

## The Charlie Buffone Garden Oak Hill Community Development Corporation, Worcester, MA



[The Oak Hill Community Development Corporation](#) (CDC) located in Worcester, Massachusetts, has successfully implemented a formula for engaging their youth in green related activities. They have been put in charge of the Charlie Buffone Garden, a community garden they nurture with care.

Operating expenses for the garden are met by individual donations and private funders, which have enabled Oak Hill CDC to hire six teens and one adult supervisor. When the garden is not being maintained by the youth, it is being maintained by one of the many community resident volunteers.

The vegetation being grown in the garden is all organic and toxic chemicals are prohibited. In addition to using environmentally friendly materials for cultivation, the youth at Charlie Buffone garden have established a relationship with a neighboring school to use their composted food as fertilizer in the garden. On the Web site for the community garden, the teens say that through their green garden, they strive “for a balance with nature, using methods and materials which are of low impact to the environment.”

Along with growing green fruits and vegetables, the youth who run this garden have hopes of bringing the community together. They do this by the distribution of food to residents that live in the community, and by making fruit and vegetable baskets for the nearby senior citizen homes. The youth have also harvested and distributed their produce to agencies that have financially assisted the garden, community organizations and the local city government. In their efforts to engage the community, staff at the Charlie Buffone garden have also hosted workshops on topics such as how to build a garden bed and how to upkeep the community garden. They have held a block party around the garden that included games on caring for a green garden.

To find out more about the youth-run urban garden, go to [www.freewebs.com/oakhill-garden](http://www.freewebs.com/oakhill-garden).