



Well-Preserved

Updates from Neighborhood Gardens Association A Philadelphia Land Trust

Preserving community-managed open space since 1986

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OUR MISSION

The Neighborhood Gardens Association / A Philadelphia Land Trust (NGA) is a private non-profit corporation founded in 1986. The mission of the land trust is to ensure the continuity and long-term preservation of community-managed gardens and open space in low and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Editor: Margot Berg

Message from the Executive Director

One of the great joys of my job is the wonderful people I have met along the way. March marks my sixth year as Executive Director of NGA and my twenty-eighth year working with community gardeners in Philadelphia. It has truly been my pleasure to be a part of this effort. As a "transplant" from Ohio, I have learned a great deal about gardening and life from the community people I have worked with over the years.

Some of these special people are mentioned in the Garden Spotlight on Point Breeze Gardens -- 2005 is their tenth year as preserved community green spaces. Alta Felton and Mamie Nichols are amazing community gardeners -- and people -- who helped create the community greening movement that is still going strong a quarter of a century later. They may have had to hang up their gardening gloves due to age and illness, but their spirit lives on in the people who have followed.

This spring, NGA is actively working on a dozen new garden acquisitions while continuing to support the 25 gardens currently in the land trust with funding for physical improvements. Several new fencing projects will be completed this season making these gardens even more attractive assets in their neighborhoods. Thanks go to all of our partners -- foundations, individual donors, community gardeners, and corporations.



From the dedication of Point Breeze Gardens in 1995

NGA SPOTLIGHT: *POINT BREEZE*

This issue's Spotlight focuses on the nine land trusted gardens in the Point Breeze neighborhood.

Nine gardens in the Point Breeze area are celebrating ten years in the land trust. South of Washington Avenue and east of the Schuylkill Expressway, Point Breeze has a long history of community gardening. Dozens of community green spaces were created here in the 1980s as one of PHS Philadelphia Green's earliest Greene Countrie Townes. Mamie Nichols of the Point Breeze Federation worked with local residents to turn trash-filled vacant lots into gardens and parks to improve the neighborhood.



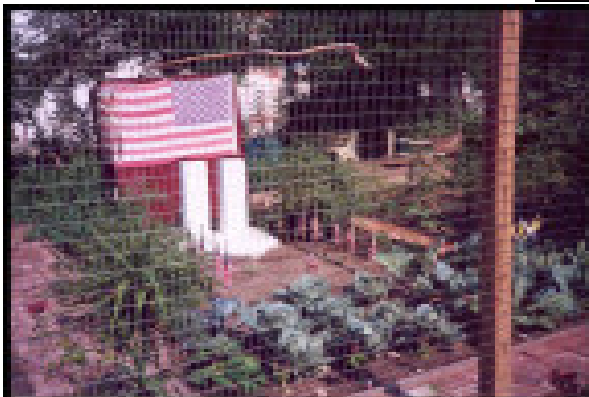
The Concert Garden at 21st and Ellsworth Streets has hosted jazz concerts and weddings, as well as birthday parties for local children.

Keith's Garden at 22nd and Ellsworth Streets is a sitting park where artist Keith Haring painted his mural "We the Youth" with help from local children in 1987.



When NGA was formed in 1986, Point Breeze was one of the first neighborhoods that NGA worked in to help preserve community gardens. Several of the large community garden "farms" along 29th Street and Grays Ferry Avenue had been sold for development, and there was a desire to preserve some of the other gardens if possible. Most of the Garden Coordinators NGA worked with were retired African American women over 60 who had

learned to garden as children growing up on farms in the South. Farming was in their blood, and they grew vegetables and fruits for their families and neighbors. Patches of green sprouted up throughout Point Breeze because of volunteers Alta Felton, her daughter Rosetta, Josephine Jackson, and Anna Davis. As the original gardeners are now in their 80s, NGA is working to encourage new gardeners to nurture these Point Breeze treasures.



The Feng Shui Garden at 17th and Federal Streets was overgrown by the 1990s. It was reclaimed in 2000 by local young people who have a new vision for the site, and have installed a tribute to the victims of September 11th.

NGA preserved nine Point Breeze Gardens - the largest grouping of land trust gardens in the city. Most of these are small, single-lot gardens and sitting parks.

GARDEN UPDATES

NGA's Acquisition Fund

Communities all around Philadelphia are actively planning for, creating, and working to preserve their neighborhood gardens and green spaces. NGA has seen a marked increase in the demand for assistance with preserving these gardens. At the same time, a strong real estate market has meant that the asking prices for the "vacant" lots on which these gardens have been created has increased steadily over the last few years. As a nonprofit organization, NGA relies on charitable donations from foundations, corporations, and individual donors to provide the funding for all of its operations and activities. NGA's original funding for acquiring properties for preservation was granted in 1986 by the Pew Charitable Trusts. NGA is seeking to create a new Acquisition Fund so that we can continue to acquire

and preserve community green spaces in Philadelphia neighborhoods. NGA kicked-off the fundraising efforts last summer with an event at Bel Arbor Community Garden. If you'd like to donate specifically to the acquisition fund, just make a note on your check or donation form. Help place more gardens in the land trust!

Thanks to our Funders

NGA is delighted to have received a grant from The McLean Contributionship to help fund garden improvements. The NGA Board, staff and land trust gardeners are grateful for McLean and all of NGA's other donors this year.



www.ngalandtrust.org

Garden Improvements

NGA continues with the fourth year of the Garden Improvement Project. Since 2002, the City's Office of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization has awarded NGA with an annual \$25,000 grant to make major physical improvements to older gardens in the land trust. This grant must be matched dollar-for-dollar by private donations. Planned improvements for 2005 include: new fencing, streetscape improvements, tool storage facilities, and installing electrical service at gardens.



Seedy Acres new fence

Clip and send with your donation!

Help Save Community Gardens

NGA is a nonprofit urban land trust preserving community-managed gardens and green spaces in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. We need your support!

\$50 \$100 \$250 Other

NGA's United Way Code is 8206

Name: _____

(as you wish to be acknowledged in our publications)

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email _____

I prefer to remain anonymous. I am interested in making a planned gift. Please contact me.

Please make checks payable to the **Neighborhood Gardens Association** and mail to:

NGA, 100 North 20th Street, Suite 309, Philadelphia, PA 19103

If you would like to use a credit card, go to www.ngalandtrust.org and click on the link to **Network for Good**.



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Email Margot if you would like to receive the newsletter and NGA announcements via email.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Wednesdays April 27, May 4, and May 11

& Saturday May 7: The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program Tree Tenders Project. Train to be a tree tender and help tend our urban forest. Learn all aspects of tree awareness and community organizing for neighborhood greening. Call Mindy Maslin at 215-988-8844 or email her at mmaslin@pennhort.org to register.

PHS Philadelphia Green City Gardening

Series: various topics and locations on dates from March 16th through April 30th. Call Marilyn Reynolds for info: 215-988-8872.

April 29th and 30th, 10AM to 2PM:

Spring Plant Sale at the Fairmount Park Horticulture Center. Buy annuals, house plants, flower boxes, hanging baskets, and scented geraniums. Montgomery Drive near Belmont Avenue in Fairmount Park.