

MILL CREEK FARM

ANNUAL REPORT 2006



A Little Taste of Everything
Mail to: 3451 Walnut Street
Franklin Building Annex, Suite P-117A
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6205
The Mill Creek Farm
Visit us at 49th and Brown Streets
Email: millcreekfarm@resist.ca
Phone: 215.939.2386 or 267.242.5539
Fax: 215.573.1134
Website: www.millcreekurbanfarm.org

Dear Friends of Mill Creek Farm,

Thank you for helping to make our first season great! Our first year was a building year focused on outreach, infrastructure, and creating a Board of Directors. Now our focus is shifting to production, marketing, and fundraising to sustain our youth and community programs for the coming years.

Looking back over the achievements of our first year, it is hard to believe all that has been done to establish a strong foundation. Our first annual report attempts to summarize the many accomplishments of our emerging organization.

We have a lot to be thankful for at this time. We grew and harvested over fifty varieties of fruits, vegetables, and herbs at the farm, located at 49th and Brown Streets in West Philadelphia. We received tremendous support from visitors, volunteers, members of youth school groups, and shoppers at our bi-weekly on-farm market stand. The active participation from the community helped bring our dreams to fruition and we could not have gotten through the season without their help. The widespread exposure we got this year increases the consumption of and understanding around fresh, locally grown food. We completed a number of critical infrastructure projects with the help of Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Philadelphia Water Department, including installation of a cob-walled toolshed, a composting toilet, a living roof, graywater collection, and drip-irrigation system.

When not farming, we are working hard to write foundation grants for a large portion of our funding needs and create a business plan for next year that will allow us to supplement grant funding with more income from the farm. Donations enable us to sustain an urban farm model that provides fresh organic produce to low-income urban residents at affordable rates and offers food, nutrition, and environmental education to both youth and adults around sustainable agricultural practices. Our goals for next season include increased educational signage, improved marketing and production, installation of a solar electric system, and use of vegetable oil to power our diesel truck. We are looking forward to working with the City Harvest program, Mariposa Food Co-op, and the Food Trust farmers' market.

Thank you for supporting our hard work to create and sustain an urban farm in Philadelphia committed to both education and food access. We are excited to be a part of the food and environmental justice movement that is gaining momentum in Philadelphia and internationally.



Sincerely,

Jade Walker and Johanna Rosen
Co-founders, Mill Creek Farm

Table of Contents

Mission.....	4
History.....	4
2006 Programs.....	5
Volunteers.....	9
Press.....	10
Funding.....	11
Board of Directors.....	12

Mission

A Little Taste of Everything (ALTOE) is a non-profit agency dedicated to increasing access to nutritious, affordable foods and providing food systems education for low-income populations in Philadelphia.

ALTOE's mission is put into action through the Mill Creek Farm (MCF) project, a collectively run urban education farm that utilizes vacant land to improve local access to nutritious foods and to promote sustainable resource use by growing and distributing produce and by demonstrating ecological methods of living.

MCF is committed to:

- Improving consumer access to nutritious foods and building food security;
- Educating local school groups and the greater Philadelphia community about urban agriculture, natural resource management and sustainable living;
- Developing a greater sense of community within the Mill Creek neighborhood;
- Managing stormwater run-off and providing a model for vacant land reclamation.

History

ALTOE grew out of a youth-driven project at University City High School in conjunction with the Urban Nutrition Initiative (UNI) and received its non-profit status in 2005. ALTOE evolved from previous efforts to improve food security in West Philadelphia communities through school gardens and farmers' markets.

In August 2005, the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) awarded ALTOE 1.5 acres of vacant land, at 49th and Brown Streets in the Mill Creek Neighborhood of West Philadelphia, to start the MCF project. Initial funding for staff salaries was provided by UNI, based at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships. The land allocation and site preparation came through the State Department of Environmental Protection's *Growing Greener Grant* for Stormwater Management and the City's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. The farm site was designed to address the flooding that shaped the block's history and transform a blighted lot into community green space. MCF had a successful first season in 2006 and anticipates continued growth as a model for local food system development and sustainability education in succeeding years.

The Mill Creek neighborhood is a low-income, African-American neighborhood. Minority and low-income populations are disproportionately affected by rising obesity rates and nutrition-related diseases. This is attributed in part to lack of access to affordable, healthy foods in inner-city neighborhoods. In West Philadelphia, supermarkets may not be accessible and corner stores do not supply fresh, nutritious options. Shopping opportunities that do exist include very little in terms of local or organic choices or high prices are prohibitive and do not encourage increased vegetable consumption. People are increasingly disconnected from the places and processes that

produce their food. There is urgent need for improved understanding of our food system to protect the health of populations and the environment.

