



NEWS

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION • County of Los Angeles
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For Immediate Release

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URBAN GARDEN IN LONG BEACH WINS STATE-WIDE AWARD OF MERIT

California State Association of Counties Recognizes
The Growing Experience as a Creative and Effective Way
to Provide Services to County Residents

Long Beach – On September 18, 2011, The Growing Experience (TGE) Urban Farm located at the Carmelitos Public Housing Development (Carmelitos) in the City of Long Beach, and operated by the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA), received an Award of Merit from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). TGE was one of Los Angeles County's seven successful award entries. The CSAC Challenge Awards recognize the innovative and creative spirit of California county governments that find new and effective ways of providing programs and services to their citizens.

Over 700 families reside at Carmelitos which is comprised of approximately 60 acres, with over 80,000 residents in the adjacent North Long Beach community. Residents of this under-served community have limited options for healthy food, as there is no major grocery store in the neighborhood. Additionally, many individuals, including senior residents, have limited mobility and transportation.



TGE supplies fresh nutritious produce for a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program, through which produce is harvested weekly, packed in individual orders, and picked up directly from the farm by participants. This results in a wider variety of produce being consumed, eliminates the middleman and food miles traveled, and connects people directly with the food source. Nearly 100 families participate in the affordable CSA program, which includes simple recipe ideas and nutrition facts about each item in the week's harvest. In so doing, they are able to break away from the cycle of relying on fast food restaurants and convenience marts as their primary meal option.

TGE consists of 4.5 acres of sustainable agricultural crop production, and a 2.5-acre community garden for low-income residents to grow their own food. TGE has become a regional resource for eco-friendly, sustainable practices, including the implementation of a native and drought-tolerant demonstration garden which uses no chemical pesticides or fertilizers, a composting program, rain barrels to harvest rainwater, and solar landscape lighting.

Sean Rogan, Executive Director of the HACoLA stated, "I am extremely proud of TGE and its accomplishments. The value of this multiple award-winning program extends beyond the aesthetics of a lush community garden; TGE promotes a healthy lifestyle by placing nutritious food within the reach of low-income residents who may otherwise not be able to enjoy such wholesome food options."

The seven Los Angeles County award recipients will be recognized by the Board of Supervisors at an upcoming Board Meeting. The date is still to be determined.

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