

Baltimore Green Space News

preserving neighborhoods' treasured open spaces



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What's in the Works at Baltimore Green Space?

- We are currently in the acquisition phase with Brentwood Commons, a beautiful open sitting area that serves residents who face onto this inner-block space. In our acquisition phase, we work with City government or private owners to transfer title to lots in community use to Baltimore Green Space.
- We are also in the acquisition phase for the third of three lots that make up the Upper Fells Point Improvement Association's community garden. We acquired the first two lots before Baltimore City set a \$1 price for community-managed land being sold to qualified land trusts. The third lot was privately owned, with a lot of money owed to City government. The City foreclosed on the lot, and Baltimore Green Space is now working with the City to acquire the lot.
- We are now in our due diligence phase for two vegetable gardens. During this phase, we want to make sure that sites are in a good position to endure for the long term, that they provide important benefits to the neighborhood, and that any risks posed by the soil are being dealt with appropriately.

For neighborhoods, the primary benefit of working with Baltimore Green Space is that they know their urban oases will not be re-developed. In addition, protected sites receive liability insurance, and we provide technical assistance to all the sites we work with. We also do a lot of advocacy, aiming to ensure that City policies support the volunteers who improve Baltimore by greening their neighborhoods.

Looking for...financial expertise

We are currently looking for people who can provide us with some financial expertise. In particular, it's time for us to ready ourselves for a financial review, and we could use some advice! We are also in search of folks with bookkeeping or accounting skills. This is a great way to contribute to the greening of Baltimore without getting dirty!

Community Space Spotlight: **BRENTWOOD COMMONS**



In 2000, this was an abandoned garage. After a fire destroyed the building, it became a dumping ground.

Now, Brentwood Commons is a beautiful sitting garden and back yard for the houses that abut it. New Greenmount East residents have created a shared grassy yard where they can play ball, have picnics, and enjoy sun and birds.

Baltimore Green Space is currently working to protect Brentwood Commons.

Learn More

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The Miracle on Duncan Street

If you ask caretaker Lewis Sharpe about the miracle of the Duncan Street Miracle Garden, you might expect him to mention that the garden has lasted almost twenty-five years – or that it exists at all, on land that was once a dangerous dumping ground. But Sharpe had something else in mind when he named this half-acre of land.

“We grow a little bit of everything here,” he likes to say. And it’s true. In these plots you’re likely to find not just broccoli and kale, but a surprising diversity of plants: a fruit cocktail tree, a potato-tomato hybrid plant, even two-foot-long corn.

And the diversity of the Miracle Garden goes beyond its produce. Sharpe, one of the original founders, has also gathered a healthy crop of gardeners, who, despite their different backgrounds and ages, are all enthusiastic members of the garden’s community.

Some members started green, like Anita, her husband Peter, and their children Noah and Jade, when they began gardening here four years ago. With Sharpe’s guidance, their pumpkins and peppers were soon winning ribbons at an annual agricultural competition, and now the kids each bring home several ribbons every year.

Not everyone was inexperienced. Ivy Parsons, a master gardener and artist, first got involved in the Miracle Garden over four years ago, when she donated her students’ brightly painted birdhouses to help beautify the garden. She often puts in long hours watering and weeding, and has created sculptures for other community sites around the city.

Another founding member, George Howard, first learned to garden by taking care of his grandmother’s flowers. Today, using his somewhat secret methods,

Lewis Sharpe, Local Hero

Congratulations to Lewis Sharpe, site manager at the Duncan Street Miracle Garden. On November 3, 2011, he was presented with the Bank of America’s Local Hero Award for his work at the garden and with his church and his community association.

According to the Bank of America, Local Heroes represent the “highest standards in community service.”



Jade works in her family’s plot at the Duncan Street Miracle Garden

he regularly grows a bumper crop of produce. Last year, he said, he could have filled a trash can with his string beans.

And then there is Sharpe himself, who since retirement has spent every day he can at the garden. He has not yet lost his enthusiasm for working hard, growing exotic produce, and, every now and then, resting under the mulberry tree.

From this diversity of gardeners – and from Sharpe’s trombone-shaped zucchinis – it is clear that the garden has brought together a real variety of life. It is an accomplishment that any community garden would be proud of, and just one of the miracles of the Duncan Street Miracle Garden.

Mr. Sharpe was recognized at a reception at the Baltimore Aquarium, and was given the opportunity to direct a \$5,000 donation to a nonprofit. We’re proud that Mr. Sharpe chose Baltimore Green Space, and we look forward to working with Mr. Sharpe to determine how the funds will be used.