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Friends of Burlington Gardens introduces Healthy City Youth Initiative

*New initiative combines Healthy City's Intervale roots with
Friends of Burlington Gardens' school garden programming*

A new Friends of Burlington Gardens initiative to increase hands-on gardening in Burlington schools takes root next month.

The Healthy City Youth Initiative will support school garden development across the city. The heart of the program is the Healthy City Youth Farm, which will be established on a half acre site at Hunt Middle School in spring 2010. The Youth Farm plan includes multiple raised beds where Burlington students and community volunteers will work side-by-side growing fresh organic produce for summer lunch programs and fall salad bars.

The Healthy City Youth Initiative evolved from the Intervale Center's Healthy City Program, which has provided more than 100 at-risk youths, ages 13 to 16, with summer employment and life skills training since its founding in 2002. During the past eight growing seasons, the program has achieved its mission by creating a community of teens and adults dedicated to growing fresh nutritious food.

On November 2, Healthy City will move from the Intervale Center across the city to its new organizational home with Friends of Burlington Gardens. Healthy City director Jenn McGowan will join the Friends of Burlington Gardens staff as program director.

The Healthy City Youth Initiative and Healthy City Youth Farm are supported by a \$25,000 bridge grant awarded to Friends of Burlington Gardens by the A.D. Henderson Foundation, and a \$20,000 two year grant awarded by the Canaday Family Charitable Trust. Additional funders and business sponsors will be announced as support is received.

The Intervale Center and Friends of Burlington Gardens agree that the transition provides a unique opportunity to broaden Healthy City's outreach to more students, schools, and grade levels. Friends of Burlington Gardens and the Intervale Center will collaborate to grow and sustain Healthy City as a resource for Burlington and a model for other communities to emulate.

Friends of Burlington Gardens is a grassroots nonprofit founded in 2001 to increase public access to community gardening resources; develop outreach, education, and service-learning programs; ensure that underserved groups have equal opportunities to participate in community gardening; and cultivate political support for gardens through networking, advocacy, and activism. Friends of Burlington Gardens facilitates the Vermont Community Garden Network which links together more than 180 community, school, and neighborhood gardens statewide.

To learn more about Friends of Burlington Gardens and the Healthy City Youth Initiative, visit <http://www.burlingtongardens.org/HealthyCity.html>.

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