



**BUSINESS
HIGH POINT**
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Nonprofit, Local Leaders Partner to Develop New Community Garden

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Growing High Point partners with Leadership High Point cohort to bring urban garden, fresh food to East Green Drive

HIGH POINT, NC, February 3, 2023 – Two High Point groups are coming together to convert a vacant urban lot on East Green Drive into a community garden, providing food, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities for residents.

Growing High Point, a nonprofit whose objective is to turn vacant lots into sustainable urban farms, along with 45 members of Leadership High Point, a Business High Point initiative have teamed up to begin developing the property. The garden is a service-learning project selected by the 2022-23 Leadership High Point cohort, through which participants hope to provide a solution to the city's food insecurity problem. High Point currently ranks number 14 in food insecurity nationally, according to data from the Greater High Point Food Alliance.

Growing High Point Executive Director, Willa Mays is up for the challenge.

"It takes a good bit of courage tackling problems that are large and seemingly intractable," she said. "But there's always a solution."

Since 2016, Growing High Point has been acquiring and transforming vacant lots into farms, using them to train new farmers and feed members of the community. Though still in its very early stages of development, the project on East Green Drive will make for Growing High Point's ninth location, and yet another source of healthy food as well as employment for families living in the area.

In addition to being a food source for the community, the garden will also benefit Growing High Point's Farmers-in-Training program which supports aspiring farmers in building the skills needed to become successful growers and entrepreneurs. Mays says she and her team have seen a rising interest in urban farming in recent months, and hope to place two budding farmers at the site.

"We're working through the lens of urban agriculture, and two of the things that we're really trying to do is provide pathways to small business success for individuals, and also to create a sense of opportunity and hope in our community."

Mays says she is also looking to use the new site as an opportunity to employ area youth, teaching them to grow and prepare food to be sold via Growdega, Growing High Point's mobile grocery store.

Ryan Nance, Leadership High Point participant and project chair for the Green Drive Urban Garden is optimistic about the groups' partnership and its impact in the long run.

"By collaborating with Growing High Point, we are able to leverage their experience, infrastructure and training program on this project, allowing us to maximize our return on investment while helping ensure sustainable, long-term success."

The East Green Drive Urban Garden is expected to break ground in February and be completed in early Spring. If you are interested in making a donation to support this project, please contact Ryan Nance, Leadership High Point service project chair at (336) 883-8293.

For information about Growing High Point visit: www.growinghighpoint.org.

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