



CAMDEN CITY GARDEN CLUB, INC

Operator

Camden Children's Garden

3 Riverside Drive

Camden, NJ 08103

www.camdenchildrensgarden.org

From the office of: Mike Devlin

Contact: Tracy Tomchik

Tel: (856) 365-8733

Fax: (856) 365-9750

For: Immediate Release

2009's Last Faith-Based Fresh Foods BBQ to Celebrate 25 New Faith-based Community Gardens!



CAMDEN, N. J. (September 16, 2009) - On September 20th, **the 3rd Faith-Based Fresh Foods BBQ** at the Camden Children's Garden will be held 12pm-3pm. This event will celebrate the creation of the 25th new Faith-based community gardens - all were created in 2009, cultivated by the Camden City Garden Club in a partnership with the Woodland Avenue Development Corporation and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Faith-based Childhood Obesity Initiative. This feast will also commemorate the 25 years of community gardening in Camden.

In addition to enjoying the food grown in the church's community gardens and local farms, attendees will enjoy nutrition education programs, cooking demonstrations, as well as, activities involving food and gardening. Participating parishioners will receive free admission to the Camden Children's Garden, a free ride token and enjoy a free healthy meal. City Officials will join the celebration with members of over 10 of Camden's religious organizations: Bridge of Peace Church, Centerville Outreach Ministries, Fairview Historic Society, Genesis Church of God in Christ, Mount Olivet, New Hope Temple, New Light Church of God, Saint Anthony of Padua & Clare House Franciscan Volunteers, Saint Bartholomew's Church, Saint Joan of Arc. Although this is only the third Faith-based BBQ, this event will mark the tenth Fresh Foods events that the Garden has hosted in 2009.

NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN SITES:

Currently, the Camden City Garden Club is working on the creation of three new gardens - totally 31 community gardens in 2009 - 25 of them faith-based gardens!



Saint Anthony of Padua's School & Church Brothers have built another community garden at their home in the Saint Anthony's complex off of River Road in Camden. Through the Spring and Summer, the brothers had been working alongside their parishioners on the community garden, which has just tripled the size of farming ground

~ More ~

the area across the street from their school. As a legacy project, the Americorps NCCC and Camden Children's Garden staff created spelled out the word "PEACE" in the wood-chipped walkways between the compost that will soon bare delicious cool weather crops. The brothers will enjoy these foods at their tables as well as share with their community and parishioners.

Northgate Towers Apartments are among Camden's landmarks, situated along the Delaware River at the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and welcomes and bids farewell to Camden/NJ visitors. These towers are part of Camden's transformation from urban terrain to green projects throughout the city. To mirror the already thriving garden at the Northgate II Tower Apartments, Northgate I residents are now working with the Camden City Garden Club to begin another food-producing plot. This garden was once the unused community pool; however, now is filled in with raised beds shaped like the rising sun, and will soon grow sugar snap, lettuce, squash, and other healthy foods.



Beckett Street in Lanning Square of Camden is building yet another community garden led by Beckett Street resident and Camden City Garden Club/Camden Children's Garden staffer, Pedro Rodriguez. Since 1985, Pedro has been an urban organic farmer, transplanting ugly trash strewn lots with healthy fresh produce that he has cultivated to feed his neighbors for 25 years. Beckett Street's greening began in 1985 when Pedro built his first community garden with the support of Mike Devlin and the then sprouting Camden City Garden Club. In 1993,

Pedro added another garden which grew a variety of fruit trees and other organic produce. In 1999, Pedro took his fresh food mission to the next level when he joined the staff of the Camden Children's Garden and Camden City Garden Club. Pedro loves being on the staff to help maintain the Camden Children's Garden, as well as teaching children and youth about horticulture through the Grow Lab Program and Youth Employment and Job Training Program. Pedro also tends the Plaza de Aibonito, a Puerto Rico inspired topical exhibit always in season at the Camden Children's Garden (pictured below left).

Pedro especially likes to educate other urban farmers and encourage Camden families to eat healthy fresh foods. This week, Pedro is enjoying helping the Beckett Street Community once again as the Garden Club is clearing yet another empty lot in the City of Camden to lay compost in preparation of planting crops weather crops such as cabbage, kale, broccoli, lettuce, spinach, and collards. Pedro is also coordinating a tree planting with the NJ Tree Foundation where he will organize volunteers to plant trees along Beckett street.

Pedro has lived in Camden, NJ for his whole life and takes leadership for his block's cleanups, social events and gardening projects. When it is time to harvest, Pedro, collects pounds of fresh produce to distribute to his neighbors. Pedro's mother, a Beckett Street resident, was from Puerto Rico and was Pedro's inspiration for his love of gardening!

###