



Sustainable Communities Network

Changing lives & landscapes

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Dear Community friends,

In 2009 both **First Lady Michelle Obama and First Lady Jane Beshear** of Kentucky planted gardens at their residences in hopes of inspiring citizens around our country and state to also grow a garden and eat more healthy food. Over the past year as our economic situation has worsened producing higher unemployment and increasing costs of fuel and food, people everywhere are struggling to maintain their household and meet their basic needs. These developments have generated a **renewed interest and an increasing necessity** for growing our own food. Consequently we have received many phone calls, emails and on the street requests for support, resources and funds for establishing backyard and community gardens. We have seen the faith community reaching out to create **gardens of eatin'** for their congregations and others in need. We have been quite surprised and excited by the keen interest in **school gardens and farm-to-school** projects. We have seen disparate sectors of our community collaborate and embrace for the first time around growing food and food security.

During World Wars I and II, all Americans were encouraged to support the war effort by planting **Victory Gardens** in their yards, workplaces, schools and city parks and to share the bounty with neighbors. Citizens young and old became part of this **national movement** that provided opportunities for community members to plant and grow, harvest and can, cook and store, share and eat fresh and local foods. This **grand spirit** of community engagement and learning around gardening is what we need and what we witness is re-emerging across our country... **an urban gardening and local foods system movement.**

Sustainable Communities Network has been responding to this movement in many ways: **organizing neighborhood meetings, sharing tools and resources, offering advice, preparing grants, hiring and training youth, organizing volunteers, distributing plants and seeds, connecting with farmers, creating web-based resources, speaking at every opportunity and yes digging in the dirt!**

2009 was a year full of building **relationships** that include such initiatives as:

- **we helped establish and expand gardens at: *Chrysalis House for Women; Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program; Nelson Ave with youth in Drug Court; Catholic Action Center God's Garden; Virginia Place; The Learning Center; Winburn, Green Acres, Malboro and Gainesway parks; several faith congregations and public and private schools***
- **we collaborated with community partners to: *build a community hoop house so we can grow food year round; set up a worm composting operation; organize the Annual Community Garden Tours; design and facilitate two school garden workshops; host several community garden workshops; provide service opportunities for 4,000+ volunteers; glean 2000+ pounds of fresh vegetables for area food banks,***
- **we participated in and served as speakers at state and national conferences while also interacting monthly with local organizations such as Catholic Action Center, Chrysalis House, Family Court**
- **we created the Bluegrass School and Community Garden Network with an interactive website**

We are literally *in the trenches* providing support for families and communities who wish to become more self-reliant by growing and eating some of their own food while also developing the partnerships that create a more sustainable local economy. **Please take time to read more details about our work in the attached 2009 SCN Annual Report.**

HELP US continue our work in 2010...Make a contribution!!

In 2010 we seek to continue our existing projects and relationships while offering new programs such as: **Sustainability 101, Worm and Backyard Composting, Eco-Art Projects, Sacred Earth Retreats**. Despite the condition of the economy **our eyes are on the prize...**sustainable communities that are *ecologically healthy, socially just, economically vibrant and spiritually fulfilling*.

Your contributions to Sustainable Communities Network will allow us to **remain responsive** to the growing needs..**and open to the opportunities...**that **gardens, healthy food, eco-art and sustainable living** bring to our communities. Please consider making a contribution this year that will support our programs to **empower, inspire and educate** our communities about social justice, sustainable living and sacred Earth connectionsespecially the youth!!

Consider these ways to contribute:

- Please consider making a tax deductible **financial donation**, yearly or monthly
- Please consider holding a **House Party For Sustainable Communities Network**
- Purchase a copy of **Sustainable World Sourcebook**
- **Volunteer** with our community initiatives, join our network and bring your ideas
- **Invite us to speak** at your school, university, faith community, or conference
- **Be creative...**suggest other ways that you can contribute to this important work.

We are very grateful for your continued support and involvement and look forward to enhancing our relationship with you in 2010. And we appreciate all the work that you are doing to build sustainable communities.

Sustainably yours, Jim Embry, Director

YES! I support the work of **Sustainable Communities Network** and will make the following contribution(s).

I am making a **financial donation** in yearly or monthly amount of **\$** _____

I will schedule a **House Party for Sustainable Communities Network**

I **want to volunteer** with your community initiatives

I will **invite SCN us to speak** at my school, university, faith community, or conference

I **am** suggesting these other ways to contribute _____

Please send this form and check payable to: **Sustainable Communities Network**

573 Stratford Dr., Lexington, KY 40503

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____ email _____

Phone _____ Amount enclosed _____