

Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition

Local Foods Grow Healthy
Communities



Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition

Past, Present, and Future



Pros

- Arts and culture
- Education
- Historic interest

Cons

- Low economic growth
- Some urban decay
- Violent crime



Quick Facts About Wilmington

ECONOMY

The unemployment rate in Wilmington is **7.70 percent**(U.S. avg. is 6.30%).

Recent job growth is Positive. Wilmington jobs have Increased by 1.29 percent.

COST OF LIVING

Compared to the rest of the country, Wilmington's **cost of living** is 2.20% Lower than the U.S. average.

POPULATION

As of 2014, Wilmington's population is **71,119 people**. Since 2000, it has had a population growth of -2.29 percent.

TRANSPORTATION

Average Commute time is **21 minutes**.

The National Average is 25 minutes.

REAL ESTATE

The median home cost in Wilmington is **\$118,300**. Home appreciation the last year has been 2.10 percent.

SCHOOLS

Wilmington public schools spend **\$14,782 per student**. The average school expenditure in the U.S. is \$12,435. There are about **15.9 students per teacher** in Wilmington.

<http://www.bestplaces.net/city/delaware/wilmington>

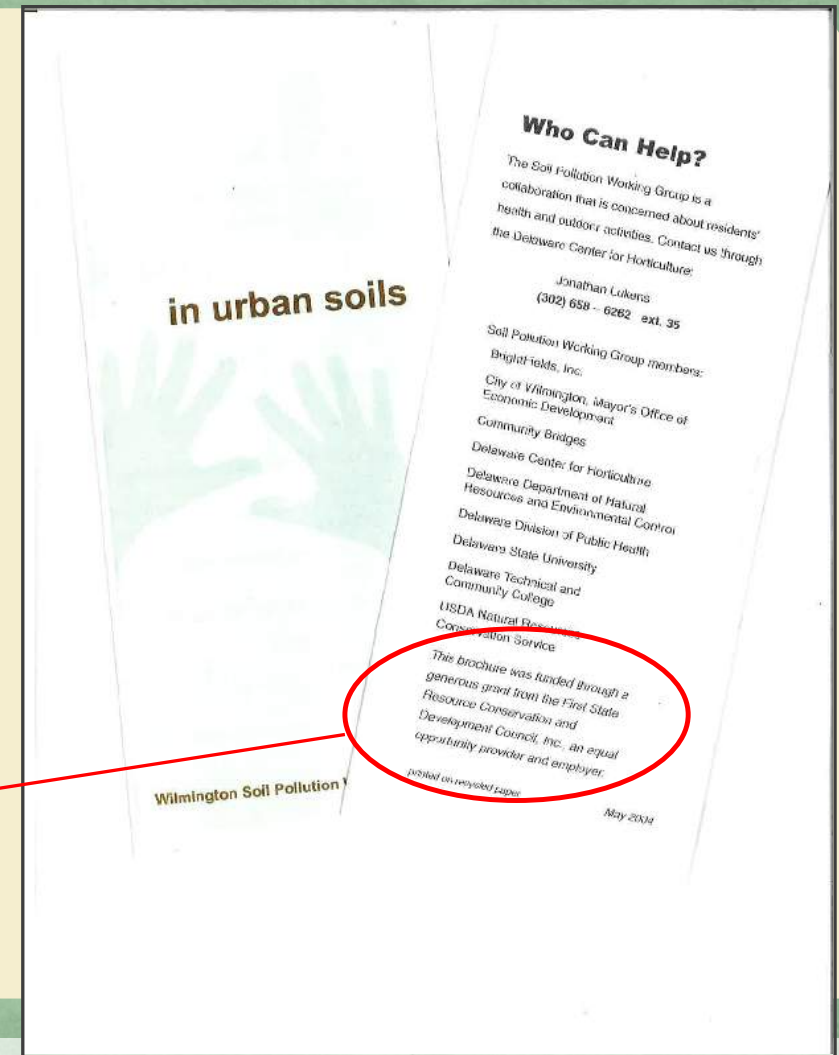
DEUFFC: Our Beginnings (2000-2014)

- Historical Perspective
 - Soil Pollution Working Group: (possibly earlier, 2000 – 2007)
 - 12th and Brandywine Urban Farm (2006 – ongoing)
 - Urban Farm Coalition (2007 – 2014)
 - Food Summit (2011/2012)
 - Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition (2014)
 - Urban Agriculture became officially recognized by DDA and part of DE Ag Week (2014)

Soil Pollution Working Group

2000 to 2007

This brochure was funded through a generous grant from the First State Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.



