I pledge to grow more food.

www.VictoryGardenInitiative.org

The Story of Food

THIS IS A GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT.
MOVE GRASS. GROW FOOD.
Story of SELF

What is MY FOOD STORY
Rural Illinois
The Rural Garden
Home Food Preservation
Hunting
The Pack

1980: $25,000
Employed 1400

The guy I ran into last week:
$11/hour in 2012!!
The Picket Line

- To Farmland, to IBP, to Smithfield Foods

- $6/hour all
- Seniority gone
- Entire operations moved to Mexico
Mom Goes to College
Gretchen Gets Independence
Without realizing what happened, my personal food system went from local, largely organic, home-grown, whole food source to the standard, highly-processed American diet, of corn syrup, meat, wheat and cheese, and I got sick.
Becoming a Farmer
Yum
Beyond Self – This is not an individual experience.
Story of Us
What is OUR FOOD STORY
Many Lenses

• Health
• Social Justice – Access and Affordability
• Food Sovereignty
• Food Security
• Ecological
• Community
How do urban folks connect to the earth?
Why is THIS force fed?
Why is morbid obesity side by side with starvation?
How much oil do we need?
Energy intensive monocropping
How many people do you know that take pills for food related illness?
• And... Let's talk about mental illness.
Why do we allow this story to continue?
Discomfort
Fear
Sadness
Permission
Hope
Commitment
Affection
Power
WE are the ones.
What’s your plan?
- Food and Farm Bill
  - GMOs
  - Federal, State and Local
Solutions - Market

• Creating Local/Small Scale Farmers – Springdale
• Creating demand for local/organic foods
• Recreating a system that sells farm direct – Farmer’s Market
• Local processing – Martha’s Cheese
• Season Extending
Ah HA!
VGI’s Story of NOW
Solutions - Grassroots

Grow your own food!
Connects us to the environment
The New Front Porch
Immediately Accessible
Promotes Self-Sufficiency
Creates more secure food system
Reduces Energy Consumption
Engages Communities with each other AND towards solutions
Gets People Outside
Reduces Criminal Activity
Engages Children in EATING
Visible Manifestation
Direct Action

EAT YOUR YARD
Fosters a Barter Economy
Improves Urban Ecosystem

The Trust for Urban Ecology and BTCV presents

Wildlife City

Green gardening in small spaces
Ideas for sustainable living
Wildlife Gardening
Water Conservation

Celebrating 50 years of wildlife volunteering in the city

- Wildlife Pond
  - A wildlife pond safe for toddlers

- Grey water irrigation
  - Mini reed-beds and Willow walls

Loggery
- Stag Beetle Loggery,
- Fern Garden

Sedum carpet
- Sedum roofed Hibernacula

Native Trees and Shrubs

Habitat Towers
- Lacewing boxes
- Moth box
- Spider box
- Leaf cutter bee box
- Butterfly feeder box
- Mining Bee Boxes
- Wren box
- Bird Boxes

Newt and frog hibernacula
- Hedgehog box
- Duck nesting box
Allows Greater control over our food system
Physical Activity
Spiritual/ Therapeutic Activity
What is a Victory Garden?
World War II Victory Gardens
Food Preservation

“We’ll have lots to eat this winter, won’t we Mother?”

Grow your own
Can your own
Our Food is Fighting!
Even Before WWII
Which Founding Father?

Finally, there seem to be but three Ways for a Nation to acquire Wealth. The first is by War as the Romans did in plundering their conquered Neighbours. This is Robbery. The second by Commerce which is generally Cheating. The third by Agriculture the only honest Way; wherein Man receives a real Increase of the Seed thrown into the Ground, in a kind of continual Miracle wrought by the Hand of God in his favour, as a Reward for his innocent Life, and virtuous Industry.
Which Founding Father?

“Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands.”
Thomas Jefferson
We believe that every person, in every household, can connect to their food source through the act of growing it. This act reminds us that we are of the earth, that we cannot live without the earth’s resources and that our needs are not met by the economy, but by the earth. Growing food reintegrates humans with ecology, guiding our culture toward a sustainable, abundant future, free from financial inequality and connect to the earth and to each other.
VICTORY
GARDEN
INITIATIVE
Our Mission

- Build communities who grow their own food, reintegrating human and food ecology and building a resilient food culture, from seed to soil to plate, to seed.
Our Slogan

This is a grassroots movement. Move grass. Grow food.
MOVE GRASS. GROW FOOD.
Our Vision

- We envision a world in which growing our own food, at our own homes, is a way of life. Envision our world transformed into an abundant and sustainable ecosystem through the reintroduction of food growing in our urban ecology. VGI uses’s organic, biodynamic, and permaculture principles to educate people to grown their own food in a way that not only feeds people, but also feeds the ecology that we are part. When fruit trees fill our parks, and our neighbors harvest nut trees, when food pantries house vegetable gardens, and school children participate in growing their lunches, we will have a secure, sovereign, socially just, and sustainable food system.
Our Culture

- Victory Garden Initiative’s philosophy is expressed through our organizational culture, which we described as: solution and action oriented, charismatic, energetic, creative, purposeful, practical, collaborative, community building, self-sufficient, edge-pushing, and often, urgent.
Our Core Values

- **Core Values**: Social Justice, Environmental Justice, Self-Sufficiency, Community, Health, and Food Sovereignty
People Power

THIS YEAR

200 have Pledged to grow more food by becoming a member.

I pledge to grow more food.

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TAKE THE PLEDGE!

Whereas, growing our own food connects us to the cycle of life, of which we are part;

Whereas, growing our own food turns organic waste into a valuable resource;

Whereas, growing our own food produces the freshest most nutritious, delicious fruit, vegetables and nuts possible;

Whereas, growing our own food builds community;

Whereas, growing our own creates a local food economy;

Whereas, growing our own food promotes self-sufficiency;

Whereas, growing our own food gives all people access to nutritious, high quality produce;

Whereas, growing our own food fosters sustainable, resilient communities

Whereas, growing our own food reintegrates human and food ecology;

I Pledge to Grow My Own Food!
THE BLITZ

Installed 2000 Gardens, half for low-income folks, free or reduced prices.
I pledge to grow more food.

VictoryGardenInitiative.org
Food Leader Program

- Trained 50 Community Food Organizers. Half low-income women.
Accomplishments

Our Food Leaders have:

• Installed gardens at universities and churches

• Led fundraiser to install a hoop house at UWM

• Created start-up microgreens co. to end world hunger

• Launched inner city compost initiative

• Turned rental properties into mini homesteads

• Started gardening programs for at risk teens

• Supported VGI’s childrens gardening programs

• TOOK A JOB WITH AN AWESOME ORG – VGI!!

• AND MORE…
Fruity Nutty Campaign

- Installed Five Neighborhood Orchards and Trained Neighborhood Orchardists
- Planted 1000 Nuts Trees
Education

Taught 250 adults how and 300 MPS students to grow food.
To date:

- Turned acres of land into rainwater harvesting opportunities.
- Started a children-led farm stand.
- Rehab one-acre for growing.
- Installed more than 2000 gardens.
- Plant 12 orchards, including one permaculture-based food forest.
- Taught hundreds of children and adults how to grow food.
- Trained 60 people to be Food Leaders.
- Helped feed 1000’s of people good food, that they grew themselves.
Envision

- A harvestable, edible community, that promotes health, community, social justice, ecology, and food security and sovereignty through the act of growing our own food.
What is YOUR story of NOW?

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Food system

YOU!