

Establishing Roots in West Philadelphia

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Healthy People 2020

- Environmental Health
- Heart Disease and Stroke
- Nutrition and Weight Status
- Physical Activity and Fitness
- Diabetes

Urban Tree Connection



Urban Tree Connection is an organization that utilizes plots of land which have been abandoned. The organization uses the land to create gardens that grow produce which is then sold at markets and to the community. Their goal is to provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables in the food desert areas of West Philadelphia. Members of the community are able to get involved by allowing some of their land to be used as gardens and helping to maintain the sites. The organization also tries to spread information about sustainability including a compost program in the neighborhood.



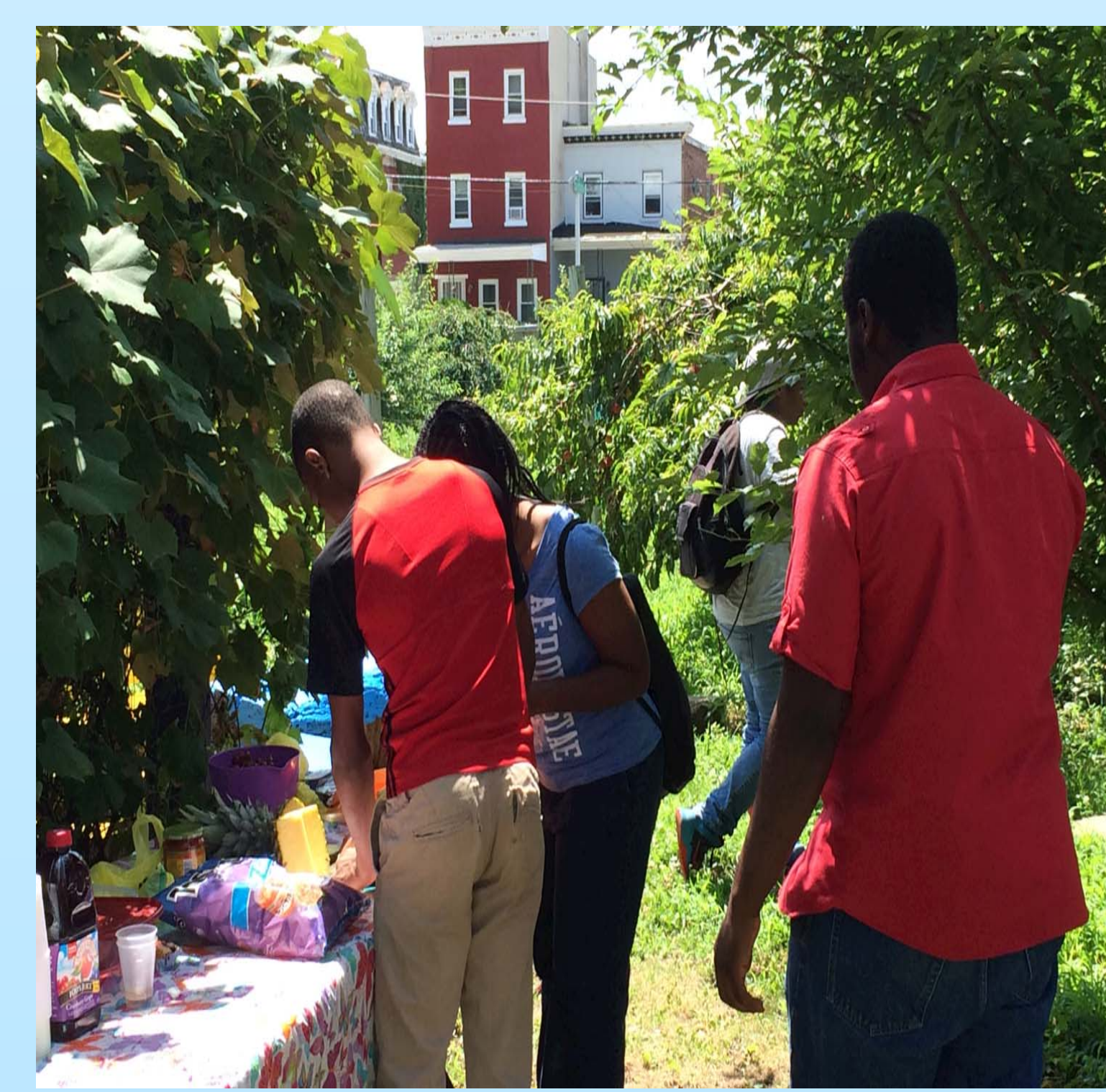
Bridging The Gaps Intern Roles and Daily Activities

The BTG interns worked with teens to help maintain several garden sites in the West Philadelphia community. Daily activities ranged from gardening, weeding, preparing produce for sale at the markets and site maintenance. Several teens worked with the “Veggie Kids Program” to help the younger children of the community become further involved in environmental health and to introduce them to fresh produce and gardening skills. The BTG interns worked side by side with the teens to help maintain the garden and become mentor-like figures to discuss some of the issues that they were facing. We planned activities once a week to help educate the teens with a specific focus on healthy living.



Heart Smart Education

We participated in the HeartSmart poster contest. In the process of working on the poster with the teens we discussed ways to stay heart healthy including diet and exercise. The Urban Tree Connection teens brainstormed ideas about healthy lifestyles and created a poster based on their discussions. They incorporated elements of physical activity and fitness as well as nutrition and environmental health. We also conversed about how to add more fresh produce and exercise into their daily lives.



Nutrition Education

One of the activities was a play on the FoodNetwork show “Chopped.” We provided the teens with four mystery ingredients (zucchini/summer squash, lemons, raspberries, and mint). After dividing into two teams, the groups had to create a meal utilizing the four ingredients. The purpose of the game was to demonstrate how to incorporate fresh produce into meals while also working on the important life skill of cooking. Many of the teens whom had never even tasted zucchini before, were excited to bring their new recipes home to their families.