What You Need to Know

Gardening is a healthy, wonderful activity. However, city gardeners need to know that parts of Wilmington, like other cities, have polluted soils from past industry.

Exposure to soil and dust that is polluted is a problem. City gardeners should take steps to protect themselves.

Simple steps to stay safe and healthy

- Wash your hands before eating.
- Wash children's hands every time they come in from outside.
- Keep children and elders away from bare soil.
- Wear gloves while digging.
- Wash hands and arms after working in soil. Also clean clothing and shoes.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before cooking or eating.

Safe Gardening

- Grow ground covers, shrubs, and trees to cover bare soil, beautify the city, and make it a better place to live.
- Consider growing ground cover, grass, and flowers instead of food crops.
- Keep clean when working in soil. Wear gloves while digging, and wash your hands, arms, and shoes when you're done – don't drag dirt into your home.
- Use mulch barriers over bare soil.
- Children should be checked for lead as part of regular checkups, especially if they are playing and digging around potentially polluted soil.



Growing Food

If you decide to grow food to eat, you need to be especially careful. You may need to get help to keep yourself and your family safe. Before starting your garden, consider:

- Having a thorough historical investigation of past land use of the garden site (see our information sheet: *How to do Historical Research*)
- Having a soil test done (see our information sheet: *Soil Testing*)
- Growing fruits and vegetables in raised beds or containers (see our information sheet: *Gardening Above Ground*)
- Wash all foods thoroughly before eating

January 31, 2007

- Participants included: RC&D, NRCS, DNREC, DDA, DCH & Brightfields, Inc.
- RC&D: Bill Bell, Project Coordinator/Rick Mickowski – presented various sites with great potential for community green spaces, including eight adjacent parcels on the corner of 12th and Brandywine Streets in NE Wilmington, northern NCC Delaware
- Bill had been working with City of Wilmington's Real Estate and Housing to transfer the property and become temporary land owners so that remediation could take place and then would be transferred to a CBO/Non-profit within the immediate community.



12th & Brandywine Streets,
Wilmington DE





Vision for 12th and Brandywine

Jan. 2007

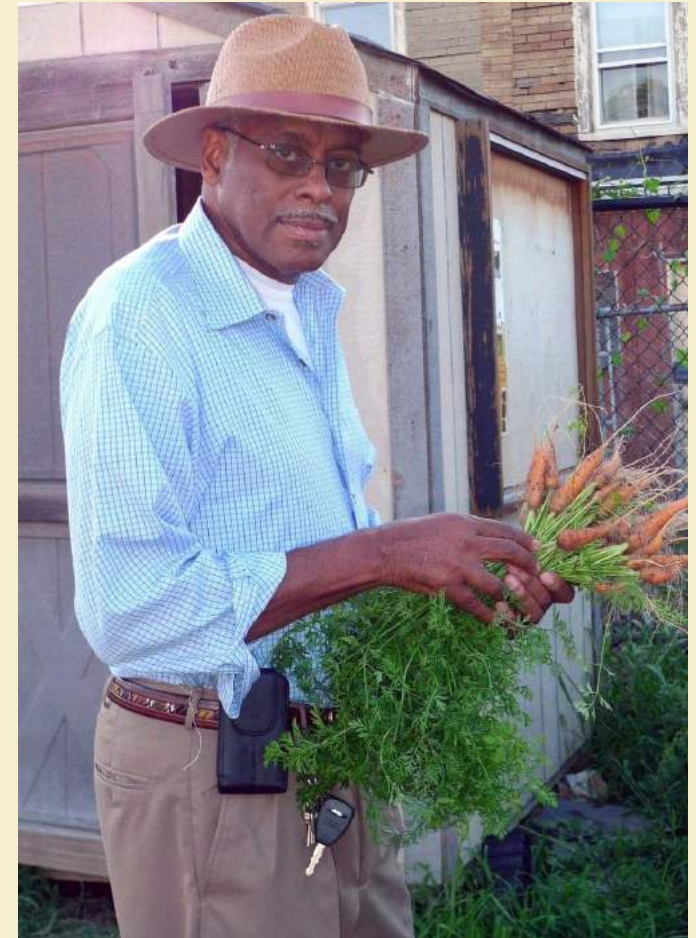
- Council wants lot to improve lives by addressing pollution and community issues
- Hopes it could serve as a model for city and state
- An environmental, economic, and social model
 - Also an educational, training, and development tool
 - Self-sustaining
 - Even a model of storm water runoff and collection
 - Would start small and simple, then grow – not a static model
- Possibility of produce distribution to restaurants
- Maybe sell to brokers w/o commitment of retail presence

