



CAMDEN CITY GARDEN CLUB, INC
Operator
Camden Children's Garden
3 Riverside Drive
Camden, NJ 08103
www.camdenchildrensgarden.org



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For: Immediate Release

***** MEDIA ALERT *** GREAT VISUALS *****

On Sunday, May 31st, 2:00pm-4:00pm @ the Camden Children's Garden
On-site Contact: Mike Devlin 609-707-7677

**Camden Children's Garden/Camden City Garden Club Celebrates with a
Cookout for Camden's Faith-based Community Gardens**

CAMDEN, N. J. (May 26, 2009) — On May 31st at 2:00pm, clergy and parishioners from five of Camden's churches will join with the Camden City Garden Club/Camden Children's Garden to celebrate the Spring harvest! In addition to enjoying the food grown in the church's community gardens and local farms, attendees will also enjoy nutritional education programs, cooking demonstrations and activities involving food and gardening. This will be the first of many picnics to celebrate the Faith-Based Community Gardening Program.

For this month's festivities, the Camden Children's Garden has invited the following parishes and leaders to enter the Garden free-of-charge for the picnic:

- Reverend Floyd White of Woodland Avenue Presbyterian Church
856.906-6978
- Reverend Steed of Genesis Church of God in Christ Church
856.577.4709
- Pastor Sarah Ryan of Mount Ararat Pentecostal Church
(856) 541-7755
- Reverend Coutinho of Bridge of Peace Church
856.365.1450
- Reverend Rivers of Centerville Ministries
856.342.7215

In addition to the parishes, AmeriCorps NCCC Team Raven 4, led by Nate Campbell and AmeriCorps NCCC Team Wolf 3 Team led by Joareyn Hill, will be attending the barbeque as honored guests and renowned community gardening staff.

The Faith-Based Community Gardening Program began in December 2008, when the Camden City Garden Club, Inc. and the Woodland Ave. Presbyterian Church partnered to help prevent childhood obesity, initiated with a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through community gardening.

In the Club's newest project, Garden staff and AmeriCorps NCCC has partnered with Camden residents to create twenty-four new community gardens - 18 of them faith-based! This program teaches Camden residents how to grow their own vegetables and fruit, so they can provide their families with healthy, nutritious produce. Our focus is to teach residents how to start, maintain and harvest community vegetable gardens and supply materials such as compost, fence, seeds, plants, and fertilizer. Throughout the year the Club will also host workshops to teach these gardeners how to cook the produce they grow, preparing healthy, tasty dishes the whole family can enjoy together!



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Faith-Based Advocacy

The Ninth & Sylvan Street Community Garden broke ground on Martin Luther King Weekend 2009, as part of Camden's Faith-Based Initiative, which is supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

RWJF supports programs that address childhood obesity by improving access to low-cost, healthy foods, by encouraging more physical activity, and by enhancing nutrition/exercise education in schools and communities. In a new multimillion-dollar initiative, RWJF has joined with 21 faith-based coalitions across the country to help prevent childhood obesity by increasing access to healthy foods and physical activity through community advocacy.

The Camden City Garden Club was named one of those coalitions, as it partners with religious and neighborhood organizations to advocate community gardening. This garden, one of 18 community gardens built in partnership with the Faith-Based Initiative, is located near the Woodland Avenue Presbyterian Church, where parishioners and neighbors work with AmeriCorps volunteers to grow their own produce. Volunteers of AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) strengthen communities and develop leaders through direct team-based national and community service. Two teams of AmeriCorps volunteers live in Camden neighborhoods throughout the year, splitting their working time between the Community Gardening Program and the Camden City Garden Club's programs, such as the Camden Children's Garden.



Garden Club's Community Gardening and Grow Lab

The Camden Children's Garden/Camden City Garden Club has been involved with community gardening in Camden for 25 years. Today, more than 1,000 Camden residents participate in the program. The Camden City Garden Club helps members who wish to clean up vacant, city-owned, trash-strewn lots and transform them into beautiful and productive community gardens. Neighbors come together to beautify vacant lots and to grow fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables for their families. At a time when food security and childhood obesity are major issues, community gardens offer access to wholesome foods and healthy lifestyles.

In addition, the Camden Children's Garden educates the city's children through its Grow Lab Program, which helps elementary schoolchildren learn about science, math and nutrition through horticulture. The Grow Lab Program installs mini-greenhouses in classrooms to teach students in grades K-8 about growing their own produce. The youngsters then take these skills home to their neighborhood community gardens.



The Garden Club's Youth Program

Many of these community gardens were developed with the assistance of teenagers who are part of the Garden Club's Youth Employment & Training Program, sponsored by the Campbell Soup Company and other generous donors. Over the past 15 years, the Garden Club's Youth Program has employed many Camden high

school students, some of whom are studying landscape design and are members, some even officers, of their local FFA Chapters. The Camden Children's Garden /Camden City Garden Club is proud that 99% of its Youth Program employees have remained in high school, several have enrolled in college, and some have become full-time employees of the Camden City Garden Club.



'Celebrate Our Milestones':

As you can see, 2009 is an exciting year for the Camden Children's Garden/Camden City Garden Club as it celebrates the milestones of its inspiring programs. We invite you to the "**Celebrate Our Milestones**" **Garden Party**, scheduled for June 12, 2009, at 6:00pm, where guests will be able to enjoy the "Champions of Children" Awards, entertainment, a silent auction, and dining in the enchanting 4-acre gardens in full bloom. Please contact the Camden Children's Garden at (856) 365-TREE for additional information on attending, sponsoring, donating auction items and/or purchasing advertising. Help **Celebrate the Milestones** of programs that continue to change the lives of Camden families every day:



Community Gardening in Camden - In its 25th Year!



Grow Labs in Camden Schools- In its 20th Year!



Youth Job Training for Camden Youth - In its 15th Year!



Camden Children's Garden - In its 10th Year!

The Camden Children's Garden wants you to...*Come Outside and Play!* The Garden is open 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Wednesday through Friday, and 10:00 am to 5:00 pm Saturday and Sunday (closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day). Admission to the Garden is \$6 for adults, \$4 for children (age 3 -11) and free for children two years and under. Additional information is available online at www.CamdenChildrensGarden.org, or call (856) 365-8733.

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