



“Farm for the City” to Spotlight Impact of Philadelphia’s Community Gardens

Installation in Center City to showcase gardeners’ role in strengthening neighborhoods

PHILADELPHIA – The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society will open “Farm for the City” on June 15 at Thomas Paine Plaza, shining a light on the role community gardeners play in strengthening neighborhoods and addressing some of the most pressing issues facing our communities, including food insecurity. With major support from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, the temporary farm-as-art installation will host a season of free and accessible workshops and activities, inviting visitors to engage with these issues and cultivate support for the community garden network of Philadelphia.

“One in five Philadelphia residents is food insecure, but the potential for Philadelphia’s community gardens to combat this and other issues is not widely known,” said Matt Rader, PHS President. “We are grateful to The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage for supporting the creation of Farm for the City, which will encourage public dialogue about the issue of food insecurity in our region and demonstrate how community gardens can improve equitable access to healthy food and transform underutilized land into community assets. We need a larger, more diverse community of people to support these gardens and their valuable contribution to our neighborhoods.”

For decades, community gardeners have transformed underused space into neighborhood assets that provide fresh, organic food, a connection to nature, and a place of common ground for everyone. PHS has been supporting community gardening for almost 50 years through education and material distribution, but long-standing challenges combined with current trends in Philadelphia’s real estate market create unprecedented threats to these gardens’ survival. By presenting community gardens as a core piece of neighborhood infrastructure, Farm for the City is an effort to address the major challenges these gardens face, including insufficient funding, lack of secure



access to land, and unplanned succession for garden leaders. Visitors are encouraged to explore, experience and engage onsite and become a “Friend of the Gardens” as donors, advocates, and volunteers.

“Our community is at our best when we work together to improve the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors, and this project is a creative way to call us all together to do just that,” said Mike Dahl, Executive Director of Broad Street Ministry. “We are so excited to collaborate with our friends at PHS on Farm for the City because we see it as a beautiful and meaningful way to raise the issues of hunger, of food waste, of sustainable food systems, and of the promise of urban gardening.”

The Farm anticipates growing over 1,000 pounds of produce, which will be donated to Broad Street Ministry and its Hospitality Collaborative program which seeks to improve the physical and psychological wellbeing of Philadelphians experiencing homelessness, hunger, and poverty by providing meals alongside stabilizing services, such as a mail service, clothing, and personal care items. Supported by Dylan DeVlieger and Stanley Morgan, the Farmers for the project, plant selections evolved out of conversations with PHS City Harvest, a network of urban growers sharing harvests with neighbors, and conversations with guests at Broad Street Ministry. Crops will include African eggplant, carrots, chard, fennel, and onion, and herbs like cilantro, lavender, mint, and thyme. In addition to providing produce, the Farm will be an educational resource to visitors who can learn from onsite Farm Hosts about the various plantings and how to grow them in their own gardens.

Development of the project began last June when The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage awarded a \$300,000 grant to PHS to present “Farm for the City” and the Philadelphia Department of Public Property provided the space next to the Municipal Services Building for the installation. PHS enlisted local design firms ThinkGreen and Viridian Landscape Studio to consult on the design of the project, which features shaded seating areas for visitors, raised vegetable beds and planters.



Programming at the Farm will follow four themes – SOIL, SEED, PLANT, and HARVEST – that frame the season’s activities, including hands-on workshops, public forums, family-centered entertainment, and special off-site events. Designed by Program Curator Charlyn Griffith, in collaboration with various community leaders and gardeners, events will explore our region’s complex agricultural history while honoring important contributions to the biodiversity of the land by the Leni Lenape and our African ancestors.

PHS and its partners invite the public to celebrate the opening of the Farm on June 15 with a group planting and sneak peek at the engaging activities that will be offered throughout the season. A complete schedule of regularly updated events can be found at <https://phsonline.org/programs/farm-for-the-city/>. The Farm for the City will be open M-F 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the weekends through September 29, 2018.

[The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage](#) is a multidisciplinary grantmaker and hub for knowledge-sharing, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, and dedicated to fostering a vibrant cultural community in Greater Philadelphia. The Center fulfills this mission by investing in ambitious, imaginative projects that showcase the region’s cultural vitality and enhance public life, and by engaging in an exchange of ideas concerning artistic and interpretive practice with a broad network of cultural practitioners and leaders. Major support for Farm for the City has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

[Broad Street Ministry](#) believes that when we embrace the individual needs of our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, we transform our city, our institutions, and ourselves. Through a unique model of radical hospitality, Broad Street Ministry provides stabilizing



services that go beyond meeting basic human needs. Along with providing nutritious meals and personal care items, Broad Street Ministry partners with organizations to offer support for health care, legal assistance, and housing.

ABOUT PHS

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 1827, that works to engage everyone in gardening and apply horticulture to transform lives and communities while solving tough challenges facing society. PHS's best known activities include the Philadelphia Flower Show, street tree planting and maintenance, community gardening, public beautification, and the PHS Pop Up Gardens. PHS is supported by individual members and supporters, foundations, partners and government grants. PHS programs bring together people from diverse backgrounds to engage in horticultural projects that advance social equity, environmental sustainability, and urban livability. For information or to support our work, visit [PHSONline.org](https://www.phsonline.org).

MEDIA CONTACT:

Kevin Feeley, PHS Communications Manager, 215.988.1631, kfeeley@pennhort.org