

Growing Green

As more and more cities experience economic downturn, gardens are cropping up in areas considered unlikely for growing food – schools, churches and vacant lots. Waco is certainly no exception to this trend. Several years ago, World Hunger Relief expanded its programming to address the issue of hunger and community development here at home in Waco.

Thanks to a partnership with Communities in School (CIS), WHRI's Urban Gardening program is now working with seven schools in the city to instill in students a greater understanding of their food through the process of digging in the dirt and harvesting heaps of vegetables.

In addition to after-school garden clubs, our Urban Gardening program has worked with a handful of churches to start their own gardens. In the garden at Carver Park Baptist Church, the Farm encountered a feisty high-schooler just beginning to germinate into a successful farmer. Her name is Phylixcia Moore.

Phylixcia is not one of those granola-eating hippie farmers typically attracted to the urban gardening scene. In fact, she can pass as a young business professional studying to enter the 9-to-5 corporate world. But she is studying to be a farmer, an unlikely career path for any young adult these days.

Eventually wants to return to her roots in East Waco. She is basically the next best thing to bike-ground whole-wheat home-baked sliced bread.

Not that she needs to study how to be a farmer. She was born with the heartbeat of the soil pumping through her veins. Grandma Evelyn grows flowers. Uncle Vernon tends vegetables. Together with family and friends, they helped begin the Back to Earth Gardening Coalition (now the Heart of Texas Urban Gardening Coalition). Under the tutelage of Uncle Vernon Clark and former WHRI Interns Robin Heppner Entz and Will Summers, Phylixcia delved wholeheartedly into growing greens and other vegetables at Carver Park Baptist Church.



Phylixcia Moore's passion for gardening and serving others is contagious

During her senior year at AJ Moore Academy, Phylixcia oversaw every project at the garden – from seed to sale, from planting to profit. Produce is sold to the culinary department at the church and donated to the local food pantry to increase access to fresh vegetables for those experiencing hard times – not to mention that Phylixcia loved to eat the profits!

Beyond developing an appreciation for garden-fresh collards and carrots, working at the Carver Park garden cultivated a deeper understanding of God within Phylixcia. "Through nature, I get closer to God. I am able to understand how awesome God is."

Because of the passion and fervor she expressed through her work in the garden, Phylixcia received the 2009 Urban Gardening Scholarship awarded by the HOT Urban Gardening Coalition, which was applied towards her college studies. This spring, she was awarded a scholarship

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to Prairie View A&M University because of her exemplary leadership skills and work ethic in the classroom.

Now studying at Prairie View, Phyliscia is pursuing a degree in agriculture. She views gardening as essential to overcoming many of the health issues ailing Americans – especially in addressing obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure, all of which she sees affecting the lives of her neighbors in East Waco.

Phyliscia dreams of the day she will return to East Waco to farm – to overcome the problems of her own community and build it up one step at a time. She hopes to spread the revolution to more and more communities beyond her own, but wants to start with change at home. Her plan is to begin with the children – to cultivate an appreciation for sun-warmed soil, supertime salads, and something larger than all of us.

As World Hunger Relief continues to build relationships at schools and churches throughout the city, we are hopeful that stories of more and more Phyliscias will sprout forth and yield more mad farmers here in the heart of Texas and beyond.

--- Contributed by Bethel Erickson,
WHRI Urban Gardening Intern alumna

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Fall Farm Day

Saturday, November 7th - 9:00am-4:00pm

Special Presentation @ 12:30 pm by

Jeremy Everett, WHRI alum

Director, Texas Hunger Initiative

featuring THE VILLAGE STORE's fairly-traded global arts & crafts

LIVE MUSIC & FARM-FRESH FOOD

Plants, Fair-Trade Coffee, & Grass-Fed Meat Sales

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN !!!

Pony Rides, Hayrides, Animal Petting Area

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Thanks to everyone who gave generously to the J.E.S. Edwards Foundation's \$30,000 matching campaign. WHRI supporters exceeded the total and generously contributed \$37,472.15 during August & September. This included \$6,500 for the Endowment Fund!

When Two Worlds Collide

Young and hopeful, my mother courageously and by chance came to this country in the late 1970s from a small town in south India. Growing up, I was never able to contextualize or frame her experience as an immigrant in a new country. I grew up in a house that was caught up in another land and I resented the customs we had as a family.

In the eyes of my mother, everything I did seemed like a transgression. However, I was an immature adolescent and got into patterns of fighting for what I wanted. Looking back now, I cannot believe what I would go through to get my way.

