



**What is a Unity Garden?** Most people are familiar with the concept of a “community garden.” These are gardens where a group of people come together to grow food for themselves (i.e. A church group growing for their parishioners or a neighborhood garden growing for only the volunteers). A Unity Garden is different. Planted by volunteers, but open to the public for harvest without restrictions, Unity Gardens are for sharing freely. By creating a safety net for those needing access to fresh produce and creating community gathering areas, we all become part of improving our community and each other. Unity Gardens are committed to growing food, growing health, growing community, and growing together! We are grateful for your interest in creating an edible park that serves as a dignified free food model.

### **Requirements:**

1. **Diversity:** Unity Gardens are dedicated to connecting our community to each other. The garden must be inclusive in the planning and planting. For example: A lone *family* growing a garden in their own backyard would not be a Unity Garden unless they involve neighbors or others. A school, community center, religious organization or any group would meet these criteria.
2. **Sharing:** Unity Gardens are dedicated to connecting our community to healthy food. The gardens should be available and welcoming for harvesting and gathering to the public.
3. **Involvement:** Unity Gardens are dedicated to improving health. To publicize the work that all our volunteer garden leaders and teams are doing, it is important that you communicate with us, sharing photos, letting us know your regular volunteer days and informing us of any questions or concerns. We also appreciate you sharing our events, classes, and newsletter to encourage broad participation. It is ideal to have a representative attend at least a few of our events each year.
4. **Commitment:** Once designated and initiated as a Unity Garden, it is your obligation to properly maintain the garden and manage the upkeep. There are several ways to facilitate successfully achieving this:
  - Publicize and keep regular weekly or more volunteer days
  - Start small and grow as your volunteer base grows
  - Reach out to others: neighbors, businesses, organizations, schools, etc.
  - Communicate regularly with Katie and Sara and pay attention to emails from Unity Gardens

### **First Steps:**

1. Have your group, or team, attend a Unity presentation or take a guided tour of the LaSalle Square Unity Garden to create a common culture. Unity Gardens are about more than the food. It is important to have a team focused on inclusion and empowerment.
2. Invite us to see your garden site so we can plan for the future and map out the space.
3. Pick up seeds and plant starts from our Welcome Center on 3701 Prast Blvd. We'll let you know when they're ready.
4. Provide us with your garden name, address, garden leader's phone name, phone number, and email and any other information you'd like us to share with our community. When we receive inquiries regarding the neighborhood Unity gardens, we'll guide people your way.
5. Stay in contact with us, attending social hours, classes, events, follow us on social media and share your successes and challenges with us!

Welcome!!!

Katie Lane Director of Operations 914-539-1809

Sara Stewart RN MSN Executive Director 574-315-4361