his helper came to plow the Winburn Community Art Garden and turn the delivered compost into the ground. Pete and his helper were able to plow the ground and compost quite well and prepared a very fertile garden to plant in. This was the first year that we had plowed the field, but we knew that the garden size needed to be expanded to provide even greater quantities of food for the Winburn community.



### **Shopping week**

Cathy Sutphen of Russell Cave Elementary School, Nancy Peacock of Community Action Council and Jim Embry spent hours at Home Depot, Fayette Seed and Lowes during the 1st weeks of May shopping for the Back 2 Nature garden project. More than 200 plants, 6 fruit trees, several grape vines, blueberry bushes, packages of seeds, garden carts and tools were purchased for the expanded garden area for 2009.

### **Planting weekend**

Saturday May 23 was designated as the first big planting day for the Back 2 Nature garden project. Organized by Cathy Sutphen, this planting day involved neighborhood residents, students from Russell Cave Elementary School, Winburn Middle School, Community Action Council staff and other volunteers. It was a fun and productive day for everyone involved. The weather was perfect. Water and snacks were provided. The dormant garden space was filled with the seeds and plants of new life and a bountiful summer experience!

### **Youth Green Corps & the Mayor's Summer Youth Program**

In the spring of 2007 we organized the Youth Green Corps to provide a summer experience for youth to "green-ify" Lexington by planting trees, supporting community gardens, creating community art installations, painting rain barrels, painting and placing



garbage cans in the community and learning about the importance of sustainability. During the summer we were able to extend YGC by connecting with the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment. Six (6) young people were employed in this program, assigned to NELI to work 20 hours a week in the Youth



GreenCorps and were featured in the Lexington Herald-Leader a total of 3 times during the summer of 2007. These young people were able to touch the lives of many other youth and adults all around Lexington, worked in gardens, created art installations and recognized their role in changing their community. Through this 2007 YGC summer program we were far better able to envision the 2009 Back 2 Nature project and its connection to the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program.



Following this 2007 model of the Youth Green Corps we applied for this LFUCG Sustainability Grant and the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program. We received the grant and were also assigned 5 young men who became the back bone of the Back 2 Nature project this summer. Ella Wilson was the primary adult mentor for these young men (Shaquille Williams, LeDarius Jackson, Joshua Holland, RaKing Young, Jonathan Gerton, Juantez Craig ) who began their summer of work on June 22. The daily log report prepared by Ella Wilson on the summer experience of these young men is included below.

## **BACK-2-NATURE GARDEN TEAM ACTIVITY LOG (2009)**

### **Report by Ella Wilson**

June 14-16, 2009– Conducted job interviews for selection six young men from the Summer Youth Employment participants to make up the Back-2-Nature Gardening Team.

June 22, 2009– First work day: Orientation; reviewed tool usage; work rules and how to identify the different plants from the many weeds growing in the Winburn Community Art Garden; shown techniques of building and planting in raised bed garden beds.



June 23– Built and planted raised garden bed as part of the Senior Citizen Victory Garden Project. included cutting and trimmed over

grown bushes along Work fence line to assure garden would get enough sunlight.

June 24- North Branch Library – Research detailed forecast from weather.com and other forecast locations on the internet to find local weather conditions which would help TEAM plan weekly gardening chores.



June 24- Visited LFUCG Recycling Center on Thompson Road where citizens can get free mulch for their gardening projects. The tour of the facility was an important learning opportunity that showed TEAM that recycling of glass, cardboard and old Christmas trees helps our environment.

June 25- Visited God's Garden so TEAM could see a large successfully managed community gardening project. The TEAM assisted in the weeding and composting task while visiting the Catholic Action's section of God's Garden.

June 26- Assigned areas of responsibility and instructed Team on how they are to care for the different variety of vegetable, plants and fruit trees planted within their assigned areas of the Winburn's garden.



June 29–  
Reorganized/Changed weekly work schedule to 5 hours a day, 4 days a week (Mon., Tue., Wed., Thursday).



Trimmed over grown bushes along fence line and built raised bed garden boxes at Green Acres Park.

