



Comment, blog & share photos

[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#) | [Search people](#)powered by you and **THE TENNESSEAN**

Garden brings good health

Vandy med students bring veggies to McFerrin Park

By Nancy DeVillie • THE TENNESSEAN • June 1, 2009

[Post a Comment](#) [Recommend](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#) [?](#)

While volunteering at the **Shade Tree Clinic** in East Nashville, Sabina Poon and Michael Wolf noticed the increasing number of patients battling diabetes and hypertension.

ADVERTISEMENT The first year, **Vanderbilt University** medical students came up with the idea of creating a community garden in the McFerrin Park neighborhood to promote healthy living.

The project, called VEGI, the **Vanderbilt Educational Garden Initiative**, is at 225 Berry St. behind the Salvation Army Chapel.

"East Nashville is a pretty severe food desert with little or no access to fresh fruit and vegetables," Wolf said. "In medical school, we learned about the distribution of diseases that are related to one's diet. These diseases have a higher incidence in areas that are a food desert.

"We see this as an extension of our medical education. We see it as a way to expand the reach of medical professionals out into the community at large. It's a great way to have much closer interaction with a wider group of people."

The students solicited donations from Southern Nurseries and Lowe's, both on Dickerson Pike, contributed vegetable seeding, including peppers, tomatoes, blueberry bushes and flowers. A local nursery donated the soil and the group of students used recycled lumber to build a series of raised beds.

"We want to provide a small amount of fruit and vegetables, but we really want the emphasis to be on education," Wolf said. "We are planning to hold classes at the community center on healthy cooking and eating.

"It's really the community's garden. We are just working with them to help it grow."

Residents Get Involved

Jim Harney, a resident of the McFerrin Park neighborhood, said the community garden not only promotes healthy eating, but also camaraderie among residents.



Sabrina Poon, left, Justin Gregg, Dean Bonnie Miller and Benjamin Dean plant in McFerrin Park.

SUBMITTED BY CAROLE BARTOO / MONROE CARELL JR. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Photo Galleries & Multimedia



- [Slideshow: CSA spring & summer produce](#)
- [Shop smart at farmers markets](#)
- [Buy organic produce wisely](#)
- [Skip organic on this produce](#)

Related Articles

[Councilman Holleman files garden bill](#)
[Councilman Holleman files garden bill](#)

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Food Security Partners of Middle Tennessee is sponsoring a citywide community garden. The tour is intended to raise awareness about community gardens in Nashville. For more information about time and date or to RSVP, call 615-322-5638.

There will be a public hearing on the community garden bill at the Metro Council meeting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 7.

"I've seen some residents get involved and have been going to water the garden," he said. "It's expensive to eat healthy, and this is a good way for people on limited incomes to be able to.

"These kids are already helping by providing free health care, and this is just another way they can show people how to change their lifestyle."

Cassi Johnson, director of the Food Security Partners of Middle Tennessee, said easy access to affordable, healthy food is critical to health and wellbeing.

"Community gardens make neighborhoods healthier by building connections among neighbors, providing access to affordable, healthy food, and promoting physical activity," she said.

"The fact that these students helped establish a community garden as part of their education and practice as future physicians and medical researchers demonstrates a broad view of health that is very far-sighted."

Contact Nancy DeVille at 615-259-8304 or ndeville@tennessean.com.

In Your Voice | Read reactions to this story

Hide Comments ▲






POWERED BY 

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)






1000 characters left

Submit

More my.tn headlines

- Nashville is chock-full of Fourth of July events 
- Firefly festival gets early start today 
- Hendersonville could opt out of guns in parks  (1)
- Triathletes get ready for 8th Hendersonville race 
- Sumner school board chair 'alarmed' by job cuts 

Latest headlines

- Police investigating suspicious liquid at Nashville synagogue  (5)
- Huge hometown date for Kings of Leon announced 
- Lady Antebellum, Kellie Pickler and Darius Rucker tapped for CMT Awards 
- Fired THP lieutenant wants his job back  (4)
- Father and son charged in boating theft  (2)

Related news from the Web

- Life
- Home Gardening
- Fruits
- Food
- Home
- Vegetables
- Vanderbilt University
- Powered by [Topix.net](#)

ADS BY PULSE 360

[Get Listed Here](#)

AARP Auto Insurance From The Hartford

Over 50? Save \$388 on Your Auto Insurance In Minutes w/ The Hartford.

AARP.TheHartford.com

Nashville Mortgage Protection Insur.

Pays off your mortgage in the event of your death. Get a free quote!

www.NAALife.com

Now's a Great Time to Buy a Home!

Take advantage of the 8K tax credit for and low interest rates.

www.AmeliaScruggs.com

Top Jobs



Top Jobs

Top Sales Professionals

US-TN-Nashville
Senior Import Buyer
Confidential
US-TN-Nashville
Tube Mill Operators, Management

Top Cars



2007 Toyota Prius.

Top Homes



\$405,000, 6 bedroom, 2 full baths,

Advertisements