Evolving Partnerships & Roles

- 11th Street Bridge Civic Association and community
 - Without which we would have no project
 - Drove the vision, focus, and direction of the site
- RC&D
 - Identify potential sites for community greening
 - Work on property acquisition w/CoW RH, Habitat, private owner
 - Work w/DNREC on remediation/brownfield designation
 - Determine long term ownership
- DCH
 - Community engagement
 - Community outreach
- Meetings/design charettes/surveys
- Education
- In-kind solicitations
- Grant applications
- Additional partnership dev
- DDA
 - Business plan
- DNREC
 - Brownfield remediation
- Brandywine Conservancy
 - Site mapping design
 - Community charettes

Community Engagement – January 2007

- In collaboration with 11th Street Bridge Civic Association President, Eric Robinson
- Monthly/Bi-monthly meetings with residents
 - Brainstorming
 - Creating a vision/mission for the farm
 - What is it that the community wants this space to be?



12th and Brandywine: Vision Proclamation

April 2008

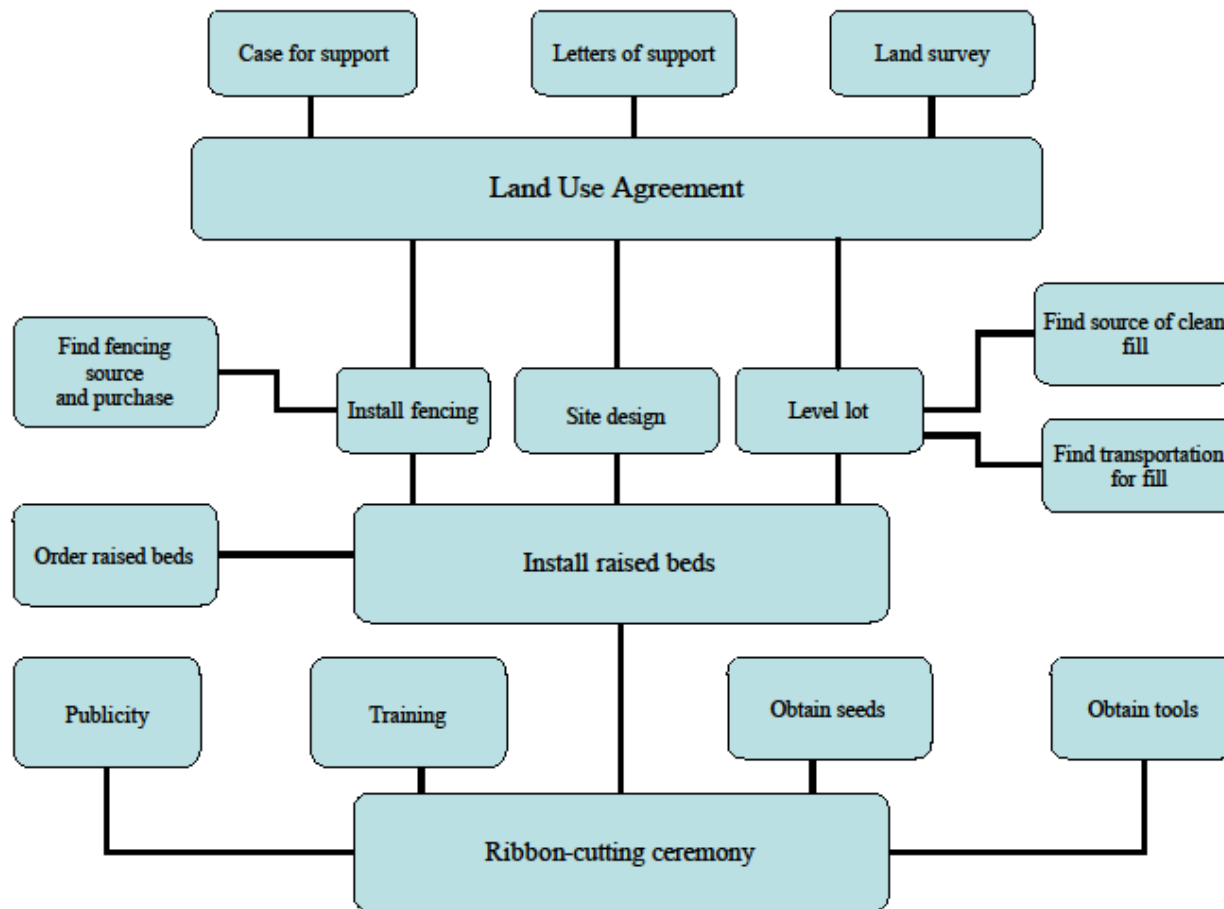
Vision Proclamation: 2008

Community Farm at 12th and Brandywine Street

We – the community members of the Eleventh Street Bridge neighborhood and the partnering organizations and individuals involved in the community farm project - have a different vision for what our communities can be. We envision communities where we connect with our neighbors and our environment. We