

FRIENDS OF CULVERHOUSE COMMUNITY GARDEN

Dear Friends,

January 2014

Last Thursday night more than 30 members of our Culverhouse Community Garden assembled at the County Extension Service's Twin Lakes facility to share a brief history of the garden and offer up suggestions toward building a vision for the near and long range future of this amazing project.

Thanks go to everyone who attended, and to those who wanted to be there, but had other conflicting commitments. Co-manager, Marcia Freeman gave a synopsis of our history, recent accomplishments, and current financial position. Member, John Kestly, lead us in a interesting "brainstorming" process, which brought out some very valuable information and ideas. The leadership is now working up a couple of items for distribution to the full membership as outcomes of this meeting.

Soon you will have the opportunity to **participate in a survey**. The purpose will be to share the many points raised in our "visioning brainstorm" meeting, and to help us prioritize issues. Another goal of this survey is to offer an opportunity to garner further ideas and input from those that were not able to attend or from those that did, but have something more to say. Please take a few minutes to do the survey when it comes out. Input from each and everyone is highly desired. Results will be analyzed and another document will be distributed soon afterward summarizing our current "vision."

If I may, as current Chair of the Friends of Culverhouse Community Garden, I would like to offer my perspective on what happened, and comment on where we are as a community:

- Our meeting participation level was proof of a strong and viable community project.
- We have a committed and excited group of widely experienced gardeners.
- There is a developing base of common denominator expectations, yet still diverse opinions.
- We have a very unique garden due to design, size, location, and management style.
- The founders and leaders want to encourage new ideas, projects, and connections.
- We are integral part of a larger community in Sarasota and beyond.
- Use of the Internet for internal communication and external outreach is a real opportunity.
- Our financial needs are minimal now, but will develop and require additional fundraising.
- Our garden is a special place for personal enjoyment and deep satisfaction for many.
- Our garden community is a living entity that is growing new friendships as well as food.
- The garden has a special "sense of place" quality that is amplified by being in a Nature Park.

It is an honor for me to be a part of this exciting project, called the Culverhouse Community Garden. It is a true blend of community and gardening. A dream started by a few, has become the answer to dreams of many. It is a work in progress, like every garden. Lessons from Nature are coming to life with the efforts, participation, and commitment of you all. *Amazing abundance, constant change, and diverse interconnection* are just three of these I see now happening with Culverhouse Community Garden.

Respectfully yours,

David Conbruck,
FOCCG Chairperson