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 DEVELOPING 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

   Myatt’s Fields Park food project

2. Award category you are entering

   Gardening and growing food – for communal eating and small-scale enterprise

3. Describe your project in one sentence

   We use the park greenhouse to support ten local food growing projects on housing estates,
schools and local parks, and also to grow food for cooking projects and our café

4. Specify the setting(s) where your project is delivered (eg homeless agency, housing organisation etc)?

Public park (greenhouse), housing estates, schools, public parks (growing projects)

5. What are the project’s objectives?

Myatt’s Fields Park is surrounded by large housing estates where thousands of people live on very low incomes, with high levels of unemployment, poor quality health and poor social cohesion.

The project aims to:

a) Promote healthy living through food growing and cooking
b) Provide opportunities for people to learn new skills
c) Bring people together and reduce isolation

It targets people living on low incomes, who are at risk of health problems caused by living in deprivation, as well as people who are isolated (especially older people and young families) and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

6. What are the project’s activities?

We brought the park’s derelict greenhouse back into use in 2009 and since then have been working with local people to grow vegetables for community use.

Our food growing activities include:

a) Supporting ten local food growing projects in schools, parks and housing estates. We provide training sessions at their sites, an annual grant of £250 for materials and they use our greenhouse to germinate their own seedlings
b) Developing our greenhouse as a centre of excellence for urban food growing
c) Supported volunteering: ten volunteers help grow food during the week and we hold monthly greenhouse open days. Volunteers are supported to gain accredited horticultural qualifications
d) Growing food for community cooking programmes and our park café: in the summer of 2013 we used 400kg of food from the greenhouse or the equivalent of
4690 meals grown

The food we grow is used in a variety of food projects including:

e) Community cooking including: food hero sessions (local people teach each other to cook on Saturdays); young food heroes (all the children in a local primary school picked and cooked vegetables); a weekly retired people’s lunch (older people enjoy a home cooked meal once a week); and a family cook and eat breakfast club; an intergenerational cooking project where experienced parents teach new parents to cook and a Caribbean food mapping project tracing the history of Caribbean food culture.

f) Our park café opened four days a week over the past three years, offering food sourced in our greenhouse.

g) Annual events including a harvest festival, pancake day, summer fair and sleepover where families are given food grown in the greenhouse and cooked by our food heroes. We sell seedlings at events so people can grow food at home

h) Our greenhouse food is used by other local charitable groups for cooking activities: Roots and Shoots bring young people with learning difficulties; Kids Company bring families living in deprivation; Brixton People’s Kitchen cook waste and surplus food and a refugee women’s project offers training and cooking bread making sessions.

We also work with partners including the Lambeth Food Partnership, Incredible Edible Lambeth and the Edible Lambeth project to develop infrastructure to support food growing.

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

Through City Bridge Trust, we are proud to be supporting ten fantastic growing projects in 2 schools, 2 parks and 6 housing estates around Myatt’s Fields Park. Project leaders report that thanks to our hugely knowledgeable community gardener Fabrice Boltho, their knowledge (and that of participants) of growing food has increased, more people are growing more food, more varieties of food and for longer in the season. Fabrice’s knowledge of world food has further engaged people from diverse communities in projects eg “Our Bangladeshi growers are much more engaged because they are delighted by his knowledge of their food” (Cowley Food Farm). Fabrice has helped draw up planting plans, worked with project volunteers to germinate hundreds of plants at our greenhouse which have been planted at their sites, run regular training sessions for adults and children at their sites and run activities at school fairs. Numbers of local people involved vary from 15 on a housing estate growing scheme (up from 7 originally) to dozens of parents in a primary school who learned about planting at a school fair, and were given 240 plants to grow at home. We are delighted to be supporting projects that are developing growing spaces that benefit the active volunteers, but also everyone using the schools, parks and housing estates.
Volunteering: ten regular volunteers per year learned more about food growing while volunteering at Myatt’s Fields Park. Most of the regular volunteers are unemployed or low income and many have mental health issues. They report that they know more about growing food, feel they make a contribution to their community as well as eating more healthily and being happier. Our monthly volunteering sessions attract people from a range of backgrounds, which brings the community together.

Training and employment: we have employed a community gardener, two café managers, two café assistants, a marketing officer and two food managers, all of whom were unemployed or not employed in their chosen field before they worked on our food programme. We have supported 3 greenhouse volunteers to gain accredited qualifications, provided 18 people with food safety qualifications, 15 with first aid qualifications, 9 with Barista training. We have employed 50 local people as food heroes (most unemployed or low income) and built a bank of local cooks who have since been employed in catering. All reported greater confidence in their cooking and a great sense of satisfaction in sharing their culture with other people.

Cooking programmes, café and events: In May 2013, we calculated that 22,666 opportunities to try food grown in the greenhouse had been offered to local people through our food sessions, café and events between 2011 and 2013. People engaged in these activities come from all backgrounds (the food heroes represented 20 different cultures) and targeted activities reach people from BME backgrounds and people living in deprivation. When asked about the impact of the food projects (retired people’s lunch club, food heroes and parents’ breakfast club), people reported they felt less stressed, had more local friends, learned to cook new dishes, started eating more healthily and spent more time with other people. People have benefited from the opportunity to come together as a community, eat good food and learn about other people’s culture as well as eating fresh, locally grown food (see our film about our food projects on the home page of www.myattsfieldspark.info) and see our Impact Assessment 2012).

8. How is your project evaluated?

We use questionnaires to evaluate the success of projects, (see attached for summaries of questionnaires from food heroes, food projects and food growing projects)
We keep registers during all food and gardening sessions, asking people for information where appropriate about physical/mental health
We estimate the number of people attending events and use photography to monitor ethnicity of attendees
We use sales information to calculate café use
We ask for postcodes and map where our participants live (and therefore can see if they live in areas of deprivation) (see attached)
We keep a training register
We monitor progress into employment of people who have been engaged in employment or training schemes
We interview participants on film about their experience of our projects
We carry out impact assessments for the local community: see attached for impact assessment 2012

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

We would use the funding to start an apprenticeship scheme at Myatt’s, where volunteers who have received accredited horticultural training would be paid to support the food growing projects and some community food growing engagement activities in the park. The apprentices would lead planting days at Myatt’s (new fruit bushes/food growing areas) which would advertise the greenhouse project and help towards our ambition of being an “edible park”. They would support the food growing projects by leading sessions eg for children after school. Several of the groups have said they would very much like additional support in running extra and regular activities as they could then engage more people and grow more food. It would build the skills and employability of the apprentices and add to the capacity of our local community in food growing.

Materials: Fruit shrubs and food plants for the park: £300

Apprenticeship scheme: £7 an hour x 3 people x 100 hours = £2100

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.