MCF has an innovative program that builds on existing work in Philadelphia to support a food system that will ensure food security for all residents. MCF is also creating a model of how blighted land can be used productively to contribute to a healthy community and environment. Urban agriculture makes fresh, locally-grown food more widely available and reduces the need for shipping and preservatives. Urban farms improve city environments, reconnect urban



populations with active resource management, and promote biodiversity within cityscapes. Through its programs, MCF strengthens the local economy, saves energy resources, and facilitates community education about food, health, and sustainability.

2006 Programs

Food Production and Distribution



In its first season, MCF grew and harvested over fifty varieties of fruits, vegetables, and herbs and established perennial crops including asparagus, flowers, berries, and fruit trees. The farm's organic produce is distributed locally through direct marketing, wholesale, and donations. In 2006, MCF held a farm stand on-site twice a week from July through November, making its freshly-harvested vegetables and herbs available to its immediate community at affordable prices.

In addition to providing access to fresh, organic produce, the on-site market stand also serves to bring visitors onto the farm itself and thus connect consumers with the source of their food. The stand achieved a promising level of success in its first season, accounting for approximately 40% of the Farm's total sales, even without significant promotion or outreach. The community response was overwhelmingly positive and a small base of loyal customers developed over the course of the season. One neighbor remarked, "I tell my neighbors – buy food from them. We don't want them to leave." Okra was the most popular crop in 2006 and customer preferences were incorporated into the growing plan for 2007.



Mill Creek Farm has also established some strong relationships for wholesale distribution of its produce. Sales to the nearby Mariposa Food Cooperative and late in the season to

the Fair Food Farmstand accounted for around 60% of total sales. MCF has also sold directly to restaurants, including Ariana.

Education

In addition to growing food for local distribution, MCF is an education center, giving tours to groups, hosting field trips and community skill-share workshops, training volunteers, supporting a community garden, and employing youth in a summer job training program.

After bringing her class for a visit, Kindergarten teacher Anne Thomforde Thomas reflected, "We had a delightful time! One of the issues for many places that we go is in the management style/ability of the adults leading the activities and you folks were great! Starting in a circle, going around saying names of vegetables, dividing into two groups, and having lots of hands on stuff all made it a wonderful visit for me as well as the kids."



In 2006 MCF lead tours for:

- The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
- Farm Aid Urban Farm Bike Tour
- "Storm-water Management" group, New York City
- The Delaware Valley Progressive Planners Network
- The White Dog Café Foundation Urban Farm Tour
- Penn State Community Food Security Class
- University of Pennsylvania Environmental Studies class
- Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation Tour
- Philadelphia Water Department
- Department of Environmental Protection

We hosted field trips from:

- Rhoads Elementary School, fourth and fifth grade classes
- Saligman Schechter Middle School
- Locke Elementary School, fourth grade classes
- University City High School
- Friends Select School, Kindergarten
- Gompers Middle School, summer youth program
- Pepper Middle School, summer youth program
- Sayre High School
- Rhodes High School

The Farm employed and educated local youth in a summer job-training program, which provides the benefits of a stipend and college support through a partnership with the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships and the Philadelphia Youth Network's Workready program. The 2006 summer youth crew worked in the field and at the farm stand; hosted and taught visitors including adults, peers, and younger

camp groups; and installed a found-object mosaic on the toolshed under the direction of our visiting artist.

We had the privilege of working with a variety of youth development programs and volunteer organizations:

- The Work Group from Camden, NJ (10 times!)
- Job Corps
- University City Green
- Greater Philadelphia Cares
- APO, co-ed community service fraternity from the University of Pennsylvania
- Peace College, Raleigh, NC
- Urban Nutrition Initiative



In the spring of 2006, learning and applying natural cob-building techniques, over 50 community members of various ages helped construct the farm's toolshed over the course of several weeks. MCF also provided many other hands-on learning opportunities for the community. Over the course of the 2006 season, over 250 volunteers participated in activities at the farm. Not only does skill-share and volunteer programming serve MCF's mission of education and sustainable resource use, but it also helps foster greater interest, involvement, and a sense of community ownership of the project.

The farm site is also home to a community garden which has been active for over 15 years. During its first season, MCF built a strong relationship with the gardeners, mostly seniors from the neighborhood, and shared seeds, seedlings, produce, stories, and gardening tips. The farm also provided access to water for the gardeners.

