



UNITED GROVE COMMUNITY GARDENS

Pre-season 2019



Hello Gardeners!

It's time to come out of hibernation – Spring truly *must* be around the corner! Although, I must say, on days like we have been having recently, it is hard to think about working outside in our gardens. However, I know there are quite a few optimists out there, as I've heard from several of you who are anxious to get started.

I know the main concern on everyone's mind is where we stand with last's year's relocation proposal from the city. As it stands right now, we are planning to remain in place for the 2019 season. Last year, we listened to your ideas and concerns and worked with the parks department in preparing a proposal for a move. Craig laid the groundwork for establishing some raised beds, and we can move forward with this if/when our move becomes a reality. Of course, when that time comes, we will need some dedicated volunteers to help get the new plots ready for planting in 2020. Our success depends of the support of our volunteers and the strength of our gardening community.

In the coming season, we are looking forward to renewing our garden friendships and welcoming new gardeners to our community. So, let's set our sights on sunshine and warm weather!

2019 REGISTRATION

This year, we will have in-person registration on **April 13, at 9:30 AM**, in the upstairs Rotary Room of the Dwight Foster Public Library. This is a time to request your plot, share gardening tips, suggest workshop ideas, choose your volunteer chores and socialize with fellow gardeners.

Please note that there has been a change in our registrations process. Last season we received several suggestions on how to improve the running and upkeep of the gardens. This year, we are implementing a refundable maintenance fee of \$10.00. It has always been the responsibility of each gardener to maintain their plot and immediate surrounds, keeping it weed-free and harvesting produce in a timely way. This not only gives the neighborhood a pleasing visual, but makes our fall cleanup an easy routine. Plots are monitored throughout the season, and reminder notices are sent to gardeners whose plots are overgrown and neglected. Unfortunately, over the past several years, there have been enough neglected and abandoned plots to cause comment, and the cleanup responsibility has fallen to the few gardeners that attend our fall cleanup. In order to avoid this, we are asking a maintenance fee, up front, of \$10.00, in cash. *[For accounting purposes, this must be kept separate from your registration fees & donations.]* If, at the end of the season, your plot has been maintained and readied for winter, your fee will be refunded. However, if your plot has become neglected and you have received warnings, you will forfeit this fee.

The 2019 registration forms are attached. Please complete both forms and submit them with your payment. We hope you will attend the meeting on April 13, but if you cannot, you may send your registration forms in. *Please note, that if your forms are mailed in, you will then need to make a separate time to meet with Deborah in person.*

ATTENTION ALL GARDENERS !!!

New Volunteer Opportunity Available

We are looking for a volunteer to assist Deborah with coordinating the running of the gardens. Duties of the co-coordinator will be more 'hands on' rather than administrative & organizational. The co-coordinator tasks include: supporting gardeners in their volunteer tasks (storage shed, kiosk, compost, water, mowing, etc), serving as a backup to Deborah for plot registrations and gardener communications, and managing un-rented or abandoned plots. Likely time commitment is roughly 2-4 hours per week in April and October, with about one hour per week during the months in between.

Please contact Deborah at dgressle@att.net if you are interested or if you have questions.

As always, your new ideas and suggestions are warmly welcomed.

A NOTE FROM CRAIG

Dear Gardeners:

I have really enjoyed helping manage our community garden since I started volunteering in 2010. But between work, travels, other volunteer obligations for my sons' activities, I'm finding less time these days for this role. Please note the volunteer opportunity announced above and consider if this may be a role for you!

The growth and success of the gardens over the past ten years is due to many people. The United Way Executive Director (First Dan McCrea, then Kristin Wallace, and now Megan Hartwick) provides unwavering support. Deborah Gressle has generously taken a leadership role among us in recent years. And the extra effort of all gardeners makes lighter work of the many tasks that keep the garden running smoothly. I plan to continue gardening at United Grove and I will help with a move across the street, if and when that should occur. And I'll be glad to help with your transition to a new role as co-coordinator.

A MESSAGE FROM MEGAN

Hello Gardeners!

Welcome to the 2019 season at United Grove Community Garden! Thank you to all of you who tended your plots last year and helped continue the beauty of this community gem.

I also appreciate all of your feedback to Deborah and Craig regarding the potential move of the garden. I understand the process may be frustrating to many of you (as it has been for us also), but please know we're doing everything we can to ensure the city makes the transition easy whenever they decide it needs to happen.

In the meantime, thank you for being a part of the United Grove community and for supporting this wonderful United Way program. I'm proud our organization has this beautiful space in our community

LOOKING BACK

- ★ Thank you to all gardeners for helping to make last season a success.
- ★ A big thank you to the hardy souls who came to help with the fall cleanup. (& that includes Rick who worked behind the scenes readying the shed for winter storage.)

IN SYMPATHY

It is with much sadness that we share the news that fellow gardeners Lorenzo Flores & Elvira José (A11 & B11) lost their 8-year old son to cancer on March 22. Additionally, Elvira was also diagnosed with cancer. The couple has one other son, who suffers with cerebral palsy.

Understandably, Lorenzo has missed a great deal of work to care for his family. Our community is pulling together to help this family. Members of the Unity Project have established a Unity Project/William account for the Flores family at Fort Community Credit Union, and welcome donations. United Grove has contributed \$100 to this account from our general garden fund. On April 27, a Taqueria d'Amor fundraiser will be held at Luther Elementary School from noon-4:00pm. There will be a silent auction and a 50/50 raffle. Tacos & desserts will be available for purchase. Your support of our fellow gardener in his time of need is welcomed.