envision a space where young and old labor and laugh together and share the rewards of a bountiful harvest. We envision a place where everyone has access to fresh, nutritional food and where social and environmental justice prevails. We see a bright future; a future where we achieve a whole and sustainable way of living with the help of our neighbors, our friends and our city.

We believe a community farm at 12th and Brandywine will be the first step in a stronger, healthier, more sustainable community. And from many different walks of life, we have come together to make it happen.

Community Farm Task Flowchart



December 2008

Transition from SPWG to Urban Farm Coalition

Additional Partners

- University of Delaware Cooperative Extension and Master Gardeners
- Habitat for Humanity
- Christiana Care
- The Challenge Program
- A plethora of individuals committed to food security...

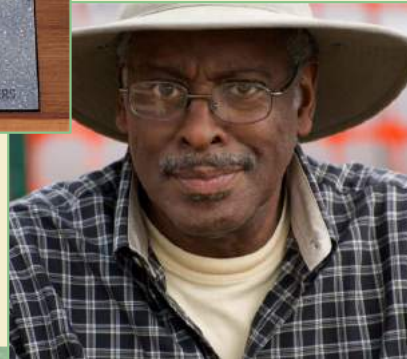
Desired outcomes remained the same, however, partnerships shifted and increased based on individuals and organizations recognizing their collective impact was far greater along with an increase in interest in urban agriculture and food security



After more than
three years of
planning...a
Community
Farm is Born!!

Spring 2009

Grand Opening – July 2009





E.D. Robinson Urban Farm – Today

- Educational Programming
- Produce Sales
- Arts/Culture

Photos by Tom Davis

Thoughts worth sharing...

