

Application Code: _____
(for committee use only)

**Tennessee Master Gardener Search For Excellence
2011 Application**

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 30, 2011

NAME OF MG GROUP: Master Gardeners of Hamilton County

COUNTY: Hamilton

MASTER GARDENER CONTACT:

NAME Sally Wencel

EMAIL slwencel@gmail.com

MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR/EXTENSION STAFF:

NAME Tom Stebbins

TITLE UT/TSU Extension Agent for Hamilton County

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PHONE 423-855-6113

CATEGORY---MUST SELECT AND SUBMIT IN ONLY ONE CATEGORY

- Youth
- Demonstration Garden
- Workshop or Presentation
- Community Service
- Innovative Project
- Research
- Special Needs Audience

COMMENCEMENT DATE OF PROJECT: February 2010

LIST THE NAMES OF MASTER GARDENERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT. Do not include their roles or any other individuals in this listing. *(Place the cursor in the box to type a name.)*

Jerry Smolinski	Bud Hines
Jeff Jarrett	Donna Smolinski
Katie Bishop	Marvin Thomasson
Mike Payne	Sue Henley
Sally Wencel	Susan Pirtle
Carol Mathews	Jo Lawrence

If you are using Word, place your cursor in the boxes and click twice. If using PDF, place your cursor in the box and begin typing.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT (include name, location, target audience, goals, and partnerships)

Evelyn Davenport Navarre (EDN) Teaching Garden, located at 2009 Curtain Pole Road, Chattanooga, TN 37406 is an approved U. T. Demonstration Garden and operates under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Chattanooga Area Food Bank (CAFB) and the Master Gardeners of Hamilton County (MGHC). EDN Teaching Garden is built on land donated by the City of Chattanooga and its 22 - 4' by 8' raised beds were built by MGHC members using materials donated by Habitat for Humanity of Chattanooga. The garden production, sale of plants, and teaching activities are coordinated by CAFB's Garden Coordinator with MGHC members providing over 5,000 hours each year in volunteer time.

The goals for this demonstration garden are to (1) grow healthy food to supplement CAFB's food distribution programs to the indigent and (2) teach citizens, especially those in need, how to grow vegetables in the most healthy and responsible manner.

As outlined in the MOU executed in early 2010, MGHC agreed to (1) demonstrate raised bed gardening and food production, (2) order, purchase, or solicit donations for, all materials necessary to prepare the area, build and plant the garden, (3) provide labor and organize work crews necessary for preparation, (4) administer the garden in a manner that demonstrates community interaction, healthy food production and water conservation techniques, and (5) train all participants in safe methods of gardening including proper use of tools, and suitable hygiene. In the time since the MOU was put into place, MGHC has fully met its responsibilities and the EDN Teaching Garden has exceeded all expectations.

DESCRIBE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT.

MGHC specifically designed the raised beds and garden area to accommodate disabled and senior gardeners. Accessibility was a major objective throughout the design and implementation process. The demonstration garden concept also dictated that organic gardening methods be used throughout the operations to assure the healthiest and safest food production possible. Early in 2010, MGHC and CAFB entered into the MOU that outlined the partner organization's responsibilities and University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture approved MGHC's application as a Demonstration Garden in February 2010.

Before the demonstration garden received the official seal of approval, MGHC commenced implementation with two raised bed building workdays in February, 2010. Most of the beds (22) were dedicated to the teaching garden, with the remaining beds being donated to community gardens in the Chattanooga area. The initial garden area construction started on a cold, rainy morning in April 2010 with more than 40 master gardeners on hand to install the raised beds and fill them with garden soil. The local Rain Bird distributor donated and installed irrigation systems. At the end of the workday everyone was wet, muddy and smiling at the sight of such a large task being done.

MGHC members and interns, under instructions of CAFB's Garden Coordinator, Jane Mauldin plant crops according to the needs of those receiving food from the sharing programs. Harvesting the crops is always a special day for the community members who line up early to share in this bounty. It doesn't get much fresher and healthier than this for these families.

Teaching is integral to the demonstration garden's aims and operations. MGHC launched workshops for disadvantaged citizens, community garden organizers, and the public at large on a wide variety of gardening and food safety topics in collaboration with CAFB. (Please refer to the last question for more details.) These programs are offered in the evening and weekends as well as during the day to make sure as many persons as possible would have an opportunity to learn. The registration fees are nominal - ranging from \$5 to \$25 -- essentially covering the cost of materials provided to participants. For example, the Rain barrel workshops cost \$25 and include a clean 55 gallon barrel and all the fittings needed to deploy the finished barrel (a \$125+ value). Class sizes are kept small (10-25 participants) to allow for fully interactive learning. Programs are also offered during CAFB plant sales, again making the educational opportunity convenient and accessible.

