

October 13, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

The West Virginia State University Extension Service, Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Area are glad to support the Huntington Community Gardens organization in their pursuit of the Healthy Sprouts Grant. Serving as a State Coordinator for the Junior Master Gardener Program in West Virginia, my overall goal is to promote the program and all of its merits statewide. Through interaction in the past with the Huntington Community Gardens organization on the program, we are proud of the working relationship that has developed and that will only be enhanced through this interaction.

The parameters set within this grant application fall right in line with the overall goals of the Junior Master Gardener curriculum, especially Health and Nutrition Garden. Emphasis is not only placed on the incorporation of healthy eating habits into a child's daily practice, it also works to instill knowledge of how to grow your own food and prepare it at home- a skill that can last a lifetime. WVSU Extension Service, ANR Program Area is willing to provide consultation garden construction as well as work with the various entities involved to present the Junior Master Program activities to the youth at the AD Lewis Center and promote interaction within the garden settings.

With a push over the past few years toward sustainability and self-sufficiency, I can not think of a better way to instill in our youth the importance of growing your own food and the sense of community that can arise from such a simple interaction. If this program is awarded one of the grant awards, I am sure that the granting agency will be impressed with the end result. It is important to bring this education to the youth of the Huntington area, especially now that it has been denoted as the unhealthiest city in America. There is only room to improve from this standing and I feel that this program has the capability to start the ball rolling in the right direction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Stewart
West Virginia State University Extension Service
Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent
Junior Master Gardener State Coordinator