- This is the communities project, not any of the organizations/individuals involved other than the residents
 - As such the planning has to be a fluid process and facilitators need to be good listeners and have a flexible approach.
 - What you end up with may be very different than what you originally envisioned – that's OK!
- Maintaining community engagement and project momentum over three years is challenging – but it can be done!
 - Communication, communication, communication
- Collectively, we can produce tremendous outcomes – far more than as individuals
- And when obstacles seem too large to overcome, step back, reassess, and figure out a way to go around.
- At the end of the day, this incredible farm would not exist without the combined efforts of a tremendous mix of dedicated individuals and organizations.

We believe a community farm at 12th and Brandywine will be the first step in a stronger, healthier, more sustainable community. And from many different walks of life, we have come together to make it happen.

DEUFFC: Where Are We Currently?



A diverse coalition of organizations,
70+ members

- Delaware Center for Horticulture
- University of Delaware Cooperative Extension/Master Gardeners
- Food Bank of Delaware
- Bright Spot Ventures/Westside Grows
- City of Wilmington
- Delaware State University
- Delaware Department of Health and Social Services
- Delaware Department of Agriculture
- Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids
- First State RC&D Council
- South Wilmington Planning Network/Neighborhood House
- Wilmington in Transition
- Nemours Health and Prevention Services
- Christiana Care Health Systems

[illegible]

Mission and Vision

Mission Statement:

The **mission** of the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition is to support community- oriented urban agricultural projects that expand healthy food access in Northern Delaware and brings together resources and technical assistance through a collaborative approach to urban farming.

Vision Statement:

The **vision** of the DEUFFC is:

Access to fresh, nutritious, locally-grown food

Healthier, sustainable communities

A strengthened regional agricultural system

Hands-on, experiential education

Re-connecting people to where their food comes from

Re-purposed vacant lands and mentored ownership

Tagline:

“Local Foods Grow Healthy Communities”

Current Structure



Vikram Krishnamurthy,
Executive Director, DCH
and Gail Hermenau, Co-
Chair, DEUFFC at October
2015 Coalition meeting.

- **Steering Committee:** the Steering Committee exists to integrate the work of the membership at-large and the other committees to meet the mission, vision, and goals of the DEUFFC. The Coalition is under the umbrella of the Delaware Center for Horticulture. One Co-Chair position is from TheDCH and one is from any other Coalition member willing to serve in that position.
- **Governance Committee:** this is a standing committee which exists to develop and maintain a mode of governance for the DEUFFC.
- **Education and Marketing Committee:** this committee exists to develop marketing strategies and provide linkages to educational resources.
- **Political Economy Committee:** this committee exists to evaluate and improve the way that DEUFFC activities are supported, allowed, and otherwise permitted by political processes.
- **Community Garden Committee:** this committee connects new and existing community gardens to a variety of resources in order to support and sustain their activities.
- **Special Projects Committee:** projects adopted by the Coalition

DEUFFC meeting at Penn Farm

Networking and Sharing are key



DEUFFC meeting at Mt. Pleasant Elementary School and Community Garden



Current Projects and Activities

Steering Committee

- Meets quarterly between the Coalition meetings to keep things on track.
- Reviews and discusses updates from all of the committees.
- Provides a coordinated response on behalf of the Coalition and brings any issues that require a vote to the membership of the Coalition.
- Plans for regular review of the mission and vision – looking at a strategic planning workshop for early 2017.

Current Projects and Activities Governance Committee

Your mission:
Should you
accept it....



- Reviewed and adopted an updated mission and vision document in July 2015. Our tagline is “Local Foods Grow Healthy Communities”
- Prepared charter documents for five of the standing committees.
- Manage the election process for the DEUFFC Co-Chairs and Steering Committee representation
- Governed by two Co-Chairs, Co-Chairs of each Committee and two at-large representatives from the Coalition.

Current Projects and Activities

Education and Marketing Committee

- Prepared informational materials for Delaware Ag Week display and evening lecture/workshop session held at the Delaware Center for Horticulture.
- Updating website page as part of UD Cooperative Extension page and exploring the options for a stand-alone website.



