



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**US Green Building Council-L.A.'s 2020 LEGACY PROJECT, the  
"West Adams Resiliency Garden", to help Formerly  
Incarcerated People and the West Adams Neighborhood**

**Garden Offers Employment, Healing, Food Access, & Green Space**

LOS ANGELES (September 23, 2020) The [U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles](#) (USGBC-LA) Chapter is proud to announce the 2020 Legacy Project: **West Adams Resiliency Garden**, located at McCarty Memorial Christian Church in the heart of Los Angeles, and in partnership with Angel City Urban Farms. The project was selected as the USGBC-LA's fifth **Legacy Project** due to the area's need for increased community access to fresh food and green space. Moreover, crucially, this project centers the needs of individuals undergoing the process of re-entry, whether returning from incarceration or recovering from other challenges such as homelessness. Designed as a personal development and healing space, the garden is intended to serve as a hub of social connectedness where community members can exchange knowledge, receive vocational training and access vital resources including fresh produce. Chosen at the start of 2020, the project has had to navigate delays, permitting challenges, and volunteer issues resulting from pandemic restrictions, but the garden is slated to break ground in October.

The garden build and re-entry program has been led by Angel City Urban Farms (ACUF), a South Los Angeles-based social enterprise that offers pathways for resilient re-entry for formerly incarcerated people through landscaping, gardening and environmental services. ACUF co-founder, Tobias Tubbs, established the Insight Garden Program while serving time in prison, and his curriculum is incorporated into this Legacy Project. This project is meant to take Angel City Urban Farms mission to the next level by connecting returning citizens to food, employment and healing.

"As a social justice church with a 90-year history in West Adams, we at McCarty Memorial Christian Church felt it was the perfect home for the West Adams Resiliency Garden and we are thrilled that USGBC-LA saw all the potential benefits of this project – for those who are re-entering society and for the wider community," states Clare Anderson-Fox, lead organizer of the project, liaison between the Church and ACUF, and Vice President, Strategic Partnerships at Everytable.

Each year, [USGBC-LA](#) provides the selected Legacy Project with \$20,000 in funding, along with design, strategy and project management support, and a regular callout to membership for volunteer opportunities. In a 'normal' year, that typically translates to not only help from a distance, but physical, on-site volunteer help that can include design, engineering, installation, planting, and more.

Building the garden was to be a highly hands-on, community-driven process, involving the church's youth, the community, and especially local, formerly-incarcerated individuals. Not being able to gather volunteers in-person, Anderson-Fox, Tubbs, Pastor Eddie Anderson, and lead designer Brendan Wilson, instead crafted a video curriculum series that follows "the life of a seed" to inspire dialogue about community resiliency, social justice and healing, focused on young people of color dealing with criminalization and the trauma of incarceration. Each week's video also provides lessons on the gardening process, and documents the planting of edible vegetables, fruits and flowers which will ultimately live in the church's garden, while finalizing amendments made to the design by the City. By drawing on his personal experiences of incarceration and marginalization, Tubbs is able to foster a sense of safety and connection among attendees, thus nurturing a compassionate re-entry environment at McCarty, and hopeful next steps to employment.

The West Adams Resiliency Garden project key goals include:

- A **rooftop aeroponic garden** as educational space to teach about the importance of cool roof infrastructure as a mitigating factor to Urban Heat Island effect.
- A **soil-based ground-level garden** as an educational tool for understanding the importance of healthy soils in urban environments for water retention/filtration, urban cooling and carbon sequestration, all of which are resiliency factors in light of stressors to the built environment resulting from disaster or climate events.
- **Food grown in the garden to be shared** with low-income and food insecure families connected to either the church community, Angel City Urban Farms, or through the garden re-entry program, which ultimately supports community health through nutrition and food security.
- Perhaps most importantly, this project expressly focuses on generating **more social cohesion, neighborhood connectedness and advancing social equity** for marginalized communities, particularly formerly incarcerated individuals seeking to re-establish themselves in their home community.

Legacy Project Chair Katie Freeze, of Leading Edge Consulting Services, LLC, is guiding the project on behalf of USGBC-LA. USGBC-LA's new [Green Building Corps](#) will also provide two project volunteers to the project team to provide much-needed assistance with garden construction in the absence of traditional community volunteer days. The Corps consists of students and emerging and transitioning professionals who are looking to gain experience and build relationships within the green building industry through volunteer efforts.

"2020 has been anything but normal, so Katie and the Legacy Project team have really had to be incredibly flexible and creative. From the start, we all loved and believed in this team, this project and its aspirational goals of personal healing through community and connection to nature while demonstrating use of innovative green building practices leveraging aeroponics and native plants. Everything that's transpired since they were selected – from COVID-19 to Black Lives Matter – has made the project that much more relevant," states Ben Stapleton, USGBC-LA Executive Director. "We hope this project will serve as a model for other neighborhoods across Southern California."

The [Legacy Project](#) is an annual gift from the USGBC-LA to a local community to help install a permanent project providing an enduring means of service and education. The Los

Angeles Chapter decided to continue awarding annual projects following the first project in 2016, EcoTech Makerspace in Gardena. Following its successful community impact, the Veggie Bus Project in South Central LA, the Discovery Garden in Simi Valley, and the Regenerative Learning Garden in the San Gabriel Valley followed suit.

For more information on the Legacy Project and to volunteer, please visit [www.usgbc-la.org](http://www.usgbc-la.org). If you'd like to contribute to this project or any other sponsorship support, please email [ben@usgbc-la.org](mailto:ben@usgbc-la.org).

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**About U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles**

USGBC-LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to creating a prosperous and sustainable future within one generation. Our mission promotes sustainability in LA County's built environment by delivering access to knowledge, resources, recognition and networking. ([www.usgbc-la.org](http://www.usgbc-la.org))

**About McCarty Memorial Christian Church - <http://www.mccartychurch.org/>**

**About Angel City Urban Farms**

Angel City Urban Farms is an urban agriculture program and a post-incarceration re-entry program. Angel City Urban Farms fosters community, teaches skills, supports health and nutrition, inspires neighbors, and above all restores hope for the individual, the community, the environment. We bring nature into the city, bring nutrient-dense food into an area of scarcity, and bring formerly incarcerated citizens back into our community.

**About Insight Garden Program - <http://insightgardenprogram.org/>**