



For Immediate Release

Media Contacts:

Jake Seltman, jake@growpittsburgh.org, 412-362-4769 x201

Diana Maddock, diana.maddock@greenmountain.com, 713-537-5025

Grow Pittsburgh Builds New Greenhouses and Agricultural Hub in Wilkinsburg

Green Mountain Energy Sun Club provides funding for greenhouses, renovations for agricultural hub and a solar array to offset 100% of the farm's electricity needs

PITTSBURGH – October 15, 2020 – Construction and renovations are set to begin at Grow Pittsburgh's newest production site, Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery in Wilkinsburg later this month. Grow Pittsburgh, a nonprofit with the mission to teach people how to grow food and promote the benefits that gardens bring to our neighborhoods, has been awarded a \$211,000 sustainability grant from the Green Mountain Energy Sun Club. The project, which will fund a new greenhouse space and make improvements for its planned agricultural hub, is expected to be completed by next spring and signals a new chapter for Garden Dreams after nearly two decades as an urban agricultural resource and private business.

The grant will pay for the construction of two new modern greenhouses where an abandoned building has been removed. The farm will be entirely powered by a 14.5 kilowatt (kW) solar array to be installed on-site and will host a workshare program with urban farmers in the region to bolster organic seedling production. Other greenhouse sustainability features include an automated irrigation system, energy curtain system, and climate control technology.

“At Grow Pittsburgh, we believe in growing plants in sunlight, in living soil, and without chemical fertilizers or pesticides,” said Jake Seltman, executive director of Grow Pittsburgh. “So, it made good sense to also have solar energy provide all the power needed for the new greenhouses at Garden Dreams. We're really grateful to Green Mountain Energy Sun Club and all our generous funders for making this project happen.”

Additional improvements in two existing structures on the property include the installation of a new wash and pack workspace, walk-in refrigeration for food production for a farm stand, a teaching kitchen, and space for educational workshops and community events. By creating an agricultural hub and social enterprise in Wilkinsburg, Grow Pittsburgh is building on the Garden Dreams legacy and increasing capacity for urban farmers and gardeners in the region. The site will be home to a retail seedling business, youth job training program, an urban farmer workshare program, and an educational workshop series that will support the strong network of gardeners and urban farmers throughout Allegheny County.



“The Sun Club seeks to empower nonprofits with sustainability solutions, and the new greenhouses and renovations at Garden Dreams will not only serve to educate others but also help address the sustainable sourcing of food with zero impact to the environment,” said Mark Parsons, vice president and general manager for Green Mountain Energy. “We are passionate about supporting organizations that are making positive changes in our communities.”

Sun Club was founded in 2002 by Green Mountain Energy, the nation’s longest-serving renewable energy retailer. Thanks to donations from customers, employees and Green Mountain Energy, Sun Club has awarded \$10 million in grants for nonprofits committed to implementing sustainability projects promoting renewable energy, energy efficiency, resource conservation and environmental stewardship.

Operated by Grow Pittsburgh since January 2020, Garden Dreams was donated to Allegheny Land Trust by former Garden Dreams owner and Grow Pittsburgh co-founder Mindy Schwartz to be preserved as an urban agricultural resource. A re-developed and community land trust-protected Garden Dreams location will serve as an education and workforce development site for young and emerging urban farmers, a gathering space for community events, and an essential food-growing resource for generations to come.

Funding for this capital project has also been provided by Neighborhood Allies, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Posner Foundation, Proteus Foundation, and The Segal Family Foundation. The Garden Dreams project team includes evolveEA, JASE Construction Services, and EIS Solar.

To learn more, visit www.growpittsburgh.org

#####

Grow Pittsburgh

Grow Pittsburgh’s mission is to teach people how to grow food and promote the benefits that gardens bring to our neighborhoods. The organization was founded in 2005, and has been a registered 501(c)(3) entity since 2008. We use growing food as a platform to bring people and communities together, while inspiring them to be healthier individuals, learn new skills, care for the earth, and make our city and region a more livable, equitable and desirable place to be. Please visit our website to learn more about the distinct programs and production sites that provide opportunities for people of all ages to grow their own food. More information can be found at www.growpittsburgh.org.

Green Mountain Energy Sun Club

The Green Mountain Energy Sun Club is a nonprofit organization committed to advancing sustainable communities. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Sun Club® invests in nonprofits and focuses on projects related to renewable energy, energy efficiency, resource conservation and environmental stewardship. Since the program’s founding in 2002, the Sun Club has donated \$10 million to more than 122 projects from nonprofit organizations across Texas and the Northeast. To learn more about the Sun Club or to apply for a Sun Club grant, visit gmesunclub.org.