June 30 – July 1, North Branch Library, workers assigned research project to learn how to enhance growing potential of vegetables growing within their assigned garden sections. Shaquille Williams- watermelons, berries, herbs, squash, fruit trees and peppers; LeDarius Jackson- green beans, corn, herbs, fruit trees and eggplants; Joshua Holland- tomatoes, melons, fruit trees and corn; RaKing Young- cucumbers, corn, melons and okra; Jonathan Gerton- Tomatoes, cabbage and grapes; Juantez Craig- squash, tomatoes, greens, strawberries.

July 2- Weeded raised bed garden boxes at Marlboro community Garden. Filled raised bed garden boxes at Green Acres Park with compost and mulch then transplanted tomatoes and squash plants.

July 3- No work Friday due to Fourth of July Holiday.

July 6-7- Cleaned debris and trash from a vacant lot, on Pine Street, which is the future site of the Isaac Scott Hathaway Memorial Art Garden. Team spent the day working with Ms. Yvonne Giles an African-American historian, who shared with them many facts about famous Blacks that lived and worked in Lexington.

July 8- Garden Maintenance and Vegetable Harvesting at Winburn Community Garden and Marlboro Garden-In-The-Park (squash, bell peppers, greens).

July 9- Visited the newly established Worm Farm Composting Project which is housed at the Catholic Action Center's 7<sup>th</sup> Street location.



July 9- North Branch Library – Did research to find out more about vermiculture and vermicomposting techniques.

Vermicomposting is a technique of composting that utilizes various species of worms, specifically red wigglers, white worms, and earthworms creating the heterogeneous mixture of decomposing vegetable or food waste, bedding material to help produce worm casting which is a rich byproduct the worms produce. The castings are used and sold as a natural fertilizer.

July 13- North Branch Library – Research detailed forecast from weather.com and other forecast locations on the internet to find local weather forecast to help plan weekly gardening

work.

July 14- Visited London Ferrell Community Garden on East 3 rd. Street.

July 15- Planted, mulched, weeded and watered Winburn, Marlboro and Green Acres Gardens

July 16- Field Trip to Kentucky State University Agricultural Research Farm and Aquaculture Fish Farm.

July 20- Harvested squash and green beans at God's Garden.

July 21-22 Built raised garden beds and planted seedlings at Green Acres Garden-In-The Park Community Garden.





July 23- July 27-30 The TEAM spent the whole week performing a new weed control technique that uses newspaper as a weed barrier. Paper is placed around the base of the plant which is then covered with mulch. This is a much cheaper weed control process that works.

July 30- Last Work Day: On July 30, buses for the 2009 Lexington Community Garden Tour arrived at the Winburn Community Art Garden at about 5:45 PM. There was



about 150 people trampling, touching and picking throughout our neat, clean, weed-free garden. The TEAM's hard work paid off! Everyone seemed to be very impressed with the hard work the young men of our BACK-TO-NATURE GARDENING TEAM put forward to help the garden grow and survive throughout the summer.

Besides their gardening skills the visitors were impressed with all of the colorful abstract sculptures and creative art work scattered throughout and around the garden. The tradition of the Art Garden is that each community group that contributes work is asked to leave a signature piece of art work to prove that they had a hand in helping to create the garden that will serve the community.



The BACK-2-NATURE TEAM is especially proud of their art contribution to the garden. Their contribution is an African Tapestry motif which adorns the top of the garden's picnic table. The table top mural depicts African farm life



and highlights some of the TEAM'S favorite vegetables they grew this summer in the Winburn Community Art Garden.

As another artistic gesture the TEAM placed police barricades around what was left the squash plants. The barricades got some inquisitive and puzzled looks. But, everyone understood and laughed when it was explained that what happened to the squash plants was a crime. The plot where flourishing, bountiful plants once grew is now a "crime scene" because of the damage the squash boring beetles do to squash plants causing the plants to wither and die.



