

Athens Land Trust



685 North Pope Street • Athens, Georgia 30601-2331
Telephone: 706.613.0122 • Fax: 706.613.0143
www.athenslandtrust.org

Nov. 3, 2010

Contact: Kate Austin, (706) 613-0122, kate@athenslandtrust.org

Athens Land Trust receives three-year grant to establish community garden network in Athens, Georgia

Athens Land Trust has received a three-year, \$287,690 grant from the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture to establish a network of community gardens in Athens, Georgia. The overarching goal of the Athens community garden initiative is to provide healthy, nutritious food for low-income families (including children, the elderly, and minority populations) by providing opportunities to grow their own food.

On Wednesday, Dec. 1 at 4:30 p.m. ALT will hold a kick-off celebration and ground-breaking at the Athens Community Council on Aging, the site of the initiative's first project. The celebration is free and open to all.

ALT was one of just twenty-seven organizations throughout the country selected to receive a grant as part of NIFA's Community Food Projects program, which funds projects that build community food systems and fight hunger and food insecurity.

Working in close collaboration with the University of Georgia Horticulture Department, as well as a number of community partners including the Athens-Clarke County Extension Office; Athens Community Council on Aging; Casa de Amistad; Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful; People of Hope Cooperative, Inc.; and PLACE (Promoting Local Agriculture and Cultural Experiences), and with additional support from the Athens Area Community Foundation, ALT will take the lead in the creation of two major "hub" gardens, which will serve as demonstration and teaching sites, and will help interested community groups to establish multiple satellite gardens throughout the community.

The first of the garden "hubs" will be an intergenerational community garden to be constructed at the Athens Community Council on Aging, with additional support from Action, Inc. It will be designed to accommodate gardeners with disabilities, and excess food grown will be used for food distribution programs.

According to ALT Executive Director Nancy Stangle, the timing couldn't be better for this initiative. "So many needs and opportunities have come together to make this project

(MORE)

possible,” she said. “With Athens’ high poverty rate, access to nutritious fresh food is difficult for many people. Providing an opportunity for families to grow their own food will not only save them money, it will improve nutrition and offer the option of outdoor exercise. And with the growing popularity of the local and sustainable food movement, there are so many individuals and groups who want to be involved.”

Athens Land Trust, a nonprofit organization founded in 1994, promotes quality of life through integration of community and the natural environment by preserving land, creating energy-efficient and affordable housing, and revitalizing neighborhoods. In addition to the conservation program, which is certified by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission, ALT has developed over 100 affordable housing units in Athens-Clarke County and provides homebuyer education and housing counseling services. ALT has helped several low-income neighborhood groups to establish community gardens since 2003.

More information about ALT is available at www.athenslandtrust.org. More information about the 2010 NIFA Community Food Project grants is available at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/newsroom/news/2010news/10271_community_foods.html.

##