

**Kim McDonald**

**FROM AROUND THE CORNER AND AROUND THE WORLD  
THE GOOD EARTH COMMUNITY GARDEN  
IS**

**PLANTING THE SEEDS OF HOPE AND  
PROSPERITY..NURTURING THE**

**GROWTH AND HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY**

**LOCATED ON THE CORNER OF WEST 96<sup>TH</sup> STREET AND MADISON AVENUE**

Celebrities do it. The First Lady's doing it. Young people, old people, rich and poor people are doing it. Sometimes it seems like everybody's doing it.

That's right. It's organic gardening, and as you may have noticed, this once quaint pastoral pastime has gone hip and community gardens, urban agriculture and all things green are taking off in a big way. And for good reason.

What's all the buzz? Well, firstly it's about access *to* and education *about* growing and eating fresh, healthy and locally-grown food. The ability to save on grocery bills. The security and peace of mind of knowing where your food comes from. Freedom from toxic pesticides and who-knows-what else. The power to build community. And the simple but miraculous satisfaction of planting a seed, watching it grow and then eating the delicious strawberry or tomato into which it has transformed under your watchful (but not overly time-consuming) care.

An opportunity to learn more about the environment, the chance to add a bit of color and life to *your* life, an easy way spend some quality time alone or with the kids without spending a dime, maybe finally even get to know the neighbors *while* you get a workout (and some sunshine-induced vitamin D) .. Well, you can begin to see the immense benefits and attraction of an organic community garden. Plus you get to commune with nature, which is surely a lost art for some of us and much welcomed pastime after so many months of you-know-what..

Just the facts..

The Good Earth Community Garden, located on West 96<sup>th</sup> Street and Madison Avenue in Cleveland began as a vision to help restore and revitalize an "old" neighborhood to it's former glory and to create a space to help and encourage new and fruitful ideas, actions and endeavors to grow.. The garden was started this past April by a group of enthusiastic and creative neighbors who wanted to "be the change they wanted to see" in their community and in their world. The desire for some or more planting space and the promise of fresh, delicious vegetables of course figured in as well.

What makes the Good Earth Community Garden special is it's diverse membership. Garden members hail not only from both sides of the City; but from both sides of the Planet. Current gardeners include long-time Cleveland residents of European, Asian, Afro-American and Caribbean descent, as well as newly arrived refugee families from Bhutan,

Nepal, and the African nations of Somalia and the Congo. Some families and individuals have been in the country for only weeks or months, but are wasting no time in making a fresh start in America and in doing for themselves and giving back to our community. Most have been farmers all their lives, and are able and happy to share their wealth of "green" knowledge with garden newbies like me..

To that end (and to other ends that have yet to be discovered) the Good Earth Community Garden is being built from the ground up, working with fellow neighborhood residents, the City of Cleveland, the OSU Extension Summer Sprout Program, neighborhood development organizations, local businesses, schools and churches and hopefully YOU!