

Urban Gardening Volunteer Fact Sheet

Thank you for your interest in learning more about serving with our Urban Gardening program at **The Pittsburgh Project**. This fact sheet should provide you with answers to some frequently asked questions about volunteering on this team. Please call *Ginny Giles, Volunteer Resources Manager* at 412-321-1678 ext. 134 or email her at vgiles@pittsburghproject.org for answers to any further questions. For more information about the vision and programs of **The Pittsburgh Project**, please visit our website at www.pittsburghproject.org. Our volunteers are vital to our work in the city. We hope you will join us!

What is the Vision and Purpose of The Pittsburgh Project?

Our **vision** statement reads “That Pittsburgh will be called a City of Truth, where once again, men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets, each with cane in hand because of age, and where the city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.” (from Zechariah 8:4-5)

Our **purpose** statement reads, “We develop servant leaders and uphold the dignity of vulnerable homeowners.”

What is the Urban Gardening program?

Our Urban Gardening program, Lots of Hope, was born out of our vision for justice and restoration in our community. In our urban neighborhood, we are seeking to restore unsafe blighted property to land rich with productivity and beauty. We desire to be good stewards of God’s creation. We seek to offer a hands-on education to our students, teaching them the importance of good nutrition and good stewardship while teaching them marketable job skills. Lots of Hope is producing healthy, wholesome fruits and vegetables to sell to our neighbors at our Farmers’ Market. We are dreaming and working toward the day when “justice will rule in the wilderness and righteousness in the fertile field. And this righteousness will bring peace. Quietness and confidence will fill the land forever. God’s people will live in safety, quietly at home. They will be at rest.” (Isaiah 32:16-18). The program is made up of three very different areas: Community Outreach, Youth Development, and Organic Food Production.

When do you need volunteers for the Urban Gardening program?

Our Farming season goes from **April** to **October** and we will be setting up volunteer work days for groups (maximum of 20 people) throughout that time. Help is especially needed during the work week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but Saturday work days are helpful as well. Contact us to arrange a specific time. If you come to work for just one day, the day will typically begin at 8:30 AM and end by 3:30.

What if I want to be more involved in the Garden program?

Currently, we have a few more involved volunteer positions for people who are interested in serving on a more consistent basis. They are:

Constant Gardeners: These volunteers will receive some basic training and are committed to serving at least once or twice a month

Lead Volunteer Gardener: These volunteers will receive more advanced training and are committed to serving on a near-weekly basis

Garden Program Apprentice/Intern: These volunteers will receive comprehensive training and are committed to serving at least three days per week. During the summer, this position is available as an unpaid Internship along with free room and board at the Pittsburgh Project.

Where do I go to serve?

Participants meet at our site on the North Side of the city, located at **2801 North Charles Street** in a building that was formerly Annunciation Catholic School. We have been nestled into this warm urban neighborhood for the past fourteen years. Our orientations take place here and the service projects will take place at one of

the numerous planting locations around our campus. A map and directions to our facility are located on our website: www.pittsburghproject.org.

Are there any age requirements for participating?

Due to the nature of the work, we would ask that, primarily, those who would like to participate should be over 18 years of age. Those under the age of 18 must have a parent complete a permission form. This signed form must be brought with them on the day of their designated project, in order for them to participate.

For groups of students under the age of 18 we ask that high school groups provide an adult to student ratio of 1:7 and for middle school groups we ask for a ratio of 1:5.

Will there be an orientation to explain what I will be doing?

Yes, for one-day service projects, the orientation takes place at **8:30 AM**. Several of our staff members will be here to greet you and orient you to the day's activities as well as to answer any questions and concerns you may have. It is important that you and your group arrive in time for this orientation. *Individuals that will be volunteering more than once will receive an orientation on their first day.

What kinds of projects might I be doing?

Our garden work projects are largely determined by the season. In early spring, we will be working to prepare garden beds and to transplant seedlings outdoors. In the summer, our work will predominantly be focused on garden maintenance (i.e. pulling weeds, staking tomatoes, fertilizing plants) and also on harvesting our produce and preparing for market. In the fall, we are busy with the work of clearing beds, composting garden waste, and continuing to maintain our fall crops. Throughout the growing season, other special projects may arise such as developing new garden areas, painting sheds, fixing fences, etc.

Who will supervise the work projects?

A team member from The Pittsburgh Project staff will facilitate group work days.

What should I bring with me that day?

Please bring your lunch with you that day, and a beverage to drink. Bring work gloves if you have them and please wear whatever you would be comfortable wearing outside for a day in the dirt (long pants and close-toed shoes are suggested). Rain boots would be helpful if the weather has been wet recently, as the planting areas tend to be muddy. Also, *sunscreen* is important, seeing as we will be working outside all day. *If you are under 18, please remember to bring your signed permission slip.*

Is there a cost for participating in an Urban Gardening project?

There is no cost for these work days; however, donations to our program are welcome.

What happens if it rains?

Due to the nature of the work, on days that are unbearably rainy, we cannot guarantee that there will be other work for your group to do. Though there may be other indoor projects available to do, we cannot guarantee an alternative project. If we think that the day's weather report is ominous, we will call you ahead of time to discuss rescheduling or cancelling the work day. Often times we do work in the rain, so come prepared!

How do I sign up?

Please contact Ginny Giles, Volunteer Resources Manager at 412-321-1678 x134 or vgiles@pittsburghproject.org. We look forward to working with you!