

FORSYTH COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**BRIEFING
DRAFT**

MEETING DATE: MAY 8, 2017

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 6

SUBJECT:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE KATE B. REYNOLDS CHARITABLE TRUST TO SUPPORT A YOUTH URBAN GARDENING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN NORTHEAST WINSTON-SALEM
(FORSYTH COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE)**

COUNTY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION OR COMMENTS:

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION:

According to a survey conducted by Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods, in limited income neighborhoods, residents struggle to access affordable healthy food and opportunities for youth to develop life skills and career skills. Ninety-three percent of Carver High School students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. However, these neighborhoods also have significant assets which can be tapped to solve pressing problems and develop the full potential of all residents.

The Youth Urban Gardening Internship Program will enhance healthy food access and youth development opportunities in northeast Winston-Salem, while addressing the Kate B. Reynolds Poor and Needy Division's Issue Areas of Community Assets, Education, and Health. This Program will work with residents of these neighborhoods to:

1. Establish a youth garden site where youth can grow fresh food and the Forsyth Community Gardening Program will offer hands-on gardening education and resource distribution;
2. Engage 10 high school students annually in a paid Youth Urban Gardening Internship, in which they will learn about growing fresh produce, cooking and nutrition, leadership, life skills, and career readiness. As a result, they will make positive changes in their own lives and teach others about gardening, healthy eating, and environmental stewardship; and
3. Promote healthy eating and physical and mental health through community gardening among youth interns and their families, peers, and neighbors.

ATTACHMENTS: YES NO

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
COUNTY MANAGER

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO
THE KATE B. REYNOLDS CHARITABLE TRUST TO SUPPORT A YOUTH URBAN
GARDENING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN NORTHEAST WINSTON-SALEM
(FORSYTH COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE)**

WHEREAS, the Forsyth County Cooperative Extension Service requests authorization to submit a grant application in the amount of \$141,040 to the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust for development of a Youth Urban Gardening Internship Program in northeast Winston-Salem during the grant period July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, these grant funds will be used to enhance healthy food access and youth development opportunities in northeast Winston-Salem, while addressing the Kate B. Reynolds Poor and Needy Division's Issue Areas of Community Assets, Education, and Health; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Urban Gardening Internship Program will work with residents of these neighborhoods to: (1) Establish a youth garden site where youth can grow fresh food and the Forsyth Community Gardening Program will offer hands-on gardening education and resource distribution; (2) Engage 10 high school students annually in a paid Youth Urban Gardening Internship, in which they will learn about growing fresh produce, cooking and nutrition, leadership, life skills, and career readiness; and (3) Promote healthy eating and physical and mental health through community gardening among youth interns and their families, peers, and neighbors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners that the Chairman or County Manager and the Clerk to the Board are hereby authorized to execute necessary documents, on behalf of Forsyth County and its Cooperative Extension Service, to submit a grant application in the amount of \$141,040 to Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust for development of a Youth Urban Gardening Internship Program in northeast Winston-Salem during the grant period July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020, as further described above, subject to a pre-audit certificate thereon by the County Chief Financial Officer, where acceptable, and approval as to form and legality by the County Attorney.

Adopted this 8th day May 2017.

**Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
Poor and Needy Division - Operating Project Application
Forsyth County Cooperative Extension (Forsyth Community Gardening Program)
Purpose: Youth Urban Gardening Internship, 2017-2020**

Organization Information

Organization Name: Forsyth County

DBA: Forsyth Community Gardening (a program of Forsyth County Cooperative Extension)

Tax ID

WWW Address

Forsyth Community Gardening: <http://forsythcommunitygardening.com/>

Forsyth County Cooperative Extension: <http://forsyth.cc/CES/>

Address: 1450 Fairchild Rd., Winston-Salem, NC 27105

Organization Primary Phone: 336-703-2850

Fiscal Year End: June 30

Request Contact Information

Organization Primary Contact

Mr. Mark A. Tucker

County Extension Director

336-703-2851

matucke1@ncsu.edu

Request Primary Contact

Dr. Megan M. Gregory

Community Gardening Coordinator

336-705-8823

gregormm@forsyth.cc

Program Information

Project Title: Youth Urban Gardening Internship

Project Start Date: 07/01/2017

Project End Date: 06/30/2020

Duration of Funding: 36 months

Targeted Age Group: School Aged Children (5 – 18)

Proposal Financial Information

Enter all financial information in whole numbers without decimals or \$ signs.

