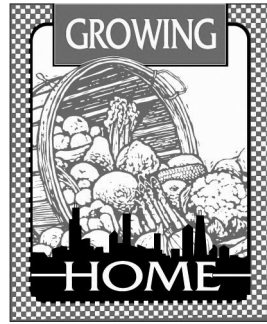


Growing Home, Inc.
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Mission

Growing Home's mission is to operate, promote, and demonstrate the use of organic agriculture as a vehicle for job training, employment, and community development.

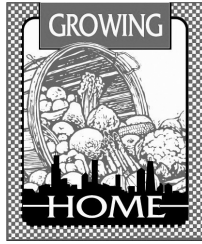
- Growing Home develops innovative urban and other agriculture initiatives with economic development potential. In 2010, Growing Home grew and sold over 11,000 pounds of local, USDA Certified Organic produce at the Wood Street Urban Farm on Chicago's South Side.
- Growing Home's transitional job program targets people with multiple barriers to employment and helps them get jobs. All participants have been identified as having one or more "serious barriers to employment," including homelessness, lack of education, history of substance abuse, and criminal background.
- Growing Home works in communities where we can make a positive economic difference. In 2011, Growing Home is providing a CSA (community supported agriculture) program for Englewood residents; members of the program pay \$5 a week for a box of greens and other vegetables.
- Growing Home is a leader in advocating for local healthy food systems. Growing Home's staff sits on numerous city- and nation-wide committees focusing on urban agriculture, food security, and food access.
- Growing Home creates green jobs and stimulates economic opportunity via an organic agriculture social enterprise. In 2011, Growing Home staff members are continuing to work with the Greater Englewood Urban Agriculture Taskforce to create a strategic plan for economic recovery that will transform Englewood from a "food desert" into a "food destination."

Job Training/Transitional Jobs Program

Growing Home works with men and women who are among the hardest to employ, and who are easily overlooked by other training programs. Most of our interns have previously been incarcerated, and/or have sought treatment for substance abuse. Many of our program participants have been homeless, or are living with family members or friends and do not have stable housing. Many participants live with and support one or more children.

In 2011, Growing Home trained 35 people in two 14-week sessions running from April through July, and July through October. Participants in Growing Home's transitional job program receive a stipend equal to minimum wage for hours worked and studied, usually 24 hours/week. We also offer opportunities for additional hours, bonuses and at times, the possibility of continuing employment with Growing Home. We provide ongoing job search support while interns are in the program, and after they graduate.

Interns divide their time between classroom training and hands-on, on-the-job horticulture training. In the morning, interns work with production staff or our Field Training Specialist to learn or use skills like planting, weeding, harvesting, processing, preparing CSA boxes, and building and grounds maintenance. In the afternoons, classroom training includes lessons in horticulture, soil science, food systems, and nutrition; as well as job readiness, including writing and sending out resumes and interview practice. Interns also help to staff our farmers market and assist with tours and special events.



Impact on the Community

Creating an urban farm or an agricultural enterprise has the potential to change communities and bring badly needed economic activity into the area. Growing Home became involved in community development through our involvement in Englewood, where our Wood Street Urban Farm is located. Its 2006 LISC/New Communities Program Quality of Life Plan advocated making an Englewood “urban agriculture district.” In 2009, we formally added community development to our mission. Our goal is to make a dramatic impact on the Englewood community by making fresh, organic produce available in a community labeled a “food desert” due to the lack of access to healthy food.

In 2010, Growing Home spearheaded a new endeavor: the Greater Englewood Urban Agriculture (GEUA) Task Force, made up of over 80 individuals and organizations. With GEUA, Growing Home will continue to increase food access in Englewood through developing more urban farms, more farmer training opportunities, and more food-related businesses.

During the growing season, Growing Home’s Wood Street Urban Farm offers tours, workshops and a film discussion series for the community, on the topics of urban gardening, healthy eating and food systems. Food grown at our Su Casa Garden in Back of the Yards goes to subsidized vegetables bags for local residents, and is donated to soup kitchens. Our interns have the opportunity to grow their own vegetables to take home.

The Future of Growing Home and Urban Agriculture

In 2012, ten years after starting our first organic farm in Marseilles, Illinois, we will begin growing on our fourth farm on Honore Street in Englewood, adjacent to our Wood Street Farm. Our farms provide delicious organic vegetables throughout Chicago-land, through our Community Supported Agriculture programs, our stand at Green City Market, our farm stands in Englewood and Marseilles, and our sales to restaurants and caterers who want to bring local food to their customers.

Locally grown food is not just for the elite. Growing food in the city is part of former Mayor Daley’s call for Chicago to be the “greenest city in the world.” Mayor Emmanuel has called for eliminating food deserts, with urban farming as one of the vehicles to accomplish this goal. We will continue to share our experience of developing a vibrant urban agriculture network with other urban farmers in the city, the state and around the country.

Our belief is that urban agriculture not only produces good, healthy food, but provides a setting where communities and individuals can build healthy lives.

Connect with us

To learn more, please visit our website: growinghomeinc.org, and join our mailing list there, or write us at info@growinghomeinc.org

Growing Home is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit social enterprise. All donations are tax-deductible. New donors are currently being matched by an anonymous donor.