Legislation Text

File #: 210339, **Version:** 0

..Title
Honoring and recognizing community garden leaders for their stewardship and service on the occasion of Earth Day 2021.

..Body
WHEREAS, The crisis of climate change continues to threaten the health and wellbeing of the planet and the citizens of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of Philadelphians struggle with food insecurity, which has only worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia, but primarily its Black and brown communities, is experiencing a gun violence crisis; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's immigrant communities struggle to access resources due to language barriers, the digital divide, and other structural challenges; and

WHEREAS, Community gardens address all of these challenges by creating safe, community-driven green spaces where residents can grow fresh, nutritious food, gather with neighbors, and partake in physical activity and skill building; and

WHEREAS, Community gardens are operated across the City by community leaders who work to address community needs through gardening; and

WHEREAS, City agencies, non-profits, community-based organizations, and individuals invest resources to provide community gardeners with supports needed to continue their positive impacts in their neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, Holly Street Neighbors Community Garden is a living memorial to honor its founder Winnie Harris, who was tragically murdered in February 2017; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Winnie Harris was a pillar in her West Philadelphia community and an advocate for creating greener, better educated communities, free of gun violence; and

WHEREAS, The Holly Street Neighbors Community Garden has been an official community garden for over fifteen years, but the plots have been used by community members for decades; and

WHEREAS, The Holly Street Neighbors Community Garden makes plots available to beginners and opens their doors on Volunteer Work Days, creating an inter-generational space for newcomers and experienced gardeners to work together; and

WHEREAS, The Holly Street Neighbors gardeners have demonstrated their resilience and determination to protect their community space as it has faced development pressure for years. Now, Neighborhood Gardens Trust, Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, and Councilmember Gauthier are working to permanently protect this important community space; and

WHEREAS, The Growing Home Gardens in South Philadelphia were created a decade ago to address nutritional deficiencies seen in newly arriving refugees, afford newcomers with the opportunity to grow culturally relevant crops, and to root people in their new neighborhoods, primarily serving Burmese, Karen, and Bhutanese refugee families; and

WHEREAS, Neighborhood Gardens Trust worked with Councilmember Squilla, SEAMAAC, and gardeners themselves to preserve the Growing Home Gardens, and it is now managed and supported by the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation, SEAMAAC, and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society; and

WHEREAS, Refugees often experience significant loss and trauma and Growing Home Gardens are a dedicated space for these gardeners to meet and gather together, find healing, and pass on agricultural traditions; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society has worked with the Growing Home Gardens to find local sources of seeds and seedlings for culturally significant produce, such as Thai chili peppers, bitter eggplant, mustard greens, and chin baung, which are provided free of charge; and

WHEREAS, Community gardens across the City are vital spaces that create safe havens for those who have experienced trauma, help reduce gun violence, allow for skill building and physical activity, increase access to healthy food, and build resilience against climate change; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors and recognizes community garden leaders for their stewardship and service on the occasion of Earth Day 2021.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Engrossed copies of this resolution will be presented to the Holly Street Neighbors Community Garden and the Growing Home Gardens, further evidencing the sincere respect of this legislative body.

..End

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