

The West Bank Community Development Center (WBCDC) is here to help!!

Activities and Resources for Residents

Assistance for Residents of Riverside Homes and Blue Goose

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused hardships for many community members. The Illeys Dariis program of the West Bank Community Development Corporation (WBCDC) has resources to assist households who live in WBCDC-owned housing. Please see the article below this one for more details about the program

- * Prepared refrigerated meals
- * Groceries
- * Hygiene supplies including diapers, soaps, menstrual supplies, etc.
- * Winter clothing (coats, gloves, etc)

If your household would benefit by receiving any of the above resources please contact Ayan Isaq at the West Bank CDC office at ayan.isaq@wbcdc or 612-437-3864.
Leave a message with your name and phone number.

A distribution schedule will be developed after hearing from interested household and you will be contacted with Instructions for picking up supplies at the Bailey Building at 1808 Riverside Avenue.

A limited number of garden plots in the Timber Park Community Gardens (19th Ave and I94 Soundwall) may be available for summer 2021. If you are interested please contact:
Ayan at 612-437-3864 ayan.isaq@wbcdc.org or David at hoffdach@wbcdc.org



Illeys Dariis (Neighborhood Light) During A Global Pandemic

by Shelly Pacheco, Augsburg University

Illeys Dariis is a community organizing initiative of West Bank CDC to build and support community connections among residents of the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis. Until the Coronavirus pandemic, the program focused on building community through gatherings, social events, and classes for residents. When the pandemic hit the USA, the Illeys Dariis program responded to the hardships facing the Cedar-Riverside community by gathering and distributing donated supplies and food, shared emergency funds and providing physical and mental health support. Ayan Isaq, the community organizer and driving force of Illeys Dariis, is now more often delivering meals than doing engagement activities. Fortunately, even during the pandemic, we had the opportunity to hire a new intern from Augsburg University, Shelley Pacheco.

Transportation is a major challenge for the community. Residents often don't drive due to the weather or lack of a car. Ayan and Shelley, using Ayan's car, have been delivering frozen meals to the community every Friday. The frozen meals come from Campus Kitchen at Augsburg University and The University of Minnesota kitchen.

Minnesota is known for the cold weather. Illeys Dariis, in addition to delivering food, has been providing gift cards for those in need of clothing for the winter and other basic necessities. So far, we have given over \$15,000 worth of clothing and other support. Anyone that may be interested in receiving support please call Ayan at 612-437-3864.

As we all know, the pandemic has led the world to be virtual. Schools and jobs are currently online, and this has led parents to deal with technology. Oftentimes, adults aren't well-educated on how to use a computer even less how to log into Zoom. We have been working to teach the community about the basics of a computer. Classes will be held at the West Bank CDC office two days a week. The goal for these classes is for families to be aware of what goes on in the daily lives of their kids, we want to educate the community on how to use basic technology.

8 Easy to Follow Tips to a More Sustainable Urban Gardening Project

From the plant a seed and see what grows foundation

1. Composting

This first tip is one of the more obvious ones. Composting is a sustainable method that turns food waste into soil. It taps into the natural biological process where living organisms such as bacteria, fungi and earthworms break down organic matter and convert it into a soil conditioner, or *compost*. Examples of everyday organic matter conducive to composting include coffee filters, tea, dried brown leaves, and food scraps. You're off to a great start when your urban gardening project adopts a composting practice!

2. Rain Barrels for Watering

Instead of tapping into the nearest faucet, position rain barrels throughout your community garden and capture rainwater. Rain barrels will provide your garden with a wealth of sustenance.

3. Plant Sustainable /Heirloom Seeds

Using sustainable seeds (those harvested from non-GMO plants that are grown without synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides) for your crops will go a long way towards greener gardening. Heirloom gardening in particular is a growing trend. Heirloom plants are open-pollinated (they rely on natural pollination from insects or the wind), are raised from seeds that are many generations old, and are grown using traditional/sustainable techniques. Developing an understanding of seed preservation methods will also help you maintain your sustainable community garden well into the future.

4. Natural Pesticides

While there are eco-friendly pesticides most sustainable community gardens have taken a pesticide-free pledge. There are far more natural ways to keep insects and pests at bay – like birds. Invite these feathered natural predators into your garden by installing feeders, birdhouses, and bird baths. Not only will they keep the insect population in check their waste adds to your composting needs. Beneficial insects are also an effective and environmentally friendly pesticide. Pest-control bugs include ladybugs, aphid parasites, and the instantly recognizable praying mantis.

5. Attract Bees

Bees naturally pollinate crops and will help you maintain the health of your urban garden. Native bees have co-evolved with native plants. You all want to attract them by growing native plant species. Annual and perennial flowers (native to your region) will work, as will certain herbs (including basil, dandelion, and mint), fruits (including blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries) and vegetables (including cucumber, peas, and squash).

6. Recycled Garden Supplies

There is no need to buy anything new when securing supplies for your community garden. Old around-the-home items (from popsicle sticks to broom handles) can be converted into planting stakes. Wornout clothes can be used as cleaning rags. Concrete blocks and bricks can serve as garden path stepping stones. Simply look around the home, garage, and backyard for inspiration. Also get into the habit of combing through local yard sales for used (and cheap) garden hoes, shovels, watering cans, and more.

7. Reclaimed Wood Fencing

A fence is essential to sectioning off and protecting your urban garden. There is no need to use fresh lumber, chain link, or plastic in its construction. Use reclaimed wood from old pallets, furnishing, and other abandoned resources to build your fence.

8. Repurposing Old Items as Planting Beds

Repurposing old furniture, automotive/industrial wares, recreational equipment and other hollowed-out items as planting beds is a creative and eco-friendly way to contribute to your community garden. For example, dresser drawers, wheelbarrows, car trunks, and even old canoes can be turned into large planters and add eye-catching appeal to your urban farming project. You can even use old toys (wagons, toy boxes, etc.) which not only serves your planting bed needs, ***it helps get community children more engaged***. The possibilities are endless when you let creativity take charge.