

2010 Annual Report

Established in response to the growing need for long-term gardening support, the Community Greening Resource Network (CGRN) is an annual membership program assisting individuals, community gardens and green spaces throughout the City of Baltimore. By coordinating the resources available in our city, CGRN provides a comprehensive and consistent support network, making it easier for residents to maintain valuable green spaces.

For a nominal yearly fee, CGRN provides access to the materials, education, and connections gardens need to successfully maintain their green spaces. With assistance from fifteen partner organizations, Parks & People Foundation serves as the primary sponsor of this innovative program. CGRN's partners include: University of Maryland Extension, Baltimore City Master Gardeners, Baltimore Water Alliance, Civic Works, Irvine Nature Center, City Blossoms, Baltimore Green Works, Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, Riverside Park, Baltimore Office of Sustainability, Southeast Community Development Corporation, Community Greens, Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Barclay Elementary/Middle School, and Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks.

MEMBERSHIP IN 2010

CGRN membership increased significantly in 2010 and now includes **196 members**. In the network, there are **93 Community Gardens, 38 School Gardens, 36 Family/Private Gardens** and **29 Advocates**.

SEED AND PLANT GIVE-AWAY DAYS

In 2010, CGRN provided resources to over **75 Community Gardens** and **25 School Gardens** in Baltimore City during **6 Give-Away Days**. Participants picked up almost **4,000 seed packets** and over **5,000 vegetable and herb seedlings**. CGRN also distributed compost, soil amendments, wood chips, 5-gallon buckets, and plastic pots. Local nurseries and retailers including Meyer Seed, Botanical Interests, Johnny's Seed, Babikow Nurseries, Valley View Farms, Sharp's Farm, In a Pickle, East Coast Organics, Green Fields Nursery, Brent and Becky's Bulbs, University of Maryland, Real Food Farm, and many others donated surplus inventory to make our Give-Away Days possible. The program's distribution of high quality resources allowed gardeners to maximize their potential for a productive season.



COMMUNITY TOOL LIBRARIES

In 2010, CGRN partnered with Baltimore Water Alliance, Parks & People Foundation, Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, and Riverside Park to maintain an inventory of **over 1,000 tools in 4 Community Tool Libraries.**

Community Tool Libraries rented **over 1,500 tools to over 65 community and school gardens.** A fifth Community Tool Library will open in 2011 and will be located at Barclay Elementary/ Middle School.



VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

Throughout the 2010 growing season, over **250 volunteers** served over **500 hours of service** during CGRN Volunteer Work Days. Volunteers helped with garden preparation, planting, harvesting, and maintenance, as well as special projects like building greenhouses, raised beds, and drip irrigation systems.

WORKSHOPS AND EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

In 2010, over **200 events** were featured on the CGRN Shared Calendar including workdays, workshops, trainings, tree sales, celebrations, volunteer days, films, short courses, conferences, and Give-Away Days. These events were led by a variety of organizations and groups throughout the city and included rain barrel construction workshops, discussions on food security and zoning policies, and cooking demonstrations.

This year, over **150 gardeners** attended over **20 workshops and trainings** designed specifically for CGRN members. Each workshop was taught and hosted by a different garden, partner organization, or volunteer in the network. Workshops are free to CGRN members and are open to the public. Workshop topics included seed planting and saving, composting in the city, legally preserving green spaces, container and roof top gardening, creating a drip irrigation system, and conducting volunteer recruitment.





PLANNING TOGETHER

Each year CGRN invites participants to provide feedback on the resources, education, and technical support they need to garden successfully. Active participation encourages appropriate use of resources and builds relationships and connections between gardeners. During the 2010 **Summer Focus Group** meetings, representatives from over **25 gardens** shared their input and feedback, identifying resources that could make their gardening efforts more successful. The **CGRN Summit**, an end-of-the-year planning and evaluation meeting, is another

opportunity to for CGRN members to provide direct feedback about the services, resources, and benefits they receive. Regular meetings and evaluation ensure that CGRN is continuing to serve the needs of our diverse membership.

SHARING INFORMATION

In the past year, CGRN members have received **4 quarterly “See Green” Newsletters** and **8 monthly news alerts** featuring our shared calendar, volunteer opportunities, network news, and garden tips. CGRN members also received a free subscription to the CGRN member site located online at www.bigtent.com/groups/cgrn. The membership website provides CGRN members with updated information and allows them to post news, discussion questions, pictures, and events.

SITE SHARES

Approximately **40 CGRN members** took the opportunity to meet and talk with other gardeners during garden Site Shares. These connections help build Baltimore’s vibrant greening community and provide CGRN with information that contributes to program development.

CHARM CITY GARDEN TOUR

In partnership with the Baltimore City Master Gardeners, CGRN hosted its first annual Charm City Garden Tour. The tour showcased **7 CGRN gardens** including Duncan Street Miracle Garden, Participation Park, Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School, Brentwood Garden, Homestead Harvest, Montpelier Orchard, and Real Food Farm. Following the tour, there was a garden party at the Duncan Street Miracle Garden featuring three bands and food donated by local restaurants. **Over 100 people** participated in the event.



CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

During Parks & People Foundation's 15th Annual Greening Celebration, **14 members of CGRN** were recognized for their outstanding contributions to Baltimore City, their community, and CGRN. The following CGRN members were nominated for one or more award: Amazing Port Street Garden, Ash Street Garden, Brentwood Garden, Barclay Elementary/Middle School, Curtis Bay Elementary/Middle School, Duncan Street Miracle Garden, Franklin Square Elementary/ Middle School, Hamilton Elementary/Middle School, Inez Robb, Montessori Public Charter School, Our Community Garden, Pam's Little Acre, Patterson Park Neighborhood Improvement Association, and Seth Wheeler. CGRN will continue to recognize and celebrate the successes of all of our members.



NEW FOR 2011...

- A grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust will allow CGRN to **open and maintain a fifth Community Tool Library at Barclay Elementary/ Middle School.**
 - The same grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust will provide funding to purchase **native plants and shrubs** which will be distributed during Give-Away Days.
 - CGRN will implement a **Horticultural Education Scholarship Program** in order to provide community gardeners with the opportunity to expand their horticultural knowledge and increase the overall capacity of Baltimore community gardens.
 - A committee consisting of current CGRN members will be formed to **welcome new members to the network** and introduce them to the resources available in CGRN.
- **Fundraising events and efforts** will occur throughout the year to ensure that CGRN has the necessary funding to continue its operation and service to Baltimore City.
 - **Social events** will be hosted throughout the city to provide CGRN members with opportunities to connect with one another, exchange information and share experiences.
 - CGRN will encourage **active participation** from all of its members. There are plenty of ways to get involved in the network and all CGRN members have something valuable to contribute.

For more information about CGRN, contact Katie Dix, CGRN Coordinator, at 410-448-5663 x128 or community.greening@parksandpeople.org