**Back 2 Nature and Knowledge is Power**  
Knowledge is Power(KIP) is the summer enrichment

program founded by Bettye Simpson and supported by Drs. Scott and Larkin as well as Calvary Baptist Church. KIP was featured in the Herald-Leader this summer in an article

written by Merlene Davis. Bettye Simpson, a longtime friend,



heard about our efforts to expand community gardening around Lexington and wanted her 15 youth to also have an experience to garden this summer. After an initial meeting Bettye wanted her KIP youth to work in the Back 2 Nature project once a week. KIP began their experience on June 22 and worked in the garden every week..sometimes twice a week..until the week of July 27. Very much like the TEAM Youth Green Corps young men mentored by Ella Wilson, KIP also had 4 young women from the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program working with them for the summer. These young women, along with the 15 younger children and Bettye Simpson had a wonderful, nutritious and fun summer experience in the Back2 Nature program. Some of their experiences included:

- 1) constructing raised beds using hammers, nails, 2x6 wood
- 2) painting all the raised beds constructed
- 3) preparing the raised beds with cardboard and mulch
- 4) filling the raised with compost and dirt and getting to use shovels, rakes and wheel barrows.
- 5) Planting vegetable and flower seeds, grape vines, trees
- 6) Working on murals, painting tomato sticks and other art projects
- 7) Working with the young men working with Ella Wilson
- 8) Being able over the summer to harvest and eat directly out of the garden many vegetables that they had actually planted. The KIP youth and adults tasted and took home: peas, tomatoes, greens, lettuce, peppers, squash and flowers.
- 9) One day we made flower jewelry from many of the flowers growing in the garden. These flowers some that they had actually planted several weeks before, became necklaces, ear rings and bracelets that gave the youth a new understanding of how to connect and go Back 2 Nature.
- 10) Cynthia Bryant of LFUCG filmed the KIP youth during their summer days spent in the Winburn Community Art Garden.



The young men under Ella Wilson's mentorship(TEAM) interacted often with the youth from KIP and served as mentors for the younger children. This experience of older teens working with and teaching the younger children was a reaffirming sight to the important role that gardening can have in teaching leadership, citizenship and creating community.





Many of the youth in KIP had never used shovels or garden tools, had never planted a garden and had never eaten vegetables directly from a garden. This was an unforgettable experience for the entire KIP family and provided an opportunity to truly get youth Back 2 Nature!

### **Back 2 Nature and KET film documentary**

The University of Kentucky Agriculture



Communication department and KET approached us about filming a short documentary about community gardening at the Winburn Community Art



Garden. We of course said YES! On July 22 the film crew arrived at the garden with camera and equipment to get us on film. Our young men(TEAM) as well as other children and adults in the Back 2 Nature project were present in the garden that day. Some of the youth were interviewed and all of them were filmed working in the garden. In August the edited segment, Grown in Kentucky, was shown on KET for several weeks. We were given a DVD copy of the interview for our use.

### **Cynthia Bryant Documentary**



Cynthia Bryant videographer for LFUCG also came to the Back 2 Nature project at the Winburn Community Art Garden numerous times during the summer to film a documentary about community gardens in the Lexington neighborhoods. Her documentary has not been completed.

### **Back 2 Nature and Art in the Garden**

Sometimes when working in the garden in middle of summer when the plants are all growing quite well, there just isn't much to do. Back 2 Nature faced this question this summer...and our answer was: "kids can always do ART!" Planting, harvesting, cooking and preparing food are definitely all art forms, but we also included other forms of creative expressions. We included several art projects this summer designed to give the youth a fun and educational experience. Our art projects in Back 2 Nature included the following:



- 1) African Tapestry picnic table
- 2) Colorful ceiling fan
- 3) Wooden faces
- 4) Tree of Life
- 5) Mosaic Tile
- 6) Painted tomato sticks
- 7) Murals
- 8) Painted Rain barrels



Many of our art installations were made from wood, tile or other materials that were “gleaned” out of construction dumpsters and trash piles from city sidewalks. The youth learned how to turn “trash” that was destined for our landfill into art, useful garden containers and compost bins. Back 2 Nature encouraged the use of art as an important experience to teach, inspire and fun-ify ecological literacy. These young people in the production of art installations also learned how to use power tools, hand tools, how to mix concrete, apply construction methodology and creative expressions.

