



Little Green Fingers ...

Los Angeles County's first children's garden collaborative to help improve the health of at-risk toddlers and their families



Champions For Our Children
www.First5LA.org



LA CONSERVATION CORPS



Little Green Fingers is an innovative program designed to address the obesity epidemic in Los Angeles County by creating community gardens for young children and their families. The initiative is being spearheaded by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, in tandem with a number of community partners that make up the Little Green Fingers Team.

THE PROBLEM:

Poor access to healthy foods is making Los Angeles children sick and obese.

- **2/3 of the U.S. population is overweight or obese**, most related to poverty.
- **1 in 5 children in Los Angeles County are overweight or obese.**
- **Over 30 percent of Latino children in Los Angeles have pre-diabetes** and medical disorders that can lead to type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease later in life. These conditions have been linked to high consumption of refined grains and added sugar, coupled with low intake of fruits and vegetables.
- **In South and East Los Angeles, only 1 grocery store exists for every 6,000 residents** (versus West Los Angeles where there is 1 for every 3,800 residents).
- **Only 18 percent of East Los Angeles grocery stores sell fresh fruits and vegetables of good quality** (i.e., not over-ripe or rotting). These "food deserts" or lack of access to healthy, affordable, high quality food, are common in low-income, inner-city communities.

A SOLUTION:

Little Green Fingers – A community garden collaborative for at-risk children will create

community gardens designed for low-income children and their families. By providing access to ongoing supplies of fresh fruits and vegetables in conjunction with nutrition education, the gardens will contribute to young children and their families leading healthier lives and maintaining healthier weights.

The Los Angeles Conservation Corps has created an innovative collaboration to create and sustain **Little Green Fingers**. The partners and team roles include:

- *The Los Angeles Conservation Corps* - project oversight, garden construction
- *First 5 LA* - providing funding for planning and construction
- *Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust* - land acquisition, community organizing
- *Nicole Gatto* (epidemiologist, Community Food Advocate and health science researcher at Loma Linda's School of Public Health) - project evaluation
- *GDML: Glen Dake and Miguel Luna* - landscape architecture and community organizing
- *UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program* - gardening and nutrition education
- *The Better World Group* - strategic communications and partnerships

Little Green Fingers initially **will construct eight (8) community gardens in underserved communities** throughout Los Angeles County between July 2012 and July 2014. The gardens will provide a minimum of **6,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables** each year and will feature on-site amenities and programs targeting families with **children ages 0-5**.

While the initial planning and construction costs are covered by a grant from First 5 LA, there is no funded annual operations budget. The Corps is actively seeking sponsors and in-kind contributors to ensure the gardens will succeed for years and decades to come.

For more information about the program please contact:

Deborah Fryman
Little Green Fingers Program Manager
Los Angeles Conservation Corps
O: 323.526.1460 x122 / C: 213.822.6867 / F: 323.526.1453
dfryman@lacorps.org

