The City of London Growing Localities Awards 2013/14

A. About the Awards

Lemos&Crane working with City Bridge Trust presents the Growing Localities Awards 2013/14. A total of £2,500 prize money is being offered to projects using nature to enhance and improve local communities and the lives of vulnerable or socially excluded people, generating positive outcomes such as health and well being, new skills and knowledge, new relationships, and a sense of purpose and belonging.

There will be 6 award categories from which a winner and three runners up will be selected:

The 6 award categories are:

- **GARDENING AND GROWING FOOD** – for communal eating and small-scale enterprise
- **LOOKING AFTER ANIMALS** – bees, chickens, pigs, etc for the experience of care but also to farm
- **NATURE-THEMED ARTS AND CRAFTS** – woodcraft, photography, film-making, writing, etc
- **EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES ABOUT WILDLIFE AND NATURE** – including trips and excursions to teach people about flora and fauna
- **RECLAIMING AND DEVLoping WASTELAND** – projects initiated and led by residents and tenants
- **“GREEN” EXERCISE** – groups for walking, cycling, running, etc with a nature theme

Entries are invited from non-profit organisations **in London** such as:

- Community-based and voluntary organisations
- Faith groups
- Health organisations
- Homeless agencies
- Hospices
- Prisons
- Resident committees
- Schools
- Social housing providers
- Social care providers
- Supported housing providers (providing mental health services, substance misuse, learning disabilities, etc)
B. Timetable

- Deadline for entries – Friday 24th January, 2014
- Shortlist announced – Friday 21st February, 2014
- Winners announced – April 2014

C. Rules and procedures

1. Entries must be completed using this entry form and submitted electronically here

2. Receipt of all entries submitted online will be automatically acknowledged.

3. Entrants may be asked to provide further information.

4. The judges' decision is final. Awards will be made at the judges' discretion and no correspondence will be entered into concerning any decision. Not all the awards advertised may be awarded if the judges consider the criteria have not been met. Additional commendations may be made at the judges' discretion.

5. The content of any entry may be used for informing other practitioners and also for publicity purposes unless the entrant withholds their consent to this in writing.

6. Entrants are deemed to have accepted these rules and procedures and to have agreed to be bound by them when entering this competition.

D. Your Entry

Please do not exceed 1500 words in total.

1. Name of the project you are entering for The City of London Growing Localities Awards 2013/2014

   "Grow to Sell" Family Allotment Sessions

2. Award category you are entering

   Gardening and Growing Food

3. Describe your project in one sentence

   Family Allotment Sessions for local parents with pre-school children, teaching nutrition, growing and then cooking the produce together with enabling parents to also raise money from the sale of some of the produce to put back funding into the project.
4. Specify the setting(s) where your project is delivered (eg homeless agency, housing organisation etc)?

Community Allotment situated in the courtyard of Cafe Gallery (purpose-built art gallery on the site of Southwark Park’s former café). Participants in the allotment comprise the residents of the dense social housing that surrounds the park.

5. What are the project's objectives?

The aim of this two-year project is to build upon the successful learning that we have developed over the past four years at the allotment (increased environmental awareness, understanding food, growing skills for local families, tackling of social isolation). With "Grow to Sell" we extend these learning opportunities to bring parents into the world of work through gardening.

By connecting with local business, we will expand the geographical horizons of parents, thereby making a direct connection between our local residents (Ofsted reports that pupils in local schools demonstrate higher than average levels of socio-economic deprivation indicators such as those in receipt of free meals, learning difficulties and special needs) to the more affluent areas of Southwark such as More London, London Bridge and Borough Market.

Furthermore, participation in our community allotment will raise awareness of where food comes from (ie Food does not just come from Tesco’s) through teaching parents and children how to grow food, supplying them with plants to take home and by encouraging healthy eating by cooking as much as possible of the produce we grow in during the gardening sessions.

6. What are the project's activities?

Friday Allotment sessions led by a trained community gardener providing local parents and carers of pre-school children with a free and accessible communal activity that both teaches new skills and contributes to social integration through the families’ engagement in collective activities. The sessions operate on a free drop-in basis so that parents can access (without the need for booking) once they have dropped older children off at school.

