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Interviews can be arranged with Gretchen Mead, Executive Director of Victory Garden Initiative

May 8, 2012

**Press Release** – For Immediate Release

## **Victory Garden Initiative Installs Gardens for Community Groups & Non-profits During Blitz!**

"The Victory Garden Initiative is installing gardens for schools, and community organizations like Pathfinders, Repairers of the Breach, Jewish Family Services, and cooperating with community organizations like Growing Power and the Urban Ecology Center," says Gretchen Mead, Executive Director, Victory Garden Initiative.

People should log onto [VictoryGardenInitiative.org](http://VictoryGardenInitiative.org) by May 15 to order gardens, soil and to volunteer.

Will Allen, CEO, Growing Power, highlights the importance of the Victory Garden Annual Garden Blitz. He shares, "The Victory Garden Initiative is very important in increasing the number of gardens planted in Milwaukee and the entire southeast Wisconsin region and plays a vital role in providing healthy, naturally grown food to people throughout Milwaukee. Growing Power firmly believes that when we develop gardens, we are growing more than just food: the community at large instantly becomes healthier. If youth want to reach their personal and professional goals, eating healthy, local, and naturally grown foods will be a help. Gardens are just one way we, as a community, can help our youth succeed in life."

"Repairers of the Breach has been committed to gardening for many years. We are truly indebted to Victory Garden Initiative for enhancing and sustaining this effort for the homeless community of Milwaukee. Our members of this day shelter enthusiastically participate in planting, care and harvest. The new raised beds will produce a bountiful harvest," says Patrice, a long term volunteer.

"Pathfinders decided to work with the Victory Garden Initiative to install the garden beds at Pathfinders because growing our own food provides a turn key solution to so many issues that we are facing. We don't have all tools available to create a raised be from scratch or a way to transport the soil to fill the bed, so we worked with VGI to donate the gardens enabling Pathfinders to begin growing some of their own food," says Jill Hepburn, Pathfinder volunteer and garden donor.

Jewish Family Services (JFS) is pleased to participate in the Great Milwaukee Victory Garden Blitz. Individuals with chronic mental illness will benefit from being out in the fresh air, working as a team and increasing their health and well-being, self-esteem and overall sense of hope. JFS staff will use the harvest to teach basic cooking skills to our clients as a way to reduce their reliance on highly processed and less nutritious foods," explains Sylvan Leabman, President/CEO of Jewish Family Services.

Help Victory Garden Initiative Blitz Install Gardens the week of May 19-26th or order one for yourself or your favorite community group.

There are three ways you can get involved.

1) Buy a garden, or two from us. Organic soil is also available to order. Raised bed gardens are \$150 each. [Visit our website to buy a garden.](#)

- 2) Donate to help someone else grow food who cannot afford the garden. (\$150 sponsors someone or an organization to have a garden. This year we will be helping many organizations install community gardens.
- 3) Get groups of friends together and install gardens for us. We have volunteer opportunities over 8 days and across the county. Visit our website to volunteer.

Donate, sign up to help, identify your team or add your garden location through our website: [www.VictoryGardenInitiative.org](http://www.VictoryGardenInitiative.org)

We need hundreds of volunteers to install as many gardens as possible throughout the city. Our goal is to double past Blitz events by installing at least 300 gardens. **Gardens help feed Milwaukee with fresh, organic food.**

Supporters include: CNH, the West Allis Department of Health, and the CNH, the West Allis Health Department, City of Milwaukee's Neighborhood Development Investment Corporation, Blifferts Lumber, and more.

Mead adds, "With generous support from our partners, we are able to expand our 2012 capacity to plant hundreds residential gardens. This will enable hundreds of Milwaukee county residents to grow their own food. Their generous support will allow us to provide garden beds at a sliding scale fee or for free to families in need."

Victory Garden Initiative builds communities who grow food, reintegrating human and food ecology; advancing a resilient food culture: from soil, to seed, to plate, to soil. When everyone is a farmer, we will have a socially and environmentally just food system. Find out more a [www.victorygardeninitiative.org](http://www.victorygardeninitiative.org)

**Move Grass. Grow Food**

Victory Garden Initiative, 1700 E. Olive, Shorewood, WI 53211