### **Back 2 Nature and Garden Tour**

On July 30 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lexington Community Garden Tour involving 150 people and 6 gardens sites was held. Jim Embry and Miranda Hileman, Back 2 Nature adult mentors, were the primary organizers of the Garden Tour and selected the Winburn Back 2 Nature project as the first site on the tour. Neighborhood children and parents came out during the week before the Garden Tour to enhance the look of the Winburn Art Garden grounds. Plants were mulched to cover weeds; wood sculpture pieces were constructed; benches were painted, trash was picked up and the grounds looked vibrant for the Garden Tour.



The Winburn Community Art Garden, site of Back 2 Nature, was a BIG HIT! with all the tour participants. Many people left very inspired to begin their own art garden. The speakers at the Winburn Art Garden included: 1) the Back 2 Nature TEAM members & Ella Wilson, Winburn resident Carolyn Benford, Roy Woods(Community Action Council) and Jim Embry.

#### **Back 2 Nature and Compton Fellow Miranda Hileman**

Miranda Hileman a recent graduate of Berea College and a 2009 Compton Mentor Fellowship recipient decided to spend her year working in Lexington with Jim Embry as her mentor. She moved to Lexington in June and joined the existing Back 2 Nature project. She has spent more than 100 hours working, planning, harvesting and teaching in the Back 2 Nature project.





### **Back 2 Nature and Family Court**

The Winburn Community Art Garden and Back 2 Nature project has been a place where youth going through Drug Court are assigned by Judge Lucinda Masterton to do community service with Jim Embry. This gardening experience has been so positive for the youth and parents that the Family Court has now set up a garden on Nelson Ave just for youth from Drug Court. So Back 2 Nature has inspired other agencies to include urban gardening in their programming where previously it did not exist.

### **Community Action Council Advisory Committee**

Roy Woods, director of the Winburn Community Action Council has the Winburn Community Art Garden project on the agenda at each monthly meeting of his advisory committee. In these meetings we have evaluated the summer Back 2 Nature garden experience, shared favorite stories and have made plans for next spring. Members of this advisory committee include: Roy Woods & Felisha Stone of Community Action, Vanessa Sanford of Winburn Neighborhood Association, Isabel Taylor of LFUCG, Cathy Sutphen of Russell Cave Elementary School, Ledetta Grimes; Diana Acevedo; T.C. Johnson of Winburn Middle School, Tom Blues of LFUCG City Council, LFUCG Police officers and others.

**The Learning Center** is the new alternative school in Fayette County that provides educational environment for youth at risk. Ron Chi, the new Learning Center principal had previously served as principal at Winburn Middle School for the past few years and this summer observed the youth working in the Winburn Community Art Garden and Back 2 Nature. He said his observations of this garden further inspired him to include a garden and outdoor classroom at The Learning Center. One student who worked in the Winburn Art Garden this summer is also a student at The Learning Center and helps provide leadership around gardening at his school.

### **Back 2 Nature and national conferences**

The experiences of the Back 2 Nature project located at the Winburn Community Art Garden was the primary content of conference workshops on *Art Gardens* given August-American Community Garden Association and October-Growing Food and Justice by Jim Embry that inspired conference participants.



### **Back 2 Nature and a westend garden**

Officer Michelle Bean of the LFUCG Division of Police contacted us to discuss a community garden in a vacant lot on the corner of Georgetown St and Roosevelt Blvd. Officer Bean said she was driving in Winburn with her husband (also a police officer) and noticed the Winburn Community Art Gardens and Back 2 Nature youth working in the garden. She thought a similar project across from Douglass Park would be good for the neighborhood. After our conversation she planned to present the idea of a garden to the neighborhood association in October. So Back 2 Nature continues to inspire other neighborhoods to create garden.