Current Projects and Activities

Political Economy Committee



- The committee is working on follow-up to a draft water policy document and guidelines for presenting to the City of Wilmington.
- A future project will look at current city codes to see what changes should be made to accommodate and support urban agriculture and community gardens in the City of Wilmington.



Current Projects and Activities

Community Gardens Committee



- Developed and sent out a community garden survey to over 80 community garden groups in New Castle County
- Preparing an urban gardening tool kit.
- Held a free film screening in conjunction with St. Nicholas Church – the film was “Inhabit: A Permaculture Perspective”. Other film screenings are being planned at additional venues.
- Promoting volunteer opportunities and calendar of events via social networks.

Current Projects and Activities

Special Projects



- The DEUFFC, through the oversight of the Delaware Center for Horticulture, completed a three-year Specialty Crop Block Grant from the Delaware Department of Agriculture. The project was entitled “Advancing Specialty Crops in Urban Wilmington” and focused on the 12th and Brandywine Urban Farm and surrounding community.
- The Wilmington Healthy Corner Stores Network is a project done in conjunction with The Food Trust of Philadelphia. The project is working with corner stores in the City of Wilmington to increase the availability of fresh produce and educational outreach to under-served neighborhoods. Stores receive training, technical assistance, and resources to help them stock and promote a variety of healthy products along with nutrition education and health promotion efforts in select stores.

Special Activity: Urban Garden Tour

- Garden tours held in 2012, 2013, and 2015. Tour transportation provided by DCH and First State RC&D Council.
- Purpose of tours is for DEUFFC members to become familiar with local community garden projects and initiatives.
- The 2016 tour will be held in Kent County for the first time. The group is known as the Kent Community Garden Collaborative.



2015 Garden Tour



Elsmere Community Garden and
Delaware State University
Demonstration Garden

2015 Garden Tour



Newark
Community
Garden and
Brightspot Urban
Farm

2015 Garden Tour



Brightspot Urban Farm at the
Rodney Street Reservoir
Community Garden in
Wilmington, Delaware

NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND THE DEUFFC



- Funded a Conservation Cost-Share Program grant to the Northeast Community Garden for a garden shed. USDA NRCS has also provided assistance to this community garden.
- Rick Mickowski, NCCD employee, represents the District as President of the First State Resource Conservation and Development Council. He has been involved with the DEUFFC since its inception and serves on the Steering Committee.
- The First State RC&D Council has funded 4 garden mini-grant projects over the past 3 years. Funds used for raised bed construction, garden sheds, and other work.
- Because of the explosive growth in community gardening and urban agriculture, the Delaware Department of Agriculture initiated a \$10,000 micro-grant pilot program in 2016. Eleven submissions were awarded funds. The District has committed to providing matching funds to the 8 New Castle County award recipients. The DDA micro-grant program is being funded at \$20,000 for 2017. The District will match projects up to a set amount for 2017. The next application round begins fall 2016.

Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition

Supporting Community-Oriented
Urban Agricultural projects in
Northern Delaware



Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition

Moving Forward



Moving Forward

Continue working with and strengthening our partnerships

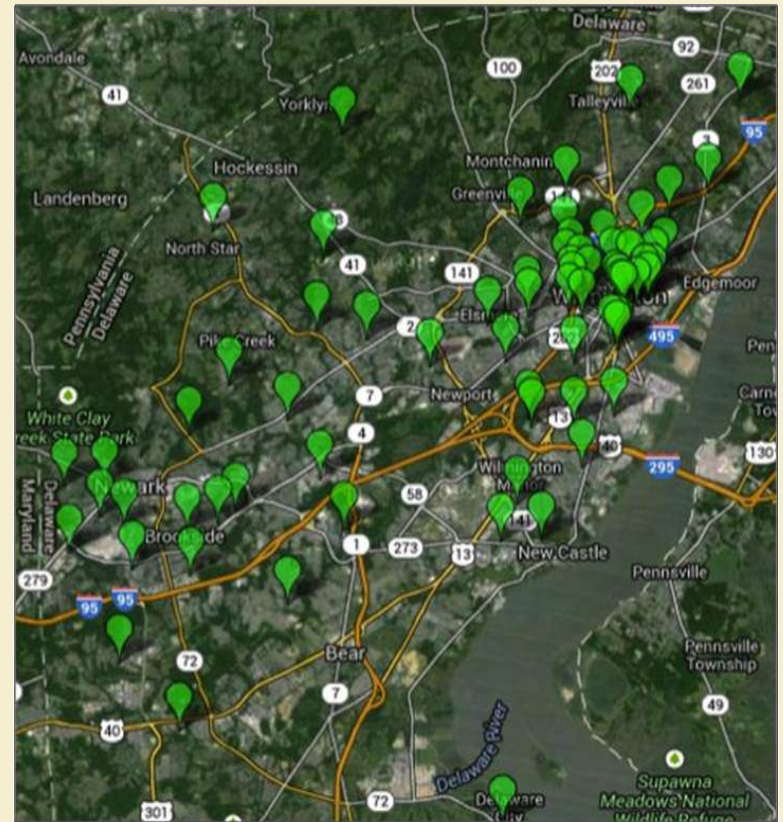
- Farmers
- Small Non-Profits, Communities, Schools, Churches
- DDA and DHSS
- RC&D
- New Castle County
- Cities of Wilmington and Newark
- The Delaware Center for Horticulture
- University of Delaware Cooperative Extension
- Nemours Health Prevention Services
- Food Bank of Delaware



Water Policy Framework

City of Wilmington

- What began with funding from a DDA Specialty Crop Block Grant will continue as more information is gathered and requested by city and community leaders
- This information is housed at our host organization, The DCH.
- Right now it includes location of existing community and school gardens
- Type of water access, on site, neighboring site, etc.
- Type of garden, vegetable and/or flower
- Use of produce, whether it is community shared, supports and farmer's market or church food pantry
- Contact information for each location



Land Bank

- Unique advisory board created by the City of Wilmington Planning Department, they work to identify vacant and blighted properties.
- Due to DCH and DEUFFC's presence on the advisory board, alternate uses for vacant properties, such as urban community gardens, will be taken into consideration.
- They work to “bank” these properties for use as community gardens.
- Challenges they face are environmental, as well as opposition issues.
- Progress has been made and they will continue to work to support community efforts.

Community Gardens

- Delaware City
- Newark
- Elsmere
- Southbridge
- Rodney Street Reservoir
- Duffy's Hope
- Northeast Community Garden





Marketing

- Education and Marketing Committee developed logo to create official brand, DEUFFC
- This committee is working on creating new brochures to make available at events
- Spreading the word about who we are and what we do on publications, brochures and social media
- Always looking for ways to connect with like minded organizations
- Sharing materials on DCH and Cooperative Extension websites while working to develop our own website to host all of our profiles of existing projects, resource materials and contact information

Outreach



Community Outreach

- Continuing to connect with communities members
- Develop strong relationships
- Community participation is vital
- Survey to learn how to best meet the needs of each one
- Provide resources to start ups, ongoing projects and expanding sites
- Work with community leaders to develop correct timeframe to begin new projects
- Provide input for grant proposal in order to match timeframe of projects to funding



Continuing Efforts

“Delaware Local Food Week” in State Legislature

- State Rep. Lyndon Yearick founded Delaware Local Produce Week in 2015 and a partnership between the General Assembly and DDA facilitates a closer relationship between consumers and farmers, both traditional and urban agriculture, that benefits the states economy and environment.

Delaware Food Policy Whitepaper

- The Department of Agriculture has connected with coalition members to begin the process of developing a statewide food policy. Our participation in this effort clearly indicates that DDA values our urban agricultural efforts and understands the role urban farms and community gardens play in providing access to fresh vegetables to vulnerable communities not just in the NCC area but throughout the state.



Healthy Corner Stores Network in Wilmington

The public health challenges facing Wilmington to reduce its burden of obesity and diet-related diseases are great. City and statewide leaders have mobilized tremendous community assets to address the city's lack of healthy food access and other barriers to healthier communities.