The planners continue to refine the educational component. For example, educational metrics evaluating program effectiveness based on feedback from participants will be used in 2012. Measurement tools will likely include post-educational participant surveys. However, we know strong bonds have been formed with community garden organizers, as one constituency, based on the continued consultation they seek with the workshop leaders and CAFB garden coordinator.

HOW HAS THE PROJECT BEEN FUNDED AND HOW HAVE THOSE FUNDS BEEN SPENT?

As stated in the first section, most of the costs to install the garden were met through charitable contributions to MGHC's partner organization, the Chattanooga Area Food Bank. MGHC is a major partner in helping CAFB's fund raising activities by providing volunteers to staff garden tours, plant sales, and providing teachers for workshops for which CAFB charges a registration fee. MGHC contributes not only volunteer time but \$100 a month to support the garden's operations and meet the need for gardening resources.

DESCRIBE THE OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT. HOW HAS IT AUGMENTED LEARNING, INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OR CHANGED PRACTICES TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE? INCLUDE THE METHODS YOU USED TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT. (These impacts could be economical, educational, environmental, health or community based. SFE projects should be developed to reach the most people possible from the target audience. Impact numbers are not significant if the target audience does not learn or utilize the information. Make sure that you ask participants how this information helped them and record this as an impact. For example, evaluation questions that ask, "How do you plan to use this information?" or "Can you share specific information that you learned today?"

The EDN Teaching Garden has multiple positive effects on the Chattanooga area: produce harvested from the garden is donated to the needy through CAFB operations (economic), MGHC and CAFB implemented broad educational programming including its immensely popular rain barrel workshops (in collaboration with Hamilton County Water Quality Department) which helps to divert surface water runoff (environmental), as well as programs on organic gardening techniques like composting, soil bed preparation, planting, plant selection, raised bed gardening (environmental/health/food safety), and food preservation (food safety/health). The garden area itself was built on a former City landfill, and the City removed the toxic soil as part of the mitigation process that proceeded the garden's implementation (environmental/health). And CAFB/MGHC donated raised beds, seedlings and plants to other community gardens throughout the Chattanooga area which helped those community programs meet their economic and education goals.

Regarding specific outcomes, garden production provided a significant positive health and economic boon to the indigent community. In 2010, the garden raised and distributed over 800 pounds of fresh, organically grown vegetables that were added to CAFB's Food Box program, with over 2,500 families receiving produce during the growing season (economic). In 2011, the garden produced an amazing 2,013 pounds of fresh vegetables --- over a ton and 2 1/2 times the previous year's production -- all distributed to needy families.

The Education/Teaching activities in 2011 were also vigorous: 26 workshops presented to a total of 361 participants (data does not include rain barrel workshops which are reported to HCWQD but is likely another 100 or more participants). Attendees included CAFB clients, hunger relief agency workers, community garden organizers, church leaders, school teachers, master gardeners and members of the general public. The relationship between attendees and instructors is ongoing with many participants continuing to ask for consultation and advice. In particular, community gardens such as Bethlehem Center, St. Albans, New Covenant Baptist Church, Mitchell Garden, Hart Garden, The Giving Garden, New City Fellowship, Northside Neighborhood House children's garden, House of Souls garden (run by city for the homeless) continue to receive advice and support from EDN Teaching Garden staff and volunteers as well as seedlings, raised beds and other surplus from EDN.

For MGHC, CAFB's demonstration garden has provided an unexpected educational benefit of offering interns a safe, comfortable and accessible way to earn volunteer hours by working side by side with other master gardeners. (This information was gleaned from feedback from the new Bud Sprout program.) Interns and certified master gardeners alike learn propagation and transplantation techniques and therefore pick up new and important gardening skills.

ADDITIONAL MASTER GARDENERS

Cathy Albright
Sherri Allison
Nancy Anderson
Ann Bartlett
Maggie Bercaw
Katie Bishop
Barbara Blankenship
Patsy Boles
Linda Book
Nina Brock
Ann Brown
Linda Busby
Edna Cason
Anna Dennett
Dick Fehrenbacher
Gary Flerchinger
Linda French
Patty Fricks
Jane Goodin
Heidi Griswold
Marcelle Hagen
Claire Bryant Haynes
Sue Henley
Bud Hines
Matt Hines
Leonard Jaecks
Jeff Jarrett
Ron Kelly
Jim Keown
Jo Lawrence
Lynne Lockie
Maria Lubkowitz
Margaret Marshall
Carol Mathews
Clyde Mathews
Barbara McMahan
Shirley McMasters
Mike Payne
Stephanie Payne
Jean Pickles
Susan Pirtle
Freeman Powell

Ulyana Pugina
Karen Quave
Diane Robinson
Gloria Roderick
Mary Randles
Ann Shelton
Jane Silver
Diane Slover
Donna Smolinski
Jerry Smolinski
John Sullivan
Carol Taylor
Dianne Tenuto
Marv Thomasson
Rebecca Travis
Gail Tryon
Sally Wencel
Wanda Wilkey
Lynne Wilson