

CCGA Planning Retreat 2017

Saturday September 30th, 2017

Venue: Christy Webber Farm & Garden
2834 West Grand Avenue, Chicago, IL 60612

Retreat Attendees

JW Glass, Greenhouse Garden
Bea Jasper, Get Gardening in Englewood
Angela Taylor, Garfield Park Garden Network/Fulton Flower & Vegetable Garden
Cordia Pugh, Hermitage St. Community Garden
Pat Hart, Sherwood Peace Garden & Paradise Garden
Mamie Grey, North Lawndale Greening Comm.
Kimberly George, Chicago Youth Centers
Qae-Dah Muhammad, hadeaq@gmail.com
Julie Samuels, CCGA
Alice Stallworth, Lawndale Triangle Garden
Kathy F. (Figel - ?), Edna White Community Garden
Harrietta, harrietta53@aol.com
Barb Dennis, Cottage Place Gardens
Anna Kong, Bridgeport Victory Garden
Vera Videnovich, Videnovich Farms
Lorraine K. Lakeview Community Garden
Brandie Booker, Community Youth Development Institute
Robin Cline, NeighborSpace
Gina Jamison, Kuumba Tre Am Garden
Robert Hart, Sherwood Peace Garden
Scott Starzec, Frankie Machine Garden

Self Assessment

What is one thing you feel is currently working well with CCGA?

- Plant distributions (quick, efficient, less stress, full circle, etc..);
- Providing resources;
- All volunteer organization many participate;
- Annual meeting/conference;
- Monthly email newsletter;
- Education Committee workshops;
- Survived as an organization for many years now: all volunteer, still motivated, common bond among gardeners;

What is one thing you feel is not working/should be better?

- Each committee needs to ask for help if they need resources from another committee facilitating inter-communication amongst committees'
- Better coordination and communication between committees;
- Cordial conduct, respect & trust at all times;
- When decisions are made by coordinating comm how to insure they are carried out;
- Facilitate skill sharing;
- Meeting structure: give each committee an opportunity to take lead at meeting: to develop leaders and create relationships;
- Public calendar is not up to date;
- Internal event calendar needs to be updated and maintained;
- Handle requests from public for assistance, which emails, who reviews?
- Governance:
 - no formal by-laws;
- Membership:
 - have CCGA membership/recruitment table at events;
 - recruiting new members;
 - Facilitate skill sharing and communication between members;
- Plant Distributions:
 - hold plant distributions at different gardens and throughout the city;
 - need more than one person at registration table;
 - plant identification at the distributions; follow up education;
 - post plant lists from distributions on web site;
 - Adhere to plant distribution rules;

- Education:
 - more workshops throughout the year;
 - education and support to start gardens and sustain themselves: guidance through education;
- Communications:
 - better maintenance of partners events on calendar - ability to input event themselves;
 - Update website with current information;
 - Improve public relations: marketing publications;
- Community garden education and support;
- Recruitment; solicitation and coordination of volunteers;
- Events need to be scheduled and on the calendar of events;

What is one thing you would like to develop as a new idea for CCGA?

- Identifiable attire/button/hat etc...;
- Coordination of volunteers into gardens;
- Invited speaker program;
- Use of a list-serve for CCGA;
- Garden tours;
- Contact and management of volunteers for CCGA events, possibly committee or listserve;
- take credit cards at events (check Public Good);
- hold coordinating meetings at gardens;
- Process for recommendations in coordinating meetings;
- meetings at gardens with garden members;
- Facilitate better inter garden networking/communication/participation possibly using website;
- Build our own CCGA greenhouse;
- Solicit feedback from distribution participants;
- Education:
 - partner with educational institution for course credit;
 - service learning internships with high schools or Loyola Univ in their sustainability program;
 - provide organizational assistance and educational training to gardens and follow up through a growing season; new gardener training;
 - better involvement of youth, youth gardens;
- Fundraising:
 - ongoing solicitation of funders;
 - better define responsibilities of development/finance committee;
 - define clear targets for spending, which evolves into fundraising budget: mini grants for gardens;
 - PR support for fundraising;

Governance Discussion

- Need for accurate representative mission statement;

Current Model

Pros

- Model remains active and is still working;
- Allows flexibility to respond to needs/events;
- Allows individuals to get involved as their time and interests allow;
- Model drives us to reach a consensus;

Cons

- Harder to achieve accountability;
- Ad-hoc participation among individuals is unpredictable;
- Time;

Traditional (more formal) Model

Pros

- Familiar model, things more formalized

Cons

- None recorded (?)

Membership Discussion

Why should CCGA adopt a membership model?

- dues revenue;
- possibly getting more gardeners involved in the work of CCGA;
- does having members give CCGA more credibility?
 - Sustainability
 - Concrete numbers
 - Members are more invested

What does it mean to be a CCGA member?

- I am a sponsor and supporter of/for community gardens;

What are the benefits of being a CCGA member?

- Tangible: conf., partner networking, mug, discounts, bag, swank, etc...;
- Part of a larger organization,
- Intangibles: status, branding

What are the responsibilities of members?

- Participation in CCGA events;
- Offer and lead tours;
- Uphold core CCGA values;