The Food Trust of Philadelphia and its Wilmington partners have embarked on fully funded planning and implementation for a new citywide Healthy Corner Store Network, which will increase healthy food access and nutrition education in the city's most underserved neighborhoods.

To date 18 corner stores have been recruited and a sampling of fruits and vegetables are now available to customers on a regular basis.

Education





DEUFFC

Workshops

- NCC Master Gardeners as members of DEUFFC conduct workshops

Resource materials

- NCC Master Gardeners developed and updated fact sheets

Tool Kits

- DEUFFC Community Garden Committee, DDA and UD Cooperative Extension have created a tool kit that is available to new and existing community garden members

Hands on Sessions

- University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Beginning Farmer Series- Farmers, urban farmers and growers

Strengths and Challenges



Challenges

We still face many of the same challenges as when we first began.

- Opposition issues
- Environmental challenges
- Community involvement
- Member participation



Community Involvement is Key

The success of community gardens rest not on our organization. We do not do, to, or do for, we always do with, with communities, meeting the needs of each one.

Whether it's helping to get a new community garden off the ground in order to increase access to fresh vegetables in a community, planting a flower garden to beautify a neighborhood or teaching youth skills at a farmer's market in order to open up more employment opportunities for young people in urban areas, we know that a committed project leader is vital.

While we can provide the technical assistance and resources to get projects started right, to have continued success community support is a must.

Member Involvement

What started as a grassroots effort has grown over the years, while that is a good thing, we need to always be mindful of the reasons our members became involved in the first place.

We need to continue to grow our coalition so that every voice is equal and every voice is heard and continues to meet the needs of our members.

Sometimes our challenges are also our greatest strengths.

Strengths

- Delaware is a small but mighty state, we have the support of Governor Jack Markell and Agricultural Secretary Ed Kee
- What began in NCC has expanded statewide
- DDA support is important step forward in urban agriculture
- DE Dept. of Agriculture Secretary Ed Kee has offered us a direct line of communication.
- After touring many sites Sec. Kee is quoted as saying, “From overgrown lots to school lawns, our neighborhoods have risen to the challenge and planted gardens or started small urban farms.”

Strength

In 2016 \$10,000 in reimbursement funding was offered statewide with up to \$1,000 per project available for supplies, seeds, materials and minor equipment.

Sec. Kee has said, “ These micro-grants provide seed money to get gardens off the ground or expand current ventures. They will provide nutritious locally grown foods, and help our young people develop connections to the land.”

\$20,000 has been set aside for 2017 to increase urban agriculture in the state.

Strength



At the award ceremony at Kingswood Community Center in Wilmington, one of the grant recipients, Secretary Kee praised all of the partners that provided technical assistance including the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition, the Delaware Center for Horticulture and Delaware Cooperative Extension.

“The support that these diverse efforts has received is phenomenal, and these micro-grants are a way to continue that support in years to come,” said Sec. Kee.

Strength

Because of Secretary Kee's support we are a constant presence at the Delaware State Agricultural Week where we have the opportunity to educate the public and our members in a one day session on the work our coalition is doing, the importance of increasing access to fresh vegetables and revitalizing blighted communities and the impact it has on Delawareans and a table display for resources and educational materials as well as contact information throughout the entire week long session.



Strength



Our Governor, Jack Markell is also supportive of the work being done to improve the lives of Delawareans through urban agriculture.

In a recent news article he is quoted saying, “Urban agriculture and community gardens are an amazing way to strengthen neighborhoods and improve the quality of life.”

Strength

Work like this cannot be done alone.

We have strength in our partnerships

- Delaware Dept. of Agriculture (DDA)
- University of Delaware Cooperative Extension
- TheDCH (Delaware Center for Horticulture)
- RC&D (First State Resource Conservation & Development Council)
- New Castle Conservation District
- And the many organizations that our members belong to that participate in all of our projects





Delaware Urban Farm & Food Coalition

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