Project Budget: \$266,060

Please enter the total budget of your entire project for the grant period

Requested Amount Year 1: \$32,650

Requested Amount Year 2: \$37,070

Requested Amount Year 3: \$71,320

Request Amount: \$141,040

Total KBR dollars requested. This amount should match the total amount requested on your attached budget.

Please Upload a Detailed Budget of Your Requested Project

Application Questions

Organizational Capacity

Q1. What is your organization's mission? (100 words)

Forsyth Community Gardening (FCG)'s mission is to help residents establish and sustain community gardens by developing local leaders' skills in community organizing and sustainable horticulture. By growing gardens and garden leaders, we improve access to fresh produce, enhance environmental quality, educate children and youth, and build social capital. In the past year, FCG added a goal of promoting youth leadership and life skill development through an urban gardening internship. More broadly, as a program of Cooperative Extension, FCG connects local residents with the resources of public universities and county government to enrich the lives, land, and economy of our county.

Q2. What have you achieved in the past year to advance your mission and improve your organization's capacity? (300 words)

Mission Accomplishments: FCG trained 15 new Community Garden Mentors in asset-based community development, garden organizing, and horticulture, and supported 50 active Mentors in assisting 48 garden groups. Over 150 people participated in six workshops on environmentally-friendly gardening techniques, and FCG offered technical assistance to 105 garden groups (70 in limited-resource neighborhoods) in garden start-up, organizing, sustainable horticulture, and garden-based curricula.

With support from FCG, 11 new community gardens were established, seven by new Mentors. At least 33 groups implemented best practices in garden organizing, such as surveying members to identify their skills and assigning leadership roles. At least 41 garden groups implemented best practices in sustainable horticulture, including crop planning, soil testing, cover cropping, composting, and cultural practices for pest management. On an end-of-season survey, a majority of garden groups indicated that FCG helped them increase vegetable production (70%), improve environmental stewardship (75%), and strengthen community relationships and cooperation (70%).

Capacity-Building: In 2016, FCCE received a three-year grant from the United Way Place Matters (PM) Program, with Crisis Control Ministry and Grace Presbyterian Church, for a Healthy Eating Initiative in northeast Winston-Salem. As part of this initiative, FCG hired a Youth and Community Gardens Coordinator (YCGC) to create an urban gardening internship for high school students. This will increase our capacity to support resident interest in healthy food access and youth employment through community gardening in the Place Matters neighborhoods. FCG staff members also participated in professional development to enhance their skills in program planning and evaluation, horticulture, and racial equity in food systems, all of which will contribute to the new youth internship. Finally, FCG submitted a proposal (to another foundation) to fund a Project Director who will fundraise to support staff and programs, thus allowing us to continue the Youth Urban Gardening Internship when initial support ends.

Your Participants

Q3. What issue are you addressing? How many individuals or groups within your focus area are affected by it? (300 words)

The overall goals of the Healthy Eating Initiative are to increase access to healthy food, improve nutrition, and train youth and adults in growing food, leadership, life skills, and career skills in 13 northeast Winston-Salem neighborhoods which are the focus of the United Way Place Matters Program.

Specifically, through our Youth Urban Gardening Internship, we will develop a youth and community garden site, offer intensive youth development opportunities through paid internships, and increase healthy food access through produce grown at the youth garden and other community gardens with assistance from youth interns. As such, this work will address the Issue Areas of Community Assets, Education, and Health in the Place Matters neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

Approximately 10,500 residents in northeast Winston-Salem struggle to access affordable healthy food and lack opportunities for youth to develop life skills and career skills, according to a survey conducted by Neighbors for Better Neighborhoods (see: <http://forsythunitedway.org/place-matters/>, Neighborhood Data Presentation). The same survey, however, also identified assets which can be tapped to solve pressing problems and develop the full potential of all residents. These assets include: a strong sense of community and mutual aid, and residents with skills in teaching, cooking, gardening, and carpentry which they are eager to share with young people.