Demonstration



MCF is an active demonstration site for ecological methods of living in an urban setting. As an urban farm, Mill Creek not only demonstrates a wide variety of locally viable crops, but also models many sustainable gardening techniques, including companion planting, crop rotation, composting, and cover cropping, that can be applied in nearby yards and community gardens. Beyond gardening, in 2006, the farm built an innovative toolshed featuring salvaged and recycled materials,

green building techniques including cob, a living roof that reduces stormwater runoff, a composting toilet that processes waste and produces fertilizer, a cistern for graywater collection, and a found object mosaic. A high school student constructed boxes for bats that will reduce insect pests and mosquitoes on site.



The farm site was formerly vacant land, collecting trash and prone to flooding. Improvements benefit the neighborhood through stormwater management and litter reduction. We pick up at least one large trash bag full of trash each week and have a trash can on the corner and to help reduce the amount of litter. Neighbors have commented, “You have it looking real nice over there. It’s a pleasure to walk out of the house now – better than before;” “It’s beauty for the neighborhood. We’ve been waiting for this for a long time;” and “You are doing a real nice job. You should get an award.”

In 2006, MCF staff attended the following events to develop our skills, network with others, and raise awareness of our project:

- Women’s Farm and Garden Association meeting, Ambler
- Joanna Macy event, Philadelphia
- Bread and Roses workshop, Philadelphia
- Mill Creek Health Fair, Philadelphia
- Women in Sustainable Agriculture conference, Burlington, VT
- Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture conference, State College
- Future of Food and Farms conference, Harrisburg
- Leading in Food Systems Training, (Food Trust/Food Project), Philadelphia
- Urban Agriculture field day, Pittsburgh
- Rhizome Collective Radical Urban Sustainability conference, Austin, TX
- Farmecology event, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
- Temple University Health Fair, Philadelphia
- Fair Food Local food expo at Reading Terminal Market, Philadelphia
- Beyond Oil Conference, Philadelphia
- Back to School Night, Rhoads Elementary School, Philadelphia
- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society Green City Youth teacher program, Philadelphia
- Community Food Security Coalition Conference, Vancouver, BC
- Global Exchange Urban Agriculture Research Delegation, Cuba
- North American Student Cooperative Association Conference, Ann Arbor, MI

MCF’s work interfaces with many other organizations. Some of our partners:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Pennsylvania Horticultural Society | • Mariposa Food Co-op |
| • The Urban Nutrition Initiative | • Community garden, Brown Street |
| • Philadelphia Water Department | • Chris Hill Media |
| • The Work Group | |
| • The Food Trust | |

Volunteers

Many thanks to all our volunteers. We could not have gotten this far without your help.

Jabrea
Corina Delman
Munir
Shaine
Towash
Tariq
Gabby
Tanisha
Mitchell Troutman
Susanna Urminska
Steve
Kit Basom
Kyana
Ciani
Anissa Weinraub
Beth Pulcinella
Dave Jonas
Ruth Holbook
Chip Malloy
Katherine Policy
Beth Nixon
Trevor Burgess
Wiley
Devin
Amber
David Siller
Bryanne Gordon
Andy Sweitzer
Jonathan Hamilton
Ben Straub
Danielle Redden
Leigh Seeleman
Erin Harvey
Ant
Dave Gooch
Gwen
Patrick
Ryan Kuck
Mira Kilpatrick
Steve Shelley
Nicole Shelley
Sue
Kadija
Joy Lawrence
Lelayna Klein
Jessica Manlin

Aden Manlin
Burdock
Daphne
Tashaun
William
Ali
Ash Robbins
Gina
Debbie Harris
Fred Kittleman
Scott Mechanic
Patty Lazos
Chris Hill
Keith
Sarah Green
Genevieve Sherrow
Catfish
Anya
Vermin
Eli
Naman Hampton
Hilary Glass
Travis Douglas
Jesse
Nati Passow
Kyle Johns
Antonio Ponce
LeRahn Bumbrey
Somalia Mitchell
Lance Wint
Nona Klotz
Lisa Barkowsky
Ashley Sahlberg
Jeff Zamoff
Zach Battle
Antoine Joyner
Nasir Gilliam
Rasheed Wilson
Kenny Ross
Luther Cherry
James
Kalil
Natasha Bussey
Tamika Sisco
Dante
Tony Larson
Aaron Maret
BJ Harden Jones
Becky Sutton
Nancy Diamond

