



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NORTH HILLS COMMUNITY OUTREACH RECEIVES \$30,000 “SEEDS OF CHANGE”
GRANT WITH COMMUNITY’S HELP**

NHCO’s Rosalinda Sauro Sirianni Garden is one of only two community gardens in the country to receive the large grant

Pittsburgh, PA – North Hills Community Outreach’s Rosalinda Sauro Sirianni Garden recently received a \$30,000 grant from Seeds of Change, after receiving enough online votes from the community to be considered for a grant award. Seeds of Change, a producer of sustainably grown organic seeds and nutritious organic foods, awarded \$310,000 in total grants to 24 garden projects around the country to recognize the value of food, farming, sustainability and nutrition education. The annual grant program benefits select school and community gardening and farming programs in the United States that focus on food, farming, sustainability and nutrition education.

“One of the greatest parts of winning this grant was knowing that we had the support of the community,” said Sharon Wolf, NHCO’s executive director. “Everything we do, from feeding families and meeting their most basic needs, to helping people find better employment and education opportunities, is done because community members support us. By voting, people demonstrated that they trust us to serve the most vulnerable in their neighborhoods. We feel blessed to have that honor.”

North Hills Community Outreach is a nonprofit serving local families in hardship and poverty in northern Allegheny County through more than 20 programs. NHCO submitted an application highlighting how they would use a Seeds of Change Grant to grow their gardening program and nourish a healthier, greener community. The NHCO garden, located in Bellevue, is a community organic garden which, with the help of many volunteers, produces thousands of pounds of fresh, organic fruits and vegetables annually for low-income families who receive food from NHCO’s three food pantries.

Alyssa Crawford, NHCO’s garden and youth coordinator, noted that the grant not only will help feed hungry families, but will support education efforts in the garden. “There is a huge educational component to what we do here,” Crawford said. “Volunteers, including young people, participate in every step from hoeing to weeding and harvesting. Youth groups and school groups learn about sustainability and food justice issues by working in the garden, in educational programs in the schools and through presentations at conferences. There’s so much this garden offers the local and broader community.”

NHCO received the grant following a close evaluation of several hundred applicants, and a public voting period, and a competition among the 50 gardens receiving the most votes. Twenty-four gardens received grants: 12 school gardens and 12 community gardens. Of those, 10 school gardens and 10 community gardens received \$10,000, two school gardens received \$25,000, and two community gardens – one of which was NHCO's garden – received \$30,000.

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Media are invited to attend the check presentation ceremony / photo opportunity Wednesday, May 24 at 2:00 p.m. in the Rosalinda Sauro Sirianni Garden, 119 Davis Avenue, Bellevue.

To RSVP for the ceremony, or to arrange an interview with NHCO Executive Director Sharon Wolf or Garden and Youth Coordinator Alyssa Crawford, please contact Director of Communications Jennifer Kissel at the email or phone number above.

Photos attached:

- Employees from SAP Ariba are briefed by Garden Coordinator Alyssa Crawford at a recent volunteer work day.
- Kohl's employees recently volunteered in the garden, planting spring crops.
- Root vegetables grown in the garden.

About NHCO's Rosalinda Sauro Sirianni Garden

The Rosalinda Sauro Sirianni Garden, located in Bellevue, is a program of North Hills Community Outreach, which serves people in crisis, hardship and poverty. The garden produces fresh, organic fruits and vegetables for the 1,400 low-income families (more than 4,100 people) who receive food from NHCO's three food pantries annually. An abundance of research suggests that inadequate food or lack of healthy food can have detrimental effects on the physical, mental and emotional health of adults and children. During the 2016 growing season, the garden produced 4,500 pounds of organic produce with the help of 194 volunteers. The garden also has a strong education component in place for children and the community, provides student leadership opportunities, and provides volunteer opportunities for corporate and civic groups and families.

About Seeds of Change

Seeds of Change® was founded in 1989 by passionate gardeners with a vision to make organically grown seeds available to gardeners and farmers, while preserving countless heirloom seed varieties in danger of being lost to the "advances" of modern industrial agriculture. For 27 years, we have remained true to our original vision by offering a wide selection of organic seeds including heirloom, traditional, and rare seeds. Our seeds are produced through a network of certified organic family farms and professional growers. Through these partnerships, we continually cultivate study and develop seeds with the goal of producing the finest certified organic varieties to share with our fellow gardeners and farmers. In 1997 our business expanded to also include Organic Food inspired by the notion that great taste and sustainability go hand in hand. We now offer a wide variety of Ready to Heat organic Rice and Grain varieties. For more information about Seeds of Change® visit www.seedsofchange.com for our seed products and www.seedsofchangefoods.com for our food products. For additional information, please contact us at the information provided above or at Seeds of Change®, P.O. Box 4908, Rancho Dominguez, CA 90220.