

City Blossoms: a unique gardening experience for children and youth

Mission Statement

To collaborate with community members in establishing youth driven, sustainable, innovative green spaces that promote stewardship, wellbeing and environmental consciousness.

Vision Statement

That all urban citizens have access to healthy living through participation in innovative community green spaces.

Program Overview

City Blossoms is a Washington, D.C. area organization that uses gardening to create environmental, nutritional, and cultural connections for children and youth. We are dedicated to empowering children, youth and community organizations in developing dynamic and productive green projects.

City Blossoms began nine years ago as a volunteer project and has since evolved to a year-round program that includes consulting, curriculum development (with consideration for learning standards), and on-site weekly workshops. To date, City Blossoms has worked with over 300 children and youth in various gardening projects.

City Blossoms has designed a unique method of developing and managing robust green spaces where children and youth are engaged as the main cultivators. We specialize in an art-based, hands-on approach that emphasizes the strengths and unique qualities of each learning center. All City Blossoms projects are organic and designed to work with the local environment and community needs. We look forward to bringing City Blossoms to schools and learning centers all around the area and increasing children and youth awareness about caring for the environment and themselves.

Our Projects

Currently we garden at five locations: DC Bilingual Public Charter School, CentroNia Pre-K Incentive program and Girard Children's Community Garden in D.C.(which brings together groups of children and youth from 4 area schools and organizations); Garrison Middle School in Baltimore; and CentroNia's Langley Park Early Childhood Campus in Maryland. Over 500 children participate in our programs. We lead weekly workshops with all of our students year-round. Some of our current projects include an herbal entrepreneurship program with middle school (harvesting herbs and creating soaps, lotions, and salt scrubs to sell at farmers' markets); a worm bin; bookmaking about compost, insects, and herbs; a weekend garden sculpture workshop for area high-school girls; and we will be hosting family and adult workshops at our Girard Garden location in spring. Our emphasis with all of our projects is community awareness and connection, artistic expression, and exploration of healthy living skills.

Who We Are

City Blossoms is an organization dedicated to working with schools, neighborhood groups, community centers and other organizations to create spaces for children to use their creativity and combined strength and skills to learn how to grow and maintain fantastic yet functioning gardens.

City Blossoms is in the process of becoming a 501c3 non-profit.

Lola Bloom

Co-Founder & Director of Curriculum Development

Lola Bloom has been interested in gardening for more reasons than her last name. Growing up in the Washington, D.C. area, she was able to watch and learn from her parents working in the back yard. Lola became involved with **City Blossoms** through CentroNia in 1999 while she worked with the youth summer program. After studying at Antioch College and Virginia Commonwealth University's School of the Arts, she returned to the D.C. area in 2001 and joined dirt-loving forces with Rebecca. In addition to working as a full time art teacher (Congressional Schools of Virginia 2001-2005, International School of Curacao 2005-2007, Community Academy Public Charter school presently), Lola enjoys traveling around the world and baking cupcakes for well-behaved kids.

Rebecca Lemos

CO-Founder and Executive Director

Over a decade ago Rebecca was asked if she would like to do a small gardening project with a group of kids in a local community center. From that point on she grew to see urban gardening as a way to combine her interests in art, community participation and everything green. Since then Rebecca has worked with children and youth of all ages. Rebecca has a BA from Fordham University, an MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art and was recently received an Honorable Mention for Education Award from Garden Crusaders, a national community gardening award.

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