Q4a. Describe the participants who will be included in your program. How many are financially needy? Are the participants different in any way from the full population you described in question three? (200 words)

Our Youth Urban Gardening Internship will focus on students attending Carver High School and Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy (WSPA), though we will accept some other students from limited-income families. According to data in School Improvement Plans (<http://www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/Page/105130>), over 95% of Carver and WSPA students are African-American and Hispanic. Ninety-three percent of Carver students and 100% of WSPA students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Therefore, we expect that 100% of our youth interns will be financially needy, in addition to facing challenges associated with structural racism and/or immigration issues -- all of which decrease opportunities for even the most motivated youth.

Our work will also engage and benefit youths' households, community gardeners, and beneficiaries of these gardens (e.g., students, recipients of donated produce). Youth interns will share produce and new skills (e.g., gardening, cooking, career preparation) with family members. They will also teach workshops and assist with workdays at community gardens in or adjacent to the Place Matters neighborhoods. Assistance from FCG and youth interns will enhance food production in these gardens and build intergenerational relationships. We estimate that over 80% of the family members, community gardeners, and community garden beneficiaries served by this program will be financially needy.

Q4b. Financially Needy Percentage. What percentage of the participants will be financially needy? Enter whole number only (without % sign).

100 (students directly enrolled in the Youth Urban Gardening Internship)

Your Impact

Q5. What impact are you committed to achieving? How many of the participants will achieve that impact? (400 words)

(1) 20 high school youth will develop skills and make positive behavior changes related to food and nutrition, health, environmental stewardship, civic engagement, and academic achievement.

Through the Youth Urban Gardening internship, students will:

- Grow and market fresh produce,
- Use environmentally-friendly gardening practices,
- Cook healthy meals,
- Engage in local food policy dialogues, and
- Participate in workshops to enhance their leadership abilities, life skills, and career readiness.

As a result, they will make positive behavior changes such as:

- Cooking and eating vegetables,
- Being physically active,
- Caring for the environment, and
- Taking on leadership roles.

They will also improve their skills in math, science, and social studies through work experiences such as planning and tending the garden, recording produce harvests and sales, and participating in community meetings.

Over the first three years of this program, we will engage a total of 20 students. At least five of these students will participate for two or three years and take on leadership responsibilities, with corresponding increases in skills such as organizing teams to accomplish a task and public speaking. At least five additional students will continue in the program after Year 3.

(2) 20 high school youth and their families (80-100 people) will increase their food security and vegetable consumption.

Youth interns will share produce, recipes, and cooking skills with their households. We will also use the Youth Garden site to teach families how they can garden at home and/or become involved with a community garden. This should increase families' access to fresh, healthy produce which can improve food security and nutrition. Those who begin gardening may also experience health improvements due to increased physical activity and the mental/emotional health benefits of gardening.

(3) 50 community and school gardeners will implement best practices in sustainable horticulture, enhance vegetable production, and improve their health through increased vegetable consumption and physical activity.

We expect these outcomes to occur as a result of increased access to community garden space (at the youth and community garden site we will develop), increased opportunities for gardening education at gardens within the Place Matters neighborhoods, and ongoing guidance and assistance from youth interns and FCG staff. In addition,

more individuals may join community gardens as a result of youth interns sharing information (and enthusiasm!) about community gardening opportunities and the educational and material resources available from FCG to support community gardeners.

Q6. How many of the participants would be likely to achieve the anticipated impact if your program did not exist? (200 words)

(1) Youth skill development and healthy behaviors: Intensive mentoring is required to effect long-term, positive changes in youths' behaviors around health, environment, and community (Falxa-Raymond and Campbell, 2013). While some students may access academic tutoring through other programs, we believe that none would achieve the lasting behavior changes in food, health, environment, and community participation that we hope to effect through this program.

