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News Release

For Immediate Release

Community Garden Plants Seeds of Change

Residents in the Grant Beach area will soon join a small, but growing contingent of Ozarks neighborhoods that are taking action to improve their quality of life through community gardening. With the support of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, City of Springfield and the Grant Beach Neighborhood Association, the Grant Beach Community Garden will soon be a reality in this Center-City neighborhood.

The Garden will be located between Grant Beach Park and Weaver Elementary, where nearly 95% of students participate in free or reduced-cost lunch programs. The Garden will be well-situated to benefit residents in multiple ways; it will provide a site for experiential learning, bringing the neighborhood residents together, and it will provide local, sustainable, nutritious choices for families.

"Especially with the economic downturn, a community garden is a need and a viable option to offset food costs for the neighborhood," says Maile Auterson, who with fellow Missouri State University Urban Planning student Michael Bruner, conducted the neighborhood study that helped inspire the project.

The Garden already has the support of Grant Beach resident and Master Gardener Shelley Vaugine, who has been involved in the project from the beginning. She and other concerned residents secured the use of the land for the Garden from the Springfield-Greene County Park Board last fall. Funding for a portion of the project will be provided by the City of Springfield.

Grant Beach residents can expect locally grown food and a shared sense of purpose, pride, and community starting this spring. Landscape architect Matt Boehner of Phase II Site Planning and Design has donated his professional services and design for the project. Development of the Garden is scheduled to begin sometime in April.

If you would like to be a contributing partner to the Grant Beach Community Garden, donations for the program can be made to the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, 425 East Trafficway, Springfield, MO 65806-1121 or at 417-864-6199. If you would like additional information on the Grant Beach Community Garden, contact Shelley Vaugine at 417-429-8574 or by e-mail at svaugine@yahoo.com. Items needed for spring planting include: tools, mulch, compost, plants, potting soil, straw, and gloves. Items can be delivered to the Hovey House, 800 W. Hovey St., or call Shelley Vaugine for pick-up.