

Misako Scott

From: Skip Wiener, Executive Director & Founder, Urban Tree Connection
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To: Misako Scott
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Urban Tree Connection

NEWSLETTER

Happy Holidays 2010

Greetings!

As our planting season officially closes and the holiday season has commenced, Urban Tree Connection would like to pay tribute to the hundreds of volunteers who assisted us in 2010. Because of your support Urban Tree Connection started its first low-income community-supported agriculture (CSA) farm in West Philadelphia. Because of your hard work, every one of our 12 gardens and farms were cleaned, planted and enjoyed by the communities we serve. Because of your dedication, children and adults from Philadelphia's most challenged neighborhoods were given fresh produce, job training opportunities, nutrition and cooking classes and safe, green spaces to enjoy. Our passionate volunteers gave us sweat equity as well as funds and we are so thankful.

Because of you, we are able to continue to build communities, one vacant lot at a time.

Our 2010 Proudest Moment: The proudest moment for Urban Tree Connection in 2010 was being appointed the [legal conservator of the CSA farm property](#) by the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. I began guerilla gardening in 1989, officially forming Urban Tree Connection as a nonprofit in 1997. The Pennsylvania Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act of 2008 allowed us to petition for and successfully become the conservator of the abandoned property which was a crime-ridden, dirty drug haven. Now, Urban Tree Connection is transforming this parcel into an urban farm. In the spring and summer of 2010, we harvested more than 100 pounds of fresh produce each week; our final harvests have yielded sweet potatoes, radishes, collard greens, eggplants, bell peppers and hot peppers. In 2011, we will officially launch the shares for the low-income CSA. The



Urban Tree Connection
Newsletter

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**We are blessed
with passionate,
dedicated
volunteers. Many
thanks to those
from the following
organizations who**

response from the Haddington neighbors and people from the region has been overwhelming. This has been a tremendous accomplishment for Urban Tree Connection!

As recently reported in [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (New study puts a hefty price on city blight by Jennifer Lin; November 10, 2010), a study released by the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations calculated that Philadelphia's 40,000 vacant properties costs \$20 million annually to maintain, clean, demolish, seal and protect. These abandoned properties are devaluing the real estate value here by \$3.6 billion. Urban Tree Connection has a model to reclaim and revitalize these blighted, vacant lots, putting ownership and opportunity into the hands of the neighborhood! Urban greening is an important piece of the neighborhood revitalization puzzle - it's a solution!

Give the gift of Urban Tree Connection this holiday season!

Looking for the perfect holiday present for family, friends and co-workers? Make a donation to Urban Tree Connection and we will send the gift recipient a holiday card explaining the present and thank them for their donation to our organization. Making a holiday donation in someone's name to Urban Tree Connection is a wonderful, generous way to celebrate the holiday season. Please send your donation to us at 5125 Woodbine Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19131-2404 to place an order.

supported Urban Tree Connection in 2010: the Philadelphia Chapter of the Garden Club of America, Mission Philadelphia Trinity Youth Group, Camp Galil, Messiah College, City Year & City Year Young Heroes, Whole Foods Markets, Recyclebank, Drexel University, Lutheran Inter-Parish Youth of Central Massachusetts, Starbucks, University of Iowa, Crefeld School, Accenture, Grace Presbyterian Church, the University of Pennsylvania, Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, Villanova University, Jefferson University Bridging the Gap, Ursinus, Temple University's Fresh Serve Volunteers, The Vanguard Group and Cigna.

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UTC News

New Children's Book Library at UTC! Trinity Episcopal Church (Solebury, PA) is generously giving books to the children involved in UTC's Pearl St. garden for the holidays and building UTC's new children's book library. We know the importance of reading to children and having books available to them for their enjoyment. Because of Trinity Episcopal Church's generosity, UTC is starting a new environmental reading circle at all of our programs! Thank you, Trinity Episcopal Church!

After school programs at Pearl Street have concluded for the season but food is still coming out of the garden; bok choy, carrots, peas, green beans, lettuce, mustard greens, collard greens continue to be distributed to the neighborhood. We are planning to install plastic hoop houses over some of the beds at Pearl Street and at the North Philly gardens to extend production later into the winter.

The Philadelphia Foundation's [IMPACT Philadelphia Fund](#) is raising money to benefit three Philadelphia nonprofits. Urban Tree Connection is a beneficiary! Fundraising ends December 15 so please help Urban Tree Connection spread the word!



The CSA Farm in 2011: This winter, we plan to change the bed layout to make it more space efficient and maximize production and build another set of rows that will be about half of the size of the existing rows. We have started to receive the annual colossal leaf dumps that help to level out the site and we will be preparing the near-acre farm for its first official season as a low-income CSA. Sixteen families will be the initial shareholders... stay tuned to learn how you can help subsidize their shares!

I would like to extend special thanks to our

We held a fun Harvest Party on Halloween! Many neighborhood children and adults as well as UTC staff members and volunteers had a great time outside, many wearing fun costumes and face paint. We always have a great time in our gardens and Halloween is an especially fun time of year. Thanks to all who helped out!

Check out this [blog](#) about **Urban Tree Connection's new farming program** at Alliance for Progress Charter School in partnership with Whole Foods Markets, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital Public Health Department and Messiah College! It's written by students participating in the new program!

Throughout the winter, our staff members will take teens from the Pearl Street garden neighborhood to attend monthly dinners and cooking demonstrations with PUFFA (the Philadelphia Urban Food and Fitness Alliance). **Thank you, PUFFA!**

Please Support UTC! We are always accepting donations online at www.urbantreeconnection.org (click 2010 Fundraiser). Your financial contributions to Urban Tree Connection allow us to continue the work we do and we thank you for your continued support.

Don't forget to join us online! On Facebook.com: UrbanTreeConnection; on Twitter.com: @UTCPhila; and on YouTube.

Urban Tree Connection has so much planned for 2011 that we are very excited for spring to arrive once again. Until then, take care and have a wonderful holiday season.

Warmly,

Skip Wiener
Executive Director & Founder
Urban Tree Connection

tireless, dedicated UTC staff: Misako, without whom UTC would cease to function; Hussian, who has been with us for almost a decade and is invaluable; the passionate Ryan, Annie, Sue, Brandon and of course Dylan who is volunteering on behalf of the CSA. Their hard work is greatly appreciated and it is because of your generosity that we can fund these important positions. Thank you!

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