**Back 2 Nature/Youth GreenCorps In Summary** During the late summer, Winburn residents enjoyed a bumper crop of tomatoes, lots of corn and okra, different kinds of peppers, green and yellow squash, cabbage and broccoli, watermelon and cantaloupe, greens and herbs, and green beans. People who did not know each other worked in the garden, became friends and enjoyed the edible bounty. Agencies worked together to provide food, environmental education and lasting friendships. Young people stepped into garden for the very first time, ate veggies right off the vine, learned about environmental stewardship, created art and had lots of FUN!



Our experience with Back 2 Nature has exceeded our expectations. The project objectives are:

- Cooperation and collaboration between community organizations which enhances our sense of community
- Outdoor physical exercise will provide improved health and well being
- Connections with nature through gardening improves our knowledge of and sense of responsibility to the environment
- Eating Fresh vegetables and fruit will improve health and nutrition
- Intergenerational communication and shared work will build stronger nurturing relationships
- Youth involvement and leadership will build greater confidence, self-esteem and work ethic
- Multicultural interactions which will improve cross-cultural understanding, communication and connections
- Access to fresh food from the garden will reduce the family food budget and allow people to stretch their shrinking dollars
- Creative use of green space can serve as a catalyst for future neighborhood and community development
- Youth participation through creative use of leisure time can reduce crime

All of our objectives have been realized as we continue our work over the winter.

**Back 2 Nature over the fall and winter.** Back 2 Nature will extend over the fall, winter and early spring. This fall we will continue with our garden cleanup and putting the garden to rest. In January we will begin seedlings inside in preparation for spring planting. By February we will begin spring planting of peas, greens and other cool weather crops

This report Submitted by Jim Embry, Northeast Lexington Initiative, Sustainable Communities Network November 10, 2009

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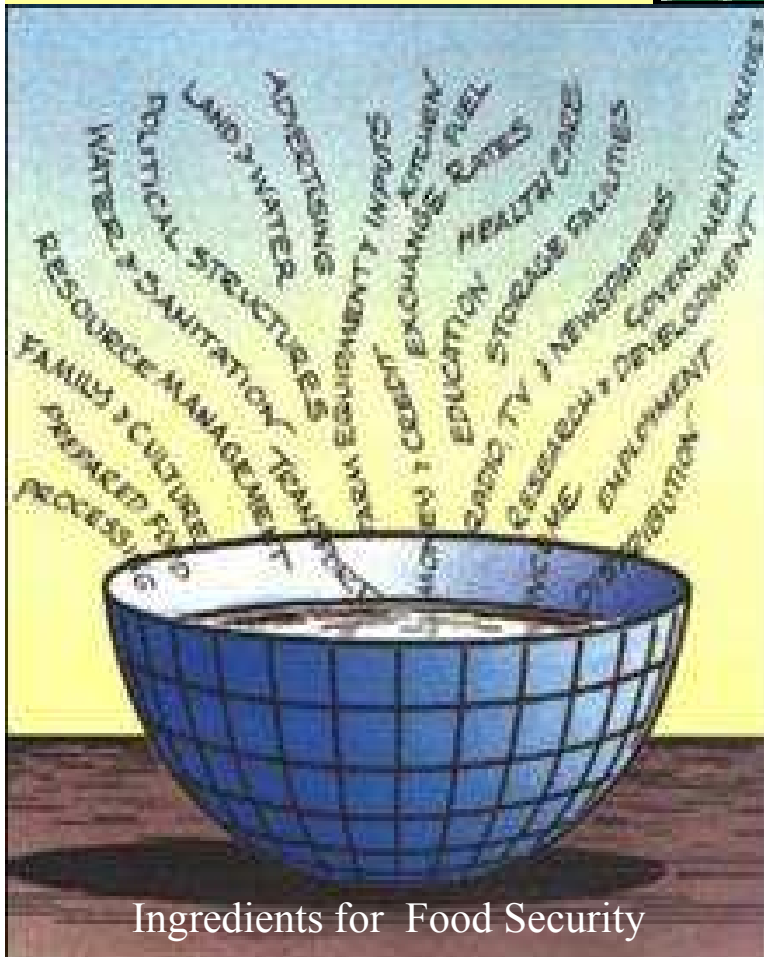
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