MOUNT PLEASANT NEIGHBORHOOD · COMMUNITY NEWS

A Publication of the Institution of Financial Unity

From Vacant Lots to a Thriving Garden

King's Learning Garden Takes Root in Mount Pleasant

CLEVELAND, OH - Community News, Mount Pleasant Edition

What began as participation in the Vacant to Vital Greenspace Development has grown into a thriving community garden and gathering space in Cleveland's Mount Pleasant neighborhood.

King's Learning Garden, stewarded by **Crystal King**, is a tangible example of what can happen when residents have access to knowledge, relationships, resources, and opportunities to transform vacant land into something that serves the community.



Crystal King at King's Learning Garden

King's journey began through her participation in the **Vacant to Vital Greenspace Development** (Cohort 2), where she gained knowledge, connections, and access to people who could help her navigate the process of turning her vision into reality. Through those relationships, she connected with the right people at Cleveland City Hall and successfully navigated the process of obtaining **two vacant parcels** for the development of **King's Learning Garden**.



Vacant to Vital Greenspace Development Cohort 2 Showcase

What was once vacant land on East 151st Street has now entered its **first growing season** and becoming a productive, welcoming space for food, learning, gathering, and neighborhood connection.

Growing More Than Food

Today, King's Learning Garden features **fruit trees, raised garden beds, garden tables, gardening equipment, and beautified outdoor spaces**. Crystal has continued investing her time and resources into making the garden both productive and inviting.



King's Learning Garden Community Gathering



Honoring our Neighbors

The garden is also supported by a growing network of community partners and supporters.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Neighborhood Connections · Private Donors · NuPoint Community Development Corporation · The Arrow Project · Institution of Financial Unity · Neighbors · Ward Leadership · Local Business Owners

The Institution of Financial Unity has supported King's Learning Garden through the Vacant to Vital Greenspace Program as a mentor, advocate, and fiscal manager, with a focus on greenspace development, community education, community engagement, and organizational support.

The garden has the potential to cultivate not only healthy food and green space, but also leadership, collaboration, and educational opportunities for youth and community members.

Crystal has also taken her vision beyond traditional grantmaking. She pitched King's Learning Garden through the **Giving Circle**, where the project received support from community members investing in local ideas.

A Garden for Learning and Gathering

Crystal envisions King's Learning Garden as more than a place to grow vegetables. She is actively seeking partnerships with **schools, educators, and community organizations** that can bring hands-on learning to the garden and teach young people and residents the basics of growing food. Plans are also underway for a **gazebo covering**, which would provide additional space for community gatherings, workshops, outdoor learning, and neighborhood activities.

That vision was on full display on **Wednesday, September 23, 2026**, when King's Learning Garden hosted a **Get Out the Vote Garden Party and Welcome Party** at the garden on East 151st Street.



King's Learning Get Out the Vote Garden & Welcome Party

Neighbors, friends, and Mount Pleasant community members gathered for an afternoon of food, music, conversation, civic engagement, and a tour of the garden. The event also provided an opportunity for community members to meet Crystal, learn about the garden, and connect with their neighbors.



Vacant to Vital Greenspace Development Program Cohort 2 hosted at Calvary Hill COGIC Woodhill

From Participation to Community Leadership

King's Learning Garden illustrates the power of moving from participation to action.

Crystal entered the Vacant to Vital program with a vision. Through the program, she developed relationships and gained access to information that helped her navigate the City of Cleveland's vacant-land process. She then secured two parcels, attracted community investment, built out the garden, and continued cultivating partnerships around the space.



Congratulations Crystal!

Her journey demonstrates how a vacant lot can become a **community asset when residents are equipped to lead the transformation themselves.**

And the garden is still growing. Crystal is looking for **schools, educators, community organizations, gardeners, volunteers, and neighborhood partners** who want to help expand the garden's educational and community-building potential.

Get involved

Volunteer days are Mondays. Community members interested in helping can reach out to Crystal.

Phone: 216-799-7704

King's Learning Garden is not simply growing food, it is growing relationships, knowledge, stewardship, and possibilities for Mount Pleasant.

King's Learning Garden · 3704 East 151st Street · Mount Pleasant, Cleveland, OH