

BUSINESS



Get informed. Stay informed.

Visit our website for regular updates!

▶▶ www.washingtoninformer.com

**Why Leave Home for great photos?
Photos on Wheels will come to you!**
Select any size from wallet to 20x30 – Frames available!

**Robert Ridley
202-889-2478**

**Be sure to
ask about
Special
Discounts!**



**IN 2012, LIVE THE
MILLIONAIRE DREAM!**
www.aplanb4me.com



Residual Income | Be Your Own Boss | Take Your Life Back

877-550-3637

Tell us your story

<http://civilrights.historybeat.com>

Gannett is pleased to partner with the Washington Informer in an effort to capture the untold stories of the Civil Rights Movement, past and present.

**Civil Rights
in America**
Connections to a Movement

- News and features
- Video interviews
- Journey to Justice blog
- Newspages from history
- Share your own story

Nichelle Y. Smith, site manager
civilrights@gannett.com

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

GANNETT *Informer*



Farm Manager Christian Melendez monitors the growth of vegetables at ECO-City Farms in Edmonston, Md./ Victor Holt Photographer

ECO-City Farm: Living Green in the County

By Tracey Gold Bennett
WI Staff Writer

Many people made resolutions to live better, save money and be kinder to the earth in the year 2012. In that vein, there's a farm in Prince George's County that just might help you live up to your New Year's resolution. It's called ECO-City Farms, located in Edmonston, Md.

Established in 2010 on county park land, ECO City Farms provides healthy produce, eggs, and honey to the Port Towns communities, and offers many hands-on educational and vocational training opportunities, including the first-ever urban agriculture certificate program with Prince George's Community College.

In just two years, the nonprofit organization not only built the first urban farm in the county, but grew and sold vegetables year-round, engaged more than 1,000 volunteers, and held the first ever Chesapeake region urban farming summit with 400 attendees.

In addition, produce from ECO-City is available for sale at the Riverdale Farmers Market.

The *Washington Informer* recently visited the operation at ECO-Farms. In this interview, lifelong social activist and ECO-City Farm CEO, Margaret Morgan-Hubbard talks about how the nonprofit enterprise serves as a prototype for sustainable local farming. ECO City's motto? We grow great food, farms and farmers.

WI: An urban farm in the middle of Prince George's County is a novel idea. How did ECO-City Farm come to be and who benefits from the farm? And by the way, how did Edmonston become the location for ECO-City?

Morgan-Hubbard:

Our urban farm in Prince George's County is a response to the fact that roughly 70 percent of all county residents are overweight or obese, and diet-related diseases amongst Port Towns adults and youth have reached epidemic proportions. There are many pockets of the county that are documented food deserts—meaning that food access is limited to snack foods at corner markets, convenience stores or take-out restaurants, with few healthy or nutritious options.

Our first farm is intentionally located in Edmonston, one of the poorest and (until very recently) most polluted communities in the inner-Beltway region. Our target population is the almost 15,000 residents of the Port Towns and vicinity. While only 54 percent of county school children qualify for free and reduced meals (FARM), almost 9 out of 10 of Port Towns students are FARM recipients. All of the elementary and middle schools serving the Port Towns are Title One “low-achieving, high poverty” schools.

We located in the Port Towns because of the many ways the residents, non-profits and the municipal governments are committed to

altering their communities to produce community wellness.

WI: At Claggett Farm there is a work share program – ECO-City has a volunteer program -- what do volunteers do at the farm and what is the incentive?

Morgan-Hubbard: We are not yet as large or stable as Claggett Farm, so that our produce is limited and initially there was nothing to share. We did not secure the land in Edmonston until May 2010. Our almost 1,000 volunteers and trainees helped us to build our farm from the ground up. They did so to learn by doing and because they were inspired by our mission.

WI: How important is eco-sustainability to Prince George's County?

Morgan-Hubbard: Prince George's County was largely farm land until quite recently. Rapid transformation of the built environment with loss of open spaces leads to environmental problems such as water and air pollution. Now is the time to rebalance and plan a greener more balanced future for the county. The county used to measure its development by how many farms were replaced by shopping malls, business development and housing. Now it knows that balanced, environmental sustainable development is a necessity for long-term survival. **WI**