

Guadalupe Land Trust history

In the early '70's two tireless social activists raised on 'The Hill' (Hilltop), Bob Gallucci and Bill (Bix) Bichsel, S. J., met, and with the help of others in the community, formed the 'G Street Community'. Although they hadn't known each other growing up, both Bob and Bill remembered Hilltop as diverse, lively and close knit, where neighbors were always available to neighbors – even when struggling.

Bob had returned to the neighborhood after serving in World War II, working as a physical therapist and teaching. Bix, taught school and served as Dean of Students at Gonzaga University. Both were alarmed by the challenges of the '70's: homelessness, the displacement from state institutions of the mentally ill as well as the shocking effects of a growing drug culture. The old neighborhood was in serious trouble!

Persuasive and persistent fund raisers and leaders, Bob and Bix involved many people in the development of the community – the founding of the Martin Luther King Jr. Ecumenical Center, the Hospitality Kitchen, the Food Connection, the Neighborhood Clinic and Neighborhood's First are all examples of their success. At 14th and G, they merged, then re-modeled two old houses, creating a twelve bedroom house of hospitality called Guadalupe House that eventually became Tacoma Catholic Worker. This "campus" included the Irma Gary House, the Lewis Jones House and Jean's House.

When Gene Wick began cultivating the terraced property just north of Guadalupe House and sharing the results with his street friends, Bix and Carrie Little, founder of Mother Earth Farm, picked up on Gene's idea and talked neighbors and surrounding property owners into letting them and volunteers cultivate 4.2 acres of unused, neglected green space. They founded the first Community Supported Agriculture operation (CSA) in Tacoma, serving about 40 customers.

In 2001, the Guadalupe Land Trust (GLT) was formed as a 501(c)3 in order to acquire, preserve, promote and maintain green space in the Hilltop neighborhood. The GLT focus became the support and maintenance of two properties - one located on the corner of South 18th St. and S. G St., 'La Grande Community Garden' and S. 14th and G Street, the 'Gallucci Learning Garden'. La Grande has a unique character, largely shaped by our South Vietnamese gardeners who raise their vegetables using the same time tested practices used in their homeland. The Guadalupe Land Trust has made this resource available to community members to grow their own food since early 2002.

Gallucci Learning Garden Project

For most of the past decade, the Gallucci site has sat vacant. But in 2010, Guadalupe Land Trust broke ground on this unique property. The Gallucci Learning Garden is a new effort and represents a large step into a new direction for the Guadalupe Land Trust in engaging the broader community. The new site offers a visually stimulating garden environment with spaces designed for garden-based learning and a beautiful community gathering place. The community is invited to participate in and learn about all phases of local food production including composting, planting, cultivating and harvesting. Prospective gardeners can learn about preparing, cooking and preserving their produce for winter use. People may take advantage of workshops led by expert gardeners in addition to working as volunteers in the garden. These learning experiences are open to children, teens, adults and seniors. Cross-cultural and cross-generational mentoring enables seniors to share their lifetime of gardening experiences with

inexperienced and younger gardeners and allows those of different cultures to share gardening techniques unique to their heritage.

A major part of the site is utilized as an outdoor classroom where students participate in hands-on learning, the fertile soil substituting for a blackboard. Ornamental food garden concepts will illustrate how creatively designed food gardens can visually enhance homes and neighborhoods. Sustainable gardening techniques will be demonstrated throughout the site in addition to a rain garden and other ecologically sound design features, making the garden an example of environmental stewardship. The community gathering place provides a place for neighborhood activities, from potlucks to outdoor movies in summer. Construction of the Gallucci Learning Garden Project was made possible by a Green Partnership Grant from the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation in partnership with Pierce Conservation District, Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department, area businesses and members of the community.

Environmentally sustainable gardening, a growing concern about the safety of our food supply, increased awareness of the benefits of growing our own food, and the importance of healthy diet and exercise in reducing obesity, are all issues that the Guadalupe Land Trust is interested in and are being addressed with programs planned for the Gallucci Learning Garden.