



Blue Island Community Health Coalition  
Food Access & Gardening Committee Meeting  
Memorial Park Fieldhouse  
December 16, 2013, 4:00-5:40PM

**In Attendance**

Bob Manthei, Blue Island Park District  
Val Kehoe, Urban Forestry Board & Master Gardener  
Sandy Quinn, Resident & Master Gardener  
Jodi Prout, City of Blue Island & Master Gardener  
Wendy Walters, City of Blue Island (Notetaker)

**Action Steps**

- All committee members to think of potential committee stakeholders and bring ideas to next meeting
- Quinn and Walters to compile a list of gardening resources
- Kehoe will check on WIC sponsorship of plots
- Kehoe will email EHS Teacher (Kristina, Science teacher leading horticulture club) in early January.
- Prout will contact the Carol Kusman, Chair of the Healthy Schools Committee, to let her know the Food Access & Gardening committee will be joining the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of their meeting on **Monday Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm** at Metro South Hospital in the Cafeteria; SO *Food Access & Gardening* plans to meet at **1pm, same place/date**); Prout will also invite her to join the Food Access & Gardening Committee.
- Prout will bring information about Environmental Education Grant on Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>
- All: invite people you think would like to make the next meeting!

**Meeting Notes**

- I. **Overview of Coalition and it's current status.** Prout gave a general background on the Blue Island Community Health Coalition (BICHC) and how it relates to this committee. She explained the quality improvement planning process and how it has strengthened the coalition in 2013 through newly formed committees (see below) and the development of a 3-year plan.

Prout handed out a Food Access Strategic Planning *Matrix* give idea of what the Coalition would like to accomplish. the Food Access Committee to accomplish; also passed out "*Food Access and Gardening—2013 Accomplishments Quantified*" to celebrate accomplishments from 2013. She explained that you don't have to be an "official member" of the coalition to be a part of a committee.

- Quinn asked if the Coalition could act as a resource for gardeners in the community, for ex. "the Parks District has compost, come and get it!"
- Prout replied YES. Exactly. And the future website will help get these kind of messages across.

Prout summarized the big picture objectives from the coalition action plan. The committee activities should complement, reflect and support these objectives.

- a. 2014—Year 1 Build capacity, identity & relationships within Coalition

1. Subcommittees

2. Website, Facebook and Twitter
3. Gather info on resources & community accomplishments for website
4. Connect with members who've dropped out
5. Subcommittees support each other on projects

b. 2015—Year 2 Build Identity and Relationships in Community and Beyond

c. 2016—Year 3 Implement Community-Wide Initiative

## II. Discuss Committee Activities for 2014

1. Set up committee chair. Prout volunteered herself as Chair and Bob volunteered himself as Vice Chair. All agreed.
2. Decide on consistent meeting schedule and location.
3. Collect information on Community Food and Gardening resources, locations, programs and contacts
  - Manthei suggested we use different tactics to engage a more diverse audience—try to connect with those that already garden in Blue Island, and share resources with them such as compost or tools. Let those relationships build naturally. “Leave them alone, but let them know there is a network available in Blue Island.”
  - Quinn asked if this (the Coalition/formation of the Committee) has anything to do with the City's “BIGG” (Blue Island Going Green) Initiative. Prout answered that it is, but only in the sense that it is “green” initiative of the community.
  - A. Develop list of potential members or stakeholders who are missing or who we want on the committee
    - Kehoe: Urban Forestry Board; Grassroots Planters; Raeann with VMS
    - Quinn: Kathy Haskel (Girl Scouts), EHS Horticulture Teacher Kristina; Lt. Vera (Sal Army), Boy Scouts
    - Jodi: Shermaine with FUTURE Foundation
  - B. Recruit additional members
    - Quinn asked if we should have representatives of UFB and Public Works come to our committee meetings. The group consensus was no, that if we want/need them involved in something we will go talk to them.
4. Partner with Health School Committee on gardening project
  - A. Horticulture Program at Eisenhower—Wendy contacted Kristina (Science Teacher at EHS) last minute to invite her to this meeting. She was interested, but unavailable. Next month we will give her more notice. Kehoe will follow up with her in early January.
  - B. FUTURE Foundation at Eisenhower—Shermaine Brown-Wade indicated that her students at Eisenhower will be working on a gardening related project in the upcoming gardening season.
  - C. Youth Gardening Ideas from Healthy Schools Committee
    - Salvation Army Tower Gardens &/or Park District Community Garden
    - Ideas & Thoughts from Healthy Schools
    - Share your Fruit Tree—ask residents who have a fruit tree in their yard that do not use them to allow the community to pick from them so the fruit isn't wasted. Could be as simple as a sign near the tree: “Go Ahead—Pick me!”

- Blessing in a Backpack—kids in need receive backpacks full of food to take home over the weekend (many of these families are homeless and only eat during school hours); Food is junk—why not throw in fresh fruits/veggies; The backpacks make the kids stand out (negatively) so this program could use revamping; We want to get these kids gardening in the summer!
- Sharefest

#### 5. Support existing Gardens and Food Access Programing

- California Gardens Community Garden
- Memorial Park Community Garden
- Blue Island Farmers Market
- Local Food at BI Restaurants

#### 6. Additional Ideas

- Question: Why aren't all the schools on the same page? Instead of one school hosting an event and taking all the credit, why not combine forces?  
-Prout suggested a joint meeting with the Healthy Schools Committee, as many of these topics overlap with what they are covering and they'll have a more inside view on the school districts. And they'll have the contacts. (general agreement)
- Limitless project ideas: Problem is continuing the enthusiasm
- Salvation Army: Quinn mentioned that they had to scale back on a lot of their projects because there was a lack of focus on religion. Lt. Vierya (Director). Prout mentioned that Master Gardener Nick G. is excited about possibility of working with youth on tower gardens. People come for the food pantry every Friday. Couldn't they just walk upstairs and pick their own food?
- Quinn: Check with Openlands—they have a model for beginning a gardening program in schools and will send someone out to teach gardening in the summers
- Manthei would like to start a compost share
- Food Trucks: Can we get food trucks (to address the food dessert problem)? Manthei: Can't the gardens coordinate with a distribution system? Maybe existing gardeners can agree to donate a certain percentage of their plots (ie 20%) to growing food for others, and possibly get paid for it
- Cooking Classes: It's important to teach cooking techniques as well. We should offer these classes—how to cut and cook with what you grow; Manthei mentioned Anna Stange

**\*Official Committee Name:** *Food Access and Gardening*

**Next Meetings:** *Monday January 27<sup>th</sup>, Metro South Hospital's Cafeteria @ 1 pm;*  
*Tuesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, Parks District @ 6pm*