



For Immediate Release: June 2, 2014

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Phipps Receives PCRG Community Development Award for Homegrown
Pittsburgh public garden honored for urban edible garden program efforts.

Pittsburgh, Pa. — [Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens](#) is pleased to announce that it has received a 2014 Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG) [Community Development Award](#) for [Homegrown](#), a new edible garden outreach initiative. Presented annually at the Community Development Summit to recognize outstanding achievement in the revitalization of urban neighborhoods in Greater Pittsburgh, these awards celebrate projects that create a positive, lasting impact on the physical, social or cultural fabric of a community.

Launched in 2013, Homegrown was developed to provide assistance to underserved areas of Pittsburgh, aiming to increase access to fresh produce in food deserts, promote better food choices, and improve the overall health of families and children. These goals are accomplished by providing mentorship, education and resources to community members, and establishing home edible gardens.

Partnering with the Homewood-Brushton YMCA in its pilot year, Homegrown first focused its efforts in the neighborhood of Homewood, equipping 10 households with a total of 24 raised beds and 391 square feet of growing space. As part of these efforts, Phipps also collaborated with Pittsburgh JobCorps to build and install the gardens, while giving local students hands-on experience. Each participating family received these services, as well as soil, seeds, plants and gardening tools, free of charge.

“In addition to creating green sites for cultivation, Homegrown seeks to hone beneficiaries’ skills and knowledge so that they can continue growing on their own for years to come,” explains Richard V. Piacentini, executive director of Phipps. “Covering everything from weed management to the culinary possibilities of Swiss chard, monthly edible gardening workshops and cooking classes held at the YMCA not only empower gardeners to realize the full potential of their raised beds but also offer opportunities for like-minded neighbors to connect. Ultimately, we hope to inspire them to become mentors, too!”

With garden installations beginning again in Homewood this past April, the Homegrown team hopes to double their efforts here in 2014 and are looking to expand to the Hill District in the near future. New this year is also [a series of challenges](#) to immerse residents all over the city and region, especially children, in issues related to gardening and health. More about the initiative can be found [here](#).

About Phipps: Founded in 1893, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh, Pa. is a green leader among public gardens with a mission to inspire and educate all with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and promote human and environmental well-being through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse. Learn more: phipps.conservatory.org.

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