(2) Household food security and nutrition and (3) Community gardener practices, vegetable production, and health improvements: Some families and community gardeners may access limited support from FCG without a youth internship program. We estimate that between 1 and 5 of the 20 families we will engage through the youth internship may become involved in community gardening of their own initiative, and about one-quarter of the 50 community gardeners we will support would have implemented improved practices with advice from FCG's less intensive county-wide programs. However, the youth internship and staff member dedicated to the Place Matters neighborhoods will greatly increase support for families and community gardeners to begin gardening, use good horticultural practices, and prepare their harvests using healthy recipes.

Reference: Falxa-Raymond, N. and L.K. Campbell. 2013. East New York Farms! Youth Internship Alumni Evaluation Report. <http://tinyurl.com/ENYFAlumniReport2013>.

Your Program

Q7. Describe the work for which you seek funds. What approach will you use to achieve the anticipated impact? (500 words)

We will implement and refine a new Youth Urban Gardening Internship for 10 high school students per year from northeast Winston-Salem. Over the first three years, we will engage 20 students and their families and assist 50 community gardeners through youth-led workshops. Our program has three components:

(1) We will work with community partners to establish a Youth & Community Garden site.

This site will be used for youth internship activities and for residents to grow fresh food. FCG will use the site to offer hands-on gardening education and distribute resources (e.g., seeds) to gardeners. We have a promising partnership with a local congregation that is eager for us to develop this garden on their property, and we are investigating options for water access.

(2) We will engage 10 high school students per year in a paid Youth Urban Gardening Internship.

Youth will grow and market fresh produce, use environmentally-friendly gardening practices, cook healthy meals, engage in food policy dialogues, and participate in workshops to enhance their leadership abilities, life skills, and career readiness. We will work with teachers to align the internship curriculum with math, science, and social studies concepts taught in school. As a result of participating in work and learning activities related to urban

gardening, youth will make positive changes in their own lives and teach others about gardening, environmental stewardship, healthy eating, and civic engagement.

We will incorporate elements of other programs that lead to positive outcomes, including:

- Long-term involvement and youth leadership: Youth will have the opportunity to participate for multiple years. Returning interns will take on additional responsibilities as crew leaders and peer teachers and be paid at a higher rate (Daftary, 2015, p. 28; Falxa-Raymond & Campbell, 2013, p. 12).
- A clear program structure, rigorous expectations, and regular 'Straight Talk' sessions: Youth will receive and give constructive feedback affirming strengths and highlighting areas for improvement (Daftary, 2015, pp. 32-38).

(3) We will promote and support community gardening in northeast Winston-Salem by teaching best practices in sustainable horticulture and health promotion. This will help community gardeners increase vegetable production and improve community nutrition.

As part of the youth internship, students will lead workshops at community and school gardens and assist with workdays, thus sharing skills for sustainable food production while building intergenerational relationships. FCG currently works with 12 gardens in the Place Matters neighborhoods and surrounding areas (see map in Attachments). We can build on these relationships to provide more consistent technical support and assistance through the youth internship.

Funding Needs: We have support from United Way for the YCGC through mid-2019 and from Forsyth County Cooperative Extension for supporting staff. We request funds for youth stipends, site development, supplies, utilities, transportation, program evaluation, and the YCGC's salary and benefits in Year 3. In particular, stipends will make the program accessible to youth from low-income families and help them experience the responsibilities of paid employment (Daftary, 2015, pp. 53-54).

Reference: Daftary, S. 2015. Growing Young Leaders in East New York.
<http://tinyurl.com/ENYFYouthProgramGuide>.

Q8. Is your approach backed by evidence of success? If so, what is it? (300 words)

Based on other successful youth and community garden programs, we believe that our program can promote youth skill development and healthy behaviors and improve community nutrition and health.

(1) Youth skill development and healthy behaviors: Alumni of a youth urban agriculture internship in East New York, Brooklyn, increased their knowledge of gardening and nutrition, and improved their skills in money management and communication. A majority reported healthy behaviors such as cooking, eating fruits and vegetables, and being physically active. A majority also took on community leadership roles. Alumni of the internship had higher rates of college enrollment than other residents of similar races and ages. Implementation of a program structure in which returning interns took on peer teaching roles increased healthy behaviors among alumni while offering returning interns opportunities to develop leadership skills (Falxa-Raymond & Campbell, 2013).