Eric Kuhn
Adrienne Roberts
Nathaniel Tobin
Megan Silas
Mike Stevens
Jonathan Henderson
Shoshanna Narva
Tim Rennick
Rebecca
Lynn
Alanna Butler
Katya
Elizabeth Busch
Jen Rock
Jack Ohly
Paula Rashkow
Jasper Gardener
Katy Burgess
Dug
Amanda Leon
Joe Murray
Bob Beaty
Genevieve
Jimmy
Ashley
Desiree
April
Rochelle
Eduardo
Porsha
Miguel
Tamika
Tatiana
Tyesha
Luis
Rich
Cop
Sharee
Vivian
George
Victor
Joe
Morgan Andrews
Josh Goldenberg
Phil Forsyth
Amy Wilder
Nielle Hill
Rosa Goldberg
Nelson Brown
Anthony Williams
Erin Abrigo

Heather Brady
Molly Ribble
Michelle Ablamsky
Steven Haldeman
Leslie Yuan
Hui Du
Teresa Oh
Yin Lo
Harrison Kahn
Sally Yuan
Dave Jahnke
Annie Chung
Alexia Butcher
Johan Tatoy
Gurpreet Kalra
Felix Wang
Anna Lee
Steven Cifello
Maria Lacayo
Jaclyn Link
Liz Sokol
Steph Conten
Brooke Boyarsky
Abby Dosoretz
Brinda Alagesan
Ziyu Zhang
Andy Upright
Shine
Albert Cua
Madelyn Moyer
Brian Zeck
Annah Shapiro
Kristin Kirkland
Bonnie Robersau
Michelle Lucas
Tera Woodard-Lehman
Mira St. Clair
Jodi Lampley
Bonnie Cook
Laurene Callender
Clay Boggs
Miranda Resnick
Julia
Shanara
Katya
Meejain
Mandy

Leah Jo
Skugly
Juliette
Natalia
Hazel
Christine Pelletier
Rosy Frascella
Mike Hall
Juan
Randy
Virad
Raphael
William
Luz
Nina
Anthony
Devon
Adrienne
Jeremy
Helen
Kimberly
Kwame
Stacy
Yessina
Lion
Vance
Terrell
Ninabeau Wild
Kwame Baskerville
Banz
Suzanne
Jakey
Jen Coleclough
Molly Tsongas
Melissa E.
Frank Reis
Katy Wich
Doug Sherrill
Barbara Lewis
Hope Temple
Joanne Webb
Shelly Salamon
Aby Wright
Tom Ollila
Keanns
Lisa Mosca
Sharat Somashekara

C'Anne Anderson
Jeannie
Neva
Luce

Note: MCF has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list. If you notice an error or omission, please let us know. Please accept our sincere apologies. We do not have everyone's full name recorded.



Press

“The Plot Thickens,” *Philadelphia Weekly*, July 19-25, 2006

Funding

In kind support:

- Philadelphia Water Department
- Urban Nutrition Initiative
- Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
- Chris Hill Media
- High Mowing Seeds
- Fairmount Park
- Joy Lawrence
- Mike Stevens

Private donors:

- Marjie Findlay and Geoff Freeman
- Lucille Alderman

Foundation support:

- The Claneil Foundation
- The Chace Fund
- The Union Benevolent Association

MCF is an environmental education farm that is part of a not-for-profit supported by private donations and grants. Additionally, produce sales partially defray operating costs for the farm project.

Mill Creek Farm Budget Report 2006

Revenue and Support	
Grants	
Union Benevolent Association	\$3,000
Chace Fund	\$3,000
Claneil Foundation	\$15,000
Jennifer McNeil / Claneil Foundation	\$5,000
<i>subtotal</i>	\$26,000
Other	
Produce Sales	\$1,587
Private donations	\$10,500
School Tours	\$150
Interest	\$4
<i>subtotal</i>	\$12,241
Total Revenue	\$38,241
In Kind Support	\$137,449
Total Revenue and Support	\$175,690
Expenses	
Salaries and benefits	\$25,331
Administrative/communications	\$230
Agricultural supplies	\$929
Education supplies	\$17
Fundraising expenses	\$125
Other direct costs	\$618
Capital expenses	\$1,098
Total Expenses	\$28,348

Board of Directors

Glen Abrams
Philadelphia Water Department

Bob Beaty
American Soil/Provenance

Lorelle Becton
Lo's Products, LLC

Cory Bowman
Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania

Hayward Ford
Aspen Farms Community Garden

Danny Gerber
Urban Nutrition Initiative

Chris Hill
Chris Hill Media

Jane Horwitz
Penn Science Teacher Institute, University of Pennsylvania

Esteban Kelly
Mariposa Cooperative

Lisa Mosca
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Jill Roberts
Project Home

Mill Creek Farm Staff:

Jade Walker, Co-director
Johanna Rosen, Co-director