Adults and children learn how to care for plants and vegetables, both at the allotment and at home with plants we give them for their balconies. We plant vegetables, herbs and flowers, harvest them and where possible turn them into saleable produce. In 2013 we sold lavender bags, bunches of herbs, seed bombs, plants and Christmas wreaths at Bermondsey Carnival and Borough Market. The sessions regularly attract more than twenty adults and children each week and run from April to December. In 2013, we recorded a total of eight hundred visits throughout the year. Many parents express a keen interest in returning to work or finding a new career path and these sessions offer a “soft” introduction to trade and employment outside of the home (for example having a stall at Borough Market) through their development of social and gardening skills at our allotment.

Included within the Community Allotment’s growing year is the highly popular Family Master Chef. During the school summer holidays, we provide three days of cooking the produce that the families had grown in the allotment. Children keenly harvest the vegetables, made fresh pasta, pesto, juices, salads and then combine these with BBQ vegetables. Having worked together to make the food, the
families then eat the food together in the allotment. In 2013, Family Master Chef attracted over sixty adults and children and comprised a wide social mix of local residents. These enjoyable activities were also filmed and this resulting video was featured as part of Urban Food Week in 2013.

The Family Master Chef video can be viewed at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kx9PjBCih-4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kx9PjBCih-4)

The film was also shown by Project Manager Bridget Virden at a conference in Turkey comprising ten other organisations actively working with families across Europe as part of “What’s on My Plate” – a Europe-wide project to raise the profile of healthy eating amongst disadvantaged families.

### 7. What has been the impact / achievement of the project?

Around three hundred families visit throughout the whole year (April to December). They have fed back that attending the project has influence what they eat and how they cook at home, with an increase in consumption of fruit and vegetables. They have also sent in pictures of plants we have given them growing at home – some of which they have harvested and eaten. In this way we are spreading food-growing spaces across Bermondsey – many balconies in block of flat now have plants thanks to our project.

Eight Families helped us run our stall at Borough Market.

Three Families helped run a stall at Bermondsey Carnival.

Produce was grown in the allotment for three days of harvesting, cooking and eating over the summer holidays, which attracted many hard to reach children.

Examples of feedback are –

“Made pasta for the first time and it was wonderful watching the amazement on my three years olds face as he discovered where potatoes really came from!”

“We have taken lots of seeds and cuttings home and the whole family has enjoyed watching them grow and been inspired to buy and sell more!

“We can see our children growing and learning so many new things about gardening”.

The film made at Family Master Chef was also shown by Project Manager Bridget Virden at a conference in Turkey comprising ten other organisations actively working with families across Europe as part of “What’s on My Plate” – a Europe-wide project to raise the profile of healthy eating amongst disadvantaged families.
8. How is your project evaluated?

As an arts and learning charity in receipt of public funding we have a thoroughly evolved system for data collection and evaluation. For the Community Allotment the data is collected through:

- Feedback is collected in the sessions from parents and carers in the form of a scrapbook with comments, quotations and observations about the activities.
- Feedback is also collected from partners (i.e. Southwark Adult Education) and recorded for later analysis.
- Attendance figures for each session together with demographic breakdown of those attending are recorded and sent to Southwark Council for assessment every four months.

Using this data, the project is evaluated as follows:

- Post-session evaluation that is undertaken by the Project Manager and the Community Gardener.
- Monthly evaluation of the project’s progress that is undertaken by the Project Manager reporting to the Director, CGP London.
- Quarterly evaluation of the information submitted to Southwark Council both formally by the Project Manager and the Director, CGP London and informally with colleagues at Southwark Council’s Art and Education departments.
- Regular assessment and reporting to the Council of Management of the Bermondsey Artists’ Group.
- An Annual Report that is distributed to all funders, partners and the Council of Management of the Bermondsey Artists’ Group.

9. How would you spend the prize money to develop the project?

To extend our provision through adding an extra day per week to our allotment programme to enable the Rotherhithe Family Centre and Primary School to nominate hard to reach / socially excluded families to attend designated allotment sessions. Experience of such previous partnership working has demonstrated that we can extend our reach, and benefit more of the community, by working with other organisations that are already engaged with hard to reach families in breaking down perceived barriers to participation, issues of self confidence and lack of awareness of local provision.

E. Submitting your entry

Please return this entry form by Friday 24th January 2014 by uploading it on this page.

If you have problems uploading your entry or would like to add documents, photos, videos or other media that are relevant to your entry, please email them to awards@lemosandcrane.co.uk
quoting ‘The City of London Growing Localities 2013/2014 entry’ and your organisation name in the subject heading.

Thank you for your entry.