A follow-up study of participants in The Food Project's youth programs in Massachusetts also found that alumni experienced lasting benefits in terms of healthy eating habits, job skills, leadership skills, ability to work with diverse groups, and understanding of complex social issues (Anderson Brigham and Nahas, 2008).

(2) Community nutrition and health: Community gardening has been shown to improve nutrition: People in households with a community gardener are 3.5 more likely to consume the recommended 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day than people in non-gardening households (Alaimo et al., 2008). We expect that youth interns' families will experience similar benefits as students share produce and recipes, and in some cases encourage their families to begin gardening.

References:

Anderson Brigham, R. and J. Nahas. 2008. The Food Project: A Follow-up Study of Program Participants. <http://thefoodproject.org/research>

Alaimo, K., E. Packnett, R.A. Miles, and D.J. Kruger. 2008. Fruit and vegetable intake among urban community gardeners. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 40(2): 94-101.

Tracking Success

Q9. How will you know when your impact has been achieved? What information or evidence will you use to verify success and/or make course corrections in your program? (500 words)

As part of our grant request, we will contract with a program evaluator to work with our team (including participants) to refine our desired impacts and craft a participatory approach to program evaluation and adaptation. The evaluation plan will begin with a program logic model and Theory of Change. The logic model outlines the program's flow from inputs and investments (i.e., strategies and activities) to outputs and short-term outcomes, and ultimately to longer-term outcomes. As shown in the figure at: <http://tinyurl.com/IOC-vs-LogicModel>, the Theory of Change identifies the larger context in which the program exists, identifying important factors that may influence participant and program success so that the program can plan for as many challenges and barriers as possible.

A preliminary logic model for the proposed program is presented in the Attachments. Tentative plans for program evaluation include the following:

(1) Track and assess program fidelity: We will establish written guidelines for program implementation and identify milestones and indicators. The guidelines will be evidence-based, to align with proven strategies for programs similar in scope and goals (such as the strategies outlined in Q7 & Q8). Faithful tracking of milestones and indicators will ensure that program is implemented to ensure its success. Fidelity measures include (but are not limited to):

- (a) Measures of staff capacity and performance,
- (b) Outputs measures, or tracking the numbers served and the services delivered, and
- (c) Participant and stakeholder satisfaction with and feedback on program services.

(2) Track and assess short-term outcomes including:

- (a) Youth skill development and behavior changes related to food and nutrition, health, and environmental stewardship: These impacts will be monitored by the YCGC through several methods:
 - o Field notes documenting her observations of youth applying knowledge and skills.
 - o Regular 'Straight Talk' sessions (see Q7 for details; feedback on youths' strengths and areas for improvement will be documented on a Comment Tracking Form).
 - o Surveys of youth and their adult mentors (e.g., parents, guardians, teachers). We will adapt the

framework and surveys outlined in Daftary, 2015 (pp. 51-52, A-31; see Q7).

- (b) Community gardener participation and practices, vegetable production, and health improvements: These impacts will be monitored through FCG site visits and end-of-season surveys of best practices, harvest tracking by selected gardeners with support from the YCGC and youth interns, and health and nutrition surveys. Harvest tracking will use FCG protocols and forms, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/FCGHarvestInfo>.

(3) Track and assess longer-term outcomes including:

- (a) Youth health behaviors and academic, civic, and social engagement and success: We will track youth participants over time to monitor sustained changes in health-related behaviors (e.g., gardening, cooking, physical activity), academic success, longer-term plans (e.g., college), civic interests and involvement, and social interests and activities.
- (b) Household food security and nutrition among youth interns, their families, and community gardeners: The program's impact on food security and nutrition will be monitored through pre/post food security surveys and food recalls conducted by the youth themselves upon entering the internship program (March-April) and at the end of each growing season (November).

