

# **Grow Appalachia**

## **The Appalachian Community Gardening and Food Security Project – sponsored by John Paul DeJoria**

**To teach and support the people of Appalachia in addressing the tragedy of hunger in the region by learning to grow their own food to feed themselves.**

### *Work Plan for 2011 Growing Season*

#### **Regional Needs to be Addressed**

- Basic diet-related health concerns – obesity, diabetes, heart disease.
- Limited availability of high-quality fresh produce.
- Generational loss of knowledge of gardening, cooking, and food preservation skills.
- Widespread economic dependency and lack of autonomy.

#### **Planned Outcomes**

- Provide mountain families the resources and support to produce more of their own food.
- Develop systems to share surplus produce with elderly and disabled folks at little or no cost.
- Create systems to market surplus produce to local residents or, cooperatively, to a wider regional market.
- Families benefiting from this program will agree to help other families as they are able to maximize the impact of the program.

#### **Benefits to the people of Central Appalachia**

- Healthy local food options.
- Increased self-esteem through agency and autonomy.
- Enhanced sense of community, resiliency, and partnership through rediscovery of Appalachian heritage and knowledge.
- More personal income retained resulting from not having to pay high costs of imported food.
- Potential source of income from local farmers' markets and cooperative regional marketing.
- Preservation of heirloom varieties of different vegetables which were critical to the mountaineers' heritage but are now in danger of being lost.

#### **Program Partners**

- Eight program partners, detailed below, are all currently involved in gardening and/or natural resource based programs in their communities.
- They have all been crucial parts of their community fabric, in some cases for decades, and have enormous credibility, working in many cases with several generations of the same families.
- Crippling funding constraints on rural development have seriously impeded the institutions' ability to reach further into the communities. Grow Appalachia represents a dramatic exception to this trend and has garnered much recognition in Central Appalachia for its impact in its service area. All eight partners are very enthusiastic about the prospects of having the resources to continue and expand this work. Recruitment numbers represent informed and realistic projections by the partners.
- Grow Appalachia has seen significant success in its first year. In its second year it has the clear potential to expand into three states and as many as seventeen counties.

## **Partner Commitments**

- Identifying and organizing a diverse group of local families to receive assistance and support to create and maintain productive and economical home gardens.
- Providing educational programs to share the most efficient and up-to-date information about gardening, cooking for maximum nutrition, and food preservation techniques. This will allow the most cost-effective and healthful use of produce. All partners recognize the value of these workshops and have committed to presenting even more of them in this second year.
- Using grant -funded soil working equipment to help families prepare gardens and maintain garden plots throughout the garden season. They will also distribute needed hand tools, seeds, plants, fertilizers, soil conditioners, soil testing tools, and educational materials for each family. Ecosystem friendly, organic, sustainable techniques will be emphasized . Each year will see an increase in the health of the soil and the land's capacity to provide for the people of the mountains.
- Working with families to help establish local farmers' markets for vegetables produced in excess of families' needs.
- Reintroducing to mountain youth the skills of food production, processing, and direct marketing, reinforcing the value of self reliance and a hard work ethic.

## **Partner Organizations :**

### **Returning Partners**

#### **Loyal Jones Appalachian Center at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky.**

<http://www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/growappalachia/default.asp>

- Will provide fiscal sponsorship and oversight of funds, coordinate trainings among all partners, serve as a liaison for all other partners (Berea College Agriculture Department, University of Kentucky Extension Service and others), and continue to develop additional partners for 2012 and beyond. Will manage purchases of hardware and supplies to secure best market prices.

#### **Pine Mountain Settlement School, Bledsoe, Kentucky - Harlan, Letcher and Perry counties.**

[www.pinemountainsettlementschool.com](http://www.pinemountainsettlementschool.com)

- Will work with 25 families and their personal gardens. Will provide community garden space at the School's headquarters as well as develop a plan to expand the program in the local schools. The potential number of people to be fed is 75 to 200.

#### **Red Bird Mission, Beverly, Kentucky - Bell, Clay and Leslie counties. <http://www.rbmission.org/>**

- Will work with 40 families and their personal gardens. Will also promote the establishment of community gardens in the area as well as providing space for a community garden site at Red Bird Mission's campus to involve youth from the area who will take the produce home to share with their families and other local residents who are unable to garden. These young people would impact families who are not currently involved in the undertaking and will serve as recruiters for following years' expansion. The potential number of people to be directly fed is 160 to 320 or more, with 600+ indirectly fed through community sharing and markets.

**Henderson Settlement, Frakes, Kentucky- Bell County, Ky. and Claiborne County, Tenn.**

<http://www.hendersonsettlement.com/>

- Will assist 33 families with their personal gardens. Will continue the success from 2010 with the raised bed Senior Center garden with expanded area and with the Day Care Garden. Space in Henderson Settlement gardens will be made for the Frakes School Center Garden Club to continue learning. The potential number of people to be fed is 500 to 600.

**Laurel County African American Heritage Center, London, Kentucky - Laurel and Knox counties.**

<http://www.africanamericanheritagecenter.com/>

- Working in a mixed-race community will work with 30 families and will also work with 10 youth who will work a common garden space marketing the produce at a local farmers' market. These young people would bring impact to families who are not initially involved in the enterprise and will serve as recruiters for following years' expansion. The potential number of people to be fed is 120 to 240.

**New Partners**

**Saint Vincent Mission, David, Kentucky – Floyd and Magoffin Counties.**

<http://www.stvincentmission.org/>

- Will work with 20 families both at individual homes as well as multiple public garden spaces where possible. The goal here is to partner with social service agencies to identify possible gardening families and advertise the gardening and cooking classes to a wide audience. St. Vincent Mission has worked in this area for over forty years and is widely respected. The potential number of people to be fed is 100 to 240.

**LMU Organic Gardening Project, Harrogate, Tennessee – Claiborne County, Tenn., Lee County, Va., and Bell County, Ky.**

[http://lmu1.lmunet.edu/cgi-](http://lmu1.lmunet.edu/cgi-bin/MySQLdb?VIEW=/news/view_one.txt&newsid=737)

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- Will work with 50 families primarily at a community garden located on land donated by Lincoln Memorial University for use by this relatively new but highly successful gardening project. This site is unique both in its number of families to be reached as well as its outreach into three states due to its geographic location. The potential number of people to be fed is 200 and 400 people.

**High Rocks Educational Foundation, Hillsboro, West Virginia – Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties, W.V., <http://www.highrocks.org/>**

- Will work with 20 families and their personal gardens. Will provide production-oriented community garden space at High Rocks' main lodge and campground. High Rocks is a nationally known leadership program for girls, which is also fully committed to the idea of local food production and food security. The potential number of people to be fed is 100 to 240.

## Conclusion

**In its first year, Grow Appalachia proved itself to be a highly successful, much-needed, and greatly desired project in the region that it serves.** By offering a hand up rather than a hand out, it provides participants with the help they need and instills in them a deep sense of pride and self-confidence. Grow Appalachia is powerful demonstration that selective and thoughtful individual's philanthropy can effect real, positive change in the lives of many needy families. The striking generosity of John Paul DeJoria, his family and friends, and the John Paul Mitchell Systems organization has brought not only enhanced nutrition and wellness into the hills of Appalachia but hope as well.

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