

Statement of Purpose

In August 2006, Cicero Christian Church launched “kindness in progress” events to serve our community with simple acts to show God’s love. By January 2008 this outlook had taken root. We adapted our mission statement to **reach, teach, serve**, implemented a new logo, and outreach was rejuvenated.

The *Community Garden* is our newest and largest endeavor. We recognize and respond to an economic crisis and the need to improve eating habits with our **primary goal of giving away free garden produce to our community**. Located on a walking path near several residential developments, our garden is in a prime setting to improve the lives of hundreds of families. We envision people walking to the garden, stopping by while picking up a child, or lingering after a service to harvest.



Yes, something for nothing! Recipients don’t have to help to partake. Secondary goals include:

Partnership

Hamilton County Master Gardeners Association (hcmga.org) ~ educating volunteers.

Mephibosheth Ministries (mm-abilities.org), serving the disabled ~ sharing their greenhouse and adopting plants while gaining practical life skills and expanding sensory experience.

Crosslight Christian School (daycare, preschool, kindergarten) ~ outside classroom increases service learning, team building and the plant-to-food connection.

Community Residents ~ thirty volunteers already involved. Community notification of free garden through signage and printed information distributed through schools, clinics, and our food pantry. Our garden was planned to be accessible to those with disabilities and easy to maintain for volunteers with proactive weed prevention and convenient water access.

Stewardship

The vision was cast after the annual budget was approved, so funding must be raised. We have solicited and already received some donations from our congregation and local businesses.

We are blessed with a large tract of land. To save water costs, an irrigation system from an on-site pond was installed. Half an acre has been prepared for sweet corn. Strip gardening will cover 2,000 square feet. We have devised an expandable planting plan to maximize for herbs, at least 25 fruits and vegetables, and four varieties of fruit trees.

On-site ministries serve a dozen meals a week. Produce from the garden will cut costs and encourage healthier eating.

Education

In addition to school and disability ministry education, a gardening workshop in July will serve a free meal from the garden followed by a Master Gardener presentation.

Additional education will focus on increasing implementation of organic gardening; including pest control, composting, creatively using discarded materials for trellises, and preparing the beds for the winter. We will harvest excess produce and teach freezing and canning.

Additional funding will allow detailed informational signage for the consumer.

Measuring Success

Success will be measured by a garden picked clean, minimal cost to our church, and increasingly “green” and accessible expansion and training plans come October.

Funding from *Gardenburger*, with God’s blessing and donor gifts, will allow us to meet our stated goals, provide storage and tools, reduce grocery costs, increase knowledge and practical life skills, improve eating habits; all while serving and building our community.