Q10. What do you most want to learn from this program? (300 words)

Since this is a new program for Forsyth Community Gardening and for the Place Matters neighborhoods, we have many questions about the best ways to structure the program, effective practices for promoting behavior changes leading to healthier individuals and communities, and how our work can contribute to systemic change that transforms conditions of poverty and marginalization affecting the lives of youth in northeast Winston-Salem. Several questions we hope to address include the following:

- (1) How can we structure an intensive youth internship program to be accessible, feasible, and relevant for youth from limited-income families, communities of color, and/or immigrant communities? What logistical and material support is needed (e.g., transportation, stipends, language interpretation/translation)? What program schedules will be feasible for their families, while allowing enough time for mentoring and practicing new skills to have a significant impact?
- (2) What program elements and structure promote mastery of new skills (e.g., gardening, cooking, public speaking) and long-term behavior changes in food and nutrition, health, environmental stewardship, civic engagement, and academic achievement? How can we best support returning interns in assuming leadership roles as crew leaders and peer educators in ways that will help returning interns grow personally and their peers develop new knowledge and skills?
- (3) How can we leverage new knowledge, skills, and relationships created through the youth internship to effect systemic change for a more just and sustainable food system? What knowledge and experiences will help youth to analyze social problems thoughtfully and make constructive contributions to public dialogue and policymaking? What roles can adult partners, such as community gardeners, play in guiding and supporting youth-led change?



3901 Carver School Road • Winston-Salem, NC 27105 • Telephone 336-767-7530 • Email: gracechurch7530@triad.twcbc.com

Rev. Touré Marshall, M.Div., Th.M., Pastor

www.gracechurchwinston.org

Dr. Megan M. Gregory
Community Garden Coordinator, Forsyth County Cooperative Extension
1450 Fairchild Road
Winston-Salem, NC 27105

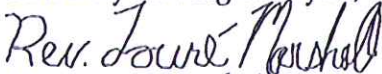
Dear Dr. Gregory

I am writing to express our commitment and support for your proposal to the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust to start a Youth Urban Gardening Internship. Your proposal to work with youth in developing community gardens will address the issues of hunger and healthy eating in a community that is considered a food desert. It will also promote health education, enrich the lives of our youth and help to establish pride and a sense connection to our community within our youth.

This is the kind of project we are excited to see in our community. Our summer youth camp collaboration last summer with you and the Forsyth County Cooperative Extension proved to be a tremendous experience for over 25 youth from Carver High School. As you know we are a church committed to mentoring youth and providing them with experiences and exposure that will positively influence their self-esteem, decision making, outlook on life, and connection to their community. Through our JRAMS (Jackets and Rams Achieving Maximum Success) partnership with Winston-Salem State University, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Inc., and Carver High School we hope to continue to build on last summer's collaboration with the Forsyth County Cooperative Extension.

Ms. Sandra Thomas, a member of our congregation and health care professional has served as a nurse in Forsyth County for more than a decade, training aspiring nurses. She along with a team of retired educators and nurses in our congregation look forward to how this project will help serve the many youth, young adults, and children we are currently providing healthy Sunday meals too and mentoring during the week. Ms. Thomas looks forward to serving on a steering committee and our church is committed to supporting and offering assistance via volunteers, space, transportation, and access to youth and families currently being served in our ministry.

Sincerely serving with you,


Rev. Touré Marshall, Pastor



Ms. Sandra Thomas, Grace Presbyterian Church Member



The Best Is Yet to Come!

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."

-1 Corinthians 2:9-



CARVER HIGH SCHOOL

*Excellence without Excuses, Quality without Question,
Committed to the Achievement of Every Student*

Megan Gregory, Forsyth Community Gardening Coordinator
Julie Hale, Youth and Community Gardens Coordinator
Forsyth County Cooperative Extension
1450 Fairchild Rd.
Winston-Salem, NC 27105

Dear Ms. Gregory and Ms. Hale:

I am writing in support of the Youth Community Gardens/Youth Urban Gardens project. I am currently a teacher at Carver High School, one of the schools participating in this initiative. Community garden projects have proven time and again to provide a positive impact on disenfranchised youth in any institution where this kind of work has been implemented. They provide a space to cultivate not only fresh organic produce, but also, a sense of community, self-esteem, and brotherhood, something that is very much needed in these communities accustomed to experience idle land and food deserts as a norm in their daily lives.

