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Lots of Food

A CSA sprouts in West Philadelphia by CASSIE CUMMINS

THERE IS AN ABUNDANCE of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs across Pennsylvania, but the latest West Philadelphia CSA is significantly different. ¶ The urban farm CSA being launched at 53rd and Wyalusing Streets is headed by Urban Tree Connection, a nonprofit dedicated to assisting low-income communities in the revitalization of their neighborhoods through community-based urban greening. This process involves transforming vacant lots—often plagued by drug trade and other illegal activities—into vital green spaces.

Since the organization's establishment as a nonprofit 13 years ago, Urban Tree Connection has focused on youth education programs in West Philly's Haddington neighborhood. Most of their gardens are used as demonstration sites or work spaces for youth and children's gardening clubs. But with this new CSA experiment, Urban Tree Connection is hoping to create a self-sustaining, neighborhood institution. Local families will work the land and gain access to fresh, healthy food.

Urban Tree Connection is still in the process of structuring the farm's share-system and explor-

ing ways to make the cost of a share affordable for low-income residents. Founder and Executive Director of Urban Tree Connection Skip Wiener says that they are hoping to use donations to subsidize the cost of shares.

After a decade of growing gardens in the Haddington community, the relationship between the community and Urban Tree Connection is very special. "We've grown up with these kids," says Wiener. "They're a part of our lives."

For information, visit urbantreeconnection.org.