



One Village. One Earth.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PORT CHESTER COMMUNITY GARDENS COMES INTO FRUITION

Local resident launches non-profit aimed to “grow” community

PORT CHESTER, NY, April 23, 2018 – In an effort to combat issues associated with food access, healthy eating, and environmental sustainability while promoting volunteerism and civic engagement, Port Chester resident and community advocate, Alex Payan, is pleased to announce the launch of *Port Chester Community Gardens, Inc. (PCCG)*, a registered public charity in New York State.

“As a resident of Port Chester, I have enjoyed helping members of my community gain access to fresh grown produce through the development of Weber Community Garden. I am very proud to be part of the team that transformed vacant land, thanks to the Port Chester Housing Authority, into sustainable gardening space,” says Payan, founding member and President/CEO of PCCG.

Highly collaborative and member driven efforts will lead PCCG to advance its mission of promoting access to locally grown food; to inform the community about healthy eating and sustainable living; to reuse vacant or underused land; all through the operation of community gardens and advocacy and education about the benefits of these gardens.

In a partnership with the *Port Chester Housing Authority*, PCCG will oversee the transformation of vacant plots of land into sustainable gardening space. Supporting food security and financial savings for individuals, especially the unemployed and those with low incomes, PCCG will equip local housing authority residents with 29 garden beds - enabling residents to grow their own organic vegetables and herbs, thus supplementing their food supply. According to the study *“Hunger in the Town of Rye,”* 11%-13% of town residents are hungry every day. 85%-90% of these residents live in the Village of Port Chester. Since the residents in the housing authority

are among the poorest citizens in the Town of Rye, their need for healthy food which they can provide for themselves is all the more important.

“Our goals are to grow food, forge new community bonds and relationships through mutual hard work. We will offer neighborhood youth a place to develop and grow through hands-on learning, so they can later share their knowledge on healthy and sustainable living. Port Chester Community Gardens will encourage food, social and environmental sustainability through practice, awareness, advocacy in public policy supporting community gardens,” stated Payan.

Weber Community Garden, the first of the *Port Chester Housing Authority* community gardens and a model for future gardens, was established in April 2016. At over 2,000 square feet, this garden has 19 4'x 8' raised beds including two elevated beds, four composting bins, and a shed full of garden tools, two spigots and a wheelbarrow – it is a robust, volunteer-run garden where residents grow more than just food – they grow community.

In 2017, the *Port Chester Housing Authority* received a grant from the *Westchester County Board of Legislators* for the construction of two additional community gardens at their senior housing locations. In April 2018, Drew and Terrace Community Gardens were established, each with 5 4' x 8' elevated beds and a vertical shed, a 150-gallon storage bench, including garden tools and one spigot.

With the help of community partners and donor support, *Port Chester Community Gardens* will act as a beacon of permanence and a reassurance that the gardens continue to thrive. Plans for the near future include:

Community Bottle Gardens – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
Community Garden Tours
Community Compost Program / Red Wiggler Worm Composting
Earth Day Event
Fall Clean-Up
Farmer's Market
Garden classes
Garden Student Internship Program
Garden Student Scholarship Fund
Halloween 'Spook Fest' at Weber Community Garden

For more information or to join in the efforts of or contribute to PCCG, please contact Alex Payan at (914) 623-3077 or send an email to portchestercommunitygardens@gmail.com. Visit Port Chester Community Gardens and "Like" their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/portchestercommunitygardens.

About Port Chester Community Gardens:

Our mission is to make community members healthier and better informed about healthy eating and sustainable living through the sharing of knowledge, and more environmentally aware through practice, awareness, and advocacy. To make communities greener and more beautiful through reuse of vacant or underutilized land, and more cooperative and bonded together through fostering a supportive learning environment and hard work in the development, management, and operation of community gardens using organic, and healthy farming methods.

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