The City of London Growing Localities Awards 2014/15

A. About the Awards

Lemos&Crane working with The City of London Corporation’s Charity, The City Bridge Trust presents The Growing Localities Awards. Total prize money of £2,500 is offered for projects based in London that demonstrate excellence in using nature to enhance and improve local communities and in particular 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.

To apply for the award you will need to describe what your project already does and to explain how the prize money would be spent to further your work.

This year entries are invited for projects and initiatives in any London borough that involve any one or combination of:

- **Gardening and growing food**: for communal eating and small-scale enterprise
- **Introducing young people to nature**: encouraging young people to develop an interest in nature through bird-watching and similar activities
- **Keeping 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
- **Reclaiming and developing wasteland**: especially led by residents and tenants
- **‘Green’ exercise**: groups for walking, cycling, running, etc with a nature theme
Entries are invited from non-profit organisations such as:

- Homeless agencies
- Supported housing (providing mental health services, substance misuse, etc)
- Social housing providers
- Residential care providers
- Health organisations
- Hospices
- Prisons
- Churches and faith groups
- Other community-based and voluntary organisations.

Entries will be judged based on criteria including:

- **Originality** – the distinctiveness and memorability of the project idea
- **Replicability** – how others could be inspired by and run similar projects themselves
- **Reach** – the numbers of people involved in the project, particularly in engaging the wider community
- **Diversity** – of people engaged, particularly those who are ‘hard to reach’ or have challenging needs and who are brought together with the local community
- **Impact** – of the project (demonstrated qualitatively or quantitatively) on people’s health, well-being, relationships, skills, knowledge, sense of purpose and belonging.

**B. Timetable**

- Deadline for entries – **Wednesday 17 December, 2014**
- Shortlist announced – **End of March 2015**
- Winners announced – **June 2015**

**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 project you are entering for The Growing Localities Awards

Father Nature’s ‘Growing Dads’ Project.

2. Describe your project in one sentence

The Father Nature ‘Growing Dads’ Project gives young Lambeth fathers the skills to teach their kids about growing food, and connecting with nature.

3. Specify the setting(s) where your project is delivered (e.g. homeless agency, social housing, prison, community, etc.)?

The project takes place at the Max Roach and Dexter playgrounds, and Myatt’s Fields Park, in Brixton, London.

4. What are the project’s objectives?

Father Nature ‘skill up’ young fathers in Lambeth to combat worklessness, teach life skills, and promote responsible fathering models. One dad said ‘It's all about growing, by doing some digging, shoulder to shoulder, and focusing on a physical aim, issues can be shared rather than taking a more direct confrontational approach’.

Roughly 50% of children in the local area come from low income families, the majority of whom live in social housing, with limited or no access to gardens. Intergenerational worklessness is high and gang rivalry is prevalent. Many parents are concerned for the safety of their children and don't allow them to go to nearby green spaces. In addition, there is an endemic lack of understanding about links between, environment, exercise and healthy lifestyles. Children in high-rise urban areas where rates of crime are high do not
have a strong appreciation of nature and are often isolated, which affects their
development. Young children are active learners, and use all of their senses to enhance
their natural curiosity and motivation. Father Nature nurtures this inquisitiveness by
teaching life skills that can be passed onto the next generation; respect and understanding
for nature, healthy eating and sustainability, as well as practical skills in gardening and the
business of gardening. We also promote responsible fathering in the local area, raising,
identifying and discussing parenting issues.

The ‘Growing Dads’ project builds community partnerships to create a learning resource
which stimulates interest in the environment, develops knowledge and understanding of
plants and insects and improves the local environment in an urban context whilst also
encouraging healthier lifestyles.

‘Growing Dads’ encourages community involvement and cohesion through partnership
working. Every person who takes part in this project benefits in terms of skills and
knowledge of horticulture, protection/value of the environment, understanding of climate
and knowledge of the natural world. This new knowledge and skill base helps to raise the
aspirations of all participants and inspires young local dads and their kids to take pride in
their local and global environment. Furthermore, through the involvement of Father Nature
partners St Michael’s Fellowship and the Royal Horticultural Society at Capel Manor, fathers
(and children age 4 years and above) have the opportunity to gain AQA qualifications
towards City and Guilds/RHS Horticultural and Business Awards.

5. What are the project’s activities?

The majority of the heavy preparation and maintenance work is carried out by local dads,
but overseen by skilled Father Nature workers. We build raised beds and natural habitats
that dads and children can access in order to develop a greater understanding and respect
of nature. Dads are coached to encourage their children to work together in understanding
the wild environment, learning to take sensible and measured risks and develop skills such
as basic carpentry in a carefully managed way. Alternative funding has been secured for
eight training sessions take place early in 2015 at Myatt’s Fields Park greenhouse to kick
start the growing season before planting out in Max Roach and Dexter playground areas. Children have the opportunity to play games to establish a love of outdoor learning; work in teams to build dens; forage for and identify bugs and plants, learn how to make a fire (without matches or a lighter) and boil water using a storm kettle. Natural surfaces combined with meadow plants encourage bees, butterflies and other insects, which are another source of learning, in structured sessions.

6. What has been the impact / achievement of the project?

Father Nature won the Lambeth Green Business award after teaching Dads and their kids how to grow vegetables for a season, and make and sell chutney. A third of the fathers involved in that season’s growing have gone on to full time work. All of the fathers involved felt that the experience gave them more confidence and gave them and their families a feeling of purpose and well-being.

Our partners St Michael’s Fellowship (who refer disadvantaged families to Father Nature) recently won the Fatherhood Institute ‘Dads Included’ Award.

Myatt’s Fields Park in conjunction with Father Nature and the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association have held four sleepovers in the park for disadvantaged kids with another six planned in other parks across London in 2015, to which participants of the ‘Growing Dads’ project will be invited. Furthermore Myatt’s Fields Park committee have awarded grants of £250 to enable the initial horticultural training and early season growing at their greenhouse.

7. How would you spend any prize money to further your project/initiative?

We need £1250 for our dads to build more robust raised beds at Max playground before the next growing season (2015), and buy the tools and seeds required to grow food there, and pay for Father Nature coaching sessions throughout the 2015 growing season.
E. Submitting your entry

Please return this entry form by 5pm, Wednesday 17, Dec 2014 by uploading it on this page.

Please add any documents, photos, videos or other media that are relevant to your entry and email them to awards@lemosandcrane.co.uk quoting ‘Growing Localities award entry’ and your organisation name in the subject heading.

If you have any problems uploading your entry please also email awards@lemosandcrane.co.uk

Thank you for your time and effort which is much appreciated. Good luck!