

# growing opportunities

## Hosts Grand Opening Celebration

By **Teresa Turner**, Front Desk Coordinator

On July 9, 2015, the South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) held a grand opening celebration to kick off the Growing Opportunities program, a social business project of the SCCAP which was developed as an Innovative Community Collaboration Grant project. In the program's 2,880 square foot greenhouse, clients with barriers to employment are learning vocational skills and receiving hands-on training to prepare them for entry-level jobs in the community in fields such as horticulture, food service, and retail. During the celebration attendees had an opportunity to tour the greenhouse, talk with program participants, and sample freshly picked lettuce grown onsite.



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As part of the tour clients demonstrated skills they had learned in the program including planting seeds, transplanting, monitoring the hydroponic equipment, and harvesting. Stacey Draves, a program participant said, “I was amazed I could transplant by myself! I really like helping and learning in the Greenhouse.” Planting began in March, and produce from the greenhouse is now sold in the community, providing area businesses with ready access to several varieties of fresh locally grown lettuce and other greens.

Nicole Wooten, Growing Opportunities Manager says that biggest challenge in bringing the program to fruition was finding a property on which to build. “We were so fortunate to partner with Stonebelt and Indiana University to lease an area for the first greenhouse. Now we are searching for more land for a future expansion!”



Left page: Produce from the greenhouse will be sold to area businesses. Above left: Program participant Stacey Draves. Above center: Attendees talking with program participants and sampling freshly picked lettuce. Above right: Nicole Wooten, Growing Opportunities Manager.

## Where Plants and Confidence Grow

In addition to the hands-on training clients receive, they also write resumes, complete mock interviews, and learn about dressing for success. Nicole says the greatest impact from the program so far has been on the clients enrolled in

the job training class. "As the plants have grown, excitement and confidence has grown in each person." The greenhouse project is growing much more than lettuce; it is growing a more promising future for the program participants. 🌱

## Aging-in-Place: RHTC Residents Speak

By the IHCD Research & Innovation Department

This past year, IHCD hosted AmeriCorps VISTA Beth Neville, who authored a report designed to inform IHCD Aging-in-Place initiatives.

- Of those residents interviewed, 69% reported that their apartment community feels as much like home or more like home than the last place they lived. Feeling at home is related to Aging-in-Place features, the ability to be independent, and development location.
- The interviews revealed that locational characteristics of the property received the greatest emphasis in relation to residents feeling at home there—even more so than amenities and activities. Resident satisfaction with their respective developments is related to multiple locational characteristics, such as neighborhood safety and retail access.



- We all share in the responsibility to address needs related to Aging-in-Place. IHCD is responsible for defining housing policy priorities; developers are responsible for identifying and designing developments that meet the needs of residents as they age, and property managers are responsible for providing a safe environment and being responsive to resident needs. 🌱