

Collinwood Friends Community Garden

Katarina Smiley & Ridwan Lawal

TRANSFORMATION PROPOSITION

What are you offering the community?

The Collinwood Friends Garden aims to combat food apartheid in Collinwood by growing and sharing fresh produce with residents. By sowing seeds of liberation on common ground, the garden serves as a space that fosters community building, healing, and connection across generations.

PROBLEM

Why is this needed?

Research indicates a direct correlation between food apartheid and elevated violence, a reality starkly evident in Cleveland's Collinwood neighborhood. The Collinwood Friends Garden is envisioned as a "green intervention," aiming not only to supply the community with healthy food options but also to cultivate the growth of leaders, organizers, and disruptors of injustice through multi-generational engagement. This resident-driven investment ensures long-term sustainability rooted in community ownership.

IMPACT FOR NUTRITION EQUITY

What's happening with this work in the next 6-12 months?

In June 2024, the Collinwood Friends Garden will debut its inaugural leadership development program, The Growing Space: Summer of Healing Cohort. Using a reproductive justice lens, the program will address the urgent need for accessible, culturally competent solutions to combat sexual and gender-based violence in Cleveland, particularly among youth adults. The cohort aims to empower participants to advocate for themselves and others while creating a communal space for wellness activities like yoga, meditation, gardening, and mindfulness exercises. This response directly confronts the escalating issue of sexual violence in Cleveland, highlighted by a 27% increase in reported cases since 2021.



COLLABORATORS

Who else will work with you to bring this to life?

- Sankofa Circle International (\$)
- New Voices for Reproductive Justice
- The Cleveland Foundation (\$)
- The Collaborative for Sexual Health Equity and Learning
- Seven

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- **Volunteer** your time and skills to assist with various activities such as garden maintenance, event organization, or educational workshops.
- **Donate** funds or supplies to help sustain the garden and its programs.
- **Support** the garden by spreading awareness of new program initiatives designed to empower residents in the Collinwood community.



Ridwan Lawal

Ridwan Lawal, born in Nigeria and raised in Maryland, holds a Bachelor's in economics from Goucher College. Now in Cleveland, he's deeply involved in addressing food insecurity and education, serving as a Youth Enrichment Specialist, co-garden manager, and Ella Baker Trainer for CDF Freedom Schools.



Katarina Smiley

Katarina Smiley, a native and rising leader of Cleveland's Collinwood neighborhood, holds a Public Health degree from Kent State University. Dedicated to justice work, Katarina centers radical love and healing in her approach as an organizer, artist, clergy, and co-manager at Collinwood Friends Garden.

STAY CONNECTED



Contact us via email to learn more: katarina@sankofacircleinternational.org