There is no doubt that this project will have a positive impact on the community that we seek to serve. As a former student at Carver High School, I feel extremely proud and satisfied to offer my services now as a teacher and mentor to a community that I have known for over 30 years. Also, being a teacher of a world language (Spanish), I feel I will be able to bridge the gap between those that would seek to better their place, but perhaps have some apprehension due to the language barrier. As this project seeks to build stronger relationships through communication and agriculture, I feel enthusiastic to participate in this holistic and empowering initiative for our own community.

Sincerely,
Christopher Jeffords.
Spanish Teacher
Carver High School (128)



WINSTON-SALEM
PREPARATORY
ACADEMY



1215 N. Cameron Avenue • Winston-Salem • North Carolina • 27101
(336) 703-6732 phone • (336) 727-2931 fax

February 1, 2017

Ms. Megan Gregory, Forsyth Community Gardening Coordinator
Ms. Julie Hale, Youth and Community Gardens Coordinator
Forsyth County Cooperative Extension
1450 Fairchild Road
Winston-Salem, NC 27105

Dear Ms. Gregory and Ms. Hale:

I am writing, as a Teaching Assistant and Garden Club Advisor at Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy at Atkins (WSPA), to offer my full support for Forsyth County Cooperative Extension's Youth Urban Gardening Internship grant proposal to the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust.

As a Teaching Assistant at WSPA, and as the Founder and Advisor for WSPA's Garden Club since 2007, I can speak first-hand to the benefits of teaching and developing youth in an educational garden setting.

Youth are increasingly disconnected from knowledge about the biological world, where their food comes from, and how it is grown. Many have never had the opportunity to plant a seed, nurture a plant and reap what they sow.

And as we are all aware, our community is suffering from a crisis of healthy food access and associated health risks such as diabetes and obesity. It is widely acknowledged that early education in the areas of nutrition and healthy eating can help to positively change behaviors, benefitting youth throughout their lives.

Since WSPA's Garden Club was founded in 2007, one of my dreams for our community has been to have an established program to help train youth in the importance of healthy eating through local food gardening, to help sustain themselves and their families. As I have witnessed in my nine years as WSPA's Garden Advisor, youth blossom when given the opportunity to experience nature in the positive environment of the garden.

I expressed my hopes for such a program to you, Ms. Gregory, when we first met last summer at a Forsyth Community Gardening Mentor meeting. I was thrilled to learn this past fall, that you were working on an initiative to provide this type of programming for youth in our community.

This program could not come at a better time! I feel we need to turn our attention back to training youth about the basics of living, and of sustaining themselves, their families and communities, while also teaching them broader skills that will translate to success in all areas of their lives, such as persistence, teamwork, leadership and community engagement. The garden as an outdoor classroom is the perfect place to nourish these essential life skills.

I have seen garden and nutrition education work in our own school garden and feel strongly that the Youth Garden Internship Program can do great things throughout our community, by creating opportunities for youth to build self-esteem and confidence through leadership-training, and by providing wage-earning opportunities for youth, as a part of the internship program.

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**WINSTON-SALEM
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The Forsyth Community Gardening program has provided ongoing support to WSPA's Garden Club efforts over the past several years with educational and technical support, resources such as seeds and vegetable transplants, workshops and meetings to help develop our garden and community organizing efforts, and, most recently, significant assistance in grant-writing to help sustain our garden financially.

Because I believe in this new program and feel it can benefit WSPA's student population through training and employment opportunities, I pledge to support the Youth Urban Garden Internship Program by recruiting interested students from the WSPA community, by promoting the program in our broader community, and by serving on the Youth and Community Gardens Program Steering Committee, to help guide and sustain the continuing efforts of the program.

Please count on me for enthusiastic support for the Youth Urban Gardening Internship.

Sincerely,

Wendy Wallace-Banks

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendy Wallace-Banks".

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard K. Watts".

Richard K. Watts
Principal