Enrolling in college, I was exposed to the academic study of identity politics and immigration patterns. As a result, I came to a deeper understanding of my adolescent experiences. I felt a strange sense of power and visibility that came with knowing that my experiences have been studied by scholars.

I learned that Diaspora communities are in incredible positions of power to speak for the struggles and injustices happening in their home countries; at the same time, there is a burden contained in the recognition that these Diaspora communities can only speak from their own experiences.

My college courses helped me realize that, through economic integration and the opening of trade and labor markets, my parents' lives are part of global political and economic forces that contribute to the interdependence of countries. As a result, our daily lives are becoming increasingly intertwined with the lives of others in apparent yet subtle ways.

One of the most disheartening effects of globalization and economic integration is the ability to rapidly increase inequality among people. Through the combination of academic and personal experiences, I became interested in working to alleviate

the poverty that has become a consequence of globalization.

Traveling to India during various summers to visit family and sightsee has been an important part of my childhood and adolescence. The people and the stark contrasts of India always shock me, but the beauty always keeps me coming back for more. From an early age, I learned to adapt to whatever resources were available and to living conditions different from what I was accustomed to. Cold showers, outdoor bathrooms, and unfamiliar food were the norm in my travels to India and other parts of the world.

Those visits to India pushed me to travel to other countries, including Guatemala and Mexico, and also to study languages. In May 2008, I completed my BA at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, with a major in Spanish Literature and minors in Gender Studies and International Studies.

I came to WHRI to learn agricultural techniques that help create self-sufficiency and also to learn about building holistic communities. Over time, I've learned that there is no standard cut-and-dry solution to poverty. In my time here, I have been learning to embrace innovation, creativity, and all the ways they can integrate into powerful projects around the world.

Working as the Village Store Intern and learning about fair trade combines my enthusiasm for indigenous cultures and the ideals of social responsibility.

After the completion of the WHRI internship, I hope to begin coursework that will lead to a career in the international medical field. I feel so blessed and inspired to live in community with passionate and intelligent people here on the Farm. I intend to share God's love wherever I go and with whomever I encounter.



Swathi Malepati has brought her thoughtful perspective to the Farm

Swathi Malepati

WHRI Alumni & Intern Updates

◆ Susan Trainor (2008)

Susan recently wrote us with this hopeful message: "So here I am in Senegal (West Africa). All is well and I am enjoying myself immensely. Only a few more weeks of training and then I'm moving to Kaffrine to get my hands dirty doing some urban ag work! The life of a Peace Corps volunteer." Join us in praying for Susan as she adjusts to a new culture and language.

◆ Peter & Kristine Zylstra-Moore (2009)

Peter and Kristine are busily renovating their 100+ year-old house in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Kristine works as Farm Program Coordinator with a nature preserve/education center named FortWhyte Alive. Their farming program works with youth from Winnipeg's inner city, most of them from First Nations backgrounds. Peter returned to university in September with his eye on an eventual Masters in economics/political economy.

◆ Jocelyne Philpott (2008)

Jocelyne's time as WHRI Livestock Intern have led her to northern Indiana, where she is working for a local cattle operation in order to obtain more large animal experience. "I am headed back down to Mississippi. I will be heading up the farm for the winter; that means I will most likely be spreading lime, doing some light disking, and spreading clover. Then, when the cows are sent down I will be managing them. So, I have quite the task before me. Honestly, I am surprised (to be given) such a charge!"

◆ Aaron & Faith Dowdy (2006)

In their most recent IDEAS newsletter, the Dowdys write: "As we ... anticipate our return to Central Asia, we ... have been eager to return to our co-workers and ... neighbors this autumn, but have found that our departure will be delayed until after the baby is born. Admittedly, we were frustrated at first, but we've found hope and grace in our Lord's words through the prophet Jeremiah (29:11, regarding returning to their home and people). Furthermore, we're thankful to be able to see God's wisdom as we discover His will. So while we continue to prepare for our big move, please pray for us."

World Hunger Relief, Inc. is a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation registered with the State of Texas under the 501(c)(3) IRS status.

Mission Statement

World Hunger Relief, Inc. is a Christian organization committed to the alleviation of hunger around the world.

God calls us to:

- Train** individuals in holistic ministry that equips them to work with communities in developing sustainable farming techniques
- Educate** those with an economic abundance on methods of conserving and sharing resources
- Participate** in local and international sustainable development programs

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