

**2014 National Medal Winner: Brooklyn Botanical Garden
Chidi Duke, Community Member Video**

Ashley Gagnay: Before the children's garden, I never knew where vegetables came from. I just thought veggies came from the store. My name is Ashley Gagnay I'm currently an instructor at the Children's Garden.

Scot Medbury: Brooklyn Botanic Garden is home to the oldest children garden in a botanic garden in the world. I'm Scot Medbury, President of Brooklyn Botanic Garden. The children's garden is sort of an urban farm for kids where children learn to grow vegetables.

Sonal Bhatt: Our kids in the children's garden really get to do the work. They are actually the ones who till the soil, mulch, plant the seeds. My name is Sonal Bhatt and I'm the VP of Education and Interpretation here at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. The Children's Garden was one of a kind when it was made 100 years ago and today it still remains a model around the world for how children's programming in gardens should be done.

SM: The Children's Garden is a beautiful introduction to a wealth of environmental issues and concerns and we're partly raising environmentally literate citizens through this program. Children who've had the experience of working in the Children's Garden learn the value of clean air, of clean water.

AG: When the children walk into The Children's Garden it's amazing to see them experience it just like I did a few years ago. Making a whole in the ground, putting the seeds in, watering it and seeing it grow.

Chidi Duke: I was 11 years old when I started at The Children's Garden. Having my own plot in the garden was a new experience for me because I've never had anything to care for, ya know, anything to take responsibility in. My name is Chidi Duke.

AG: Having a children's garden that's open to kids coming in, it's like their own little piece of land and they're able to feel responsible and take care of it with the tools that are given to them, like watering cans and rakes and trowels, so it just gives them a different experience than being in school.

SM: One of the joys of The Children's Garden is seeing, sort of, cross-aged tutoring where older youth, or teenagers, mentor younger children.

CD: Pull it out, that's ready to go. [conversation in background]

SB: Each year our children's gardeners harvest 4,300 pounds of produce. That's a lot. Carrots, radishes, tomatoes.

CD: I'd bring home fruits and vegetables and I would tell them "oh I grew this today" and my mom would be so happy.

SB: The founders of this garden really felt like it was important for kids to get to know where their food was coming from and to really engage in learning by doing. For a lot of the kids who come to our children's garden this is one of their first true contacts with nature. It's their first chance to really dig in

the dirt, so when they encounter things like insects they are sometimes grossed out or shocked and you'll be surprised at how much they grow over their time with us. They become adopters of good food habits and they really learn nature isn't yucky or scary.

AG: The children get very excited.

SB: It's about wonder and discovery. It's just a place of pure joy.

SM: And perhaps the most remarkable thing is that a mission that was created over a century ago is just as relevant in today's modern society as it was 100 years ago.

SB: I know from talking to the people who have been through this program that it changes lives. That's not a small thing. It makes me feel so proud. Kids really are important in the children's garden and the work they do is important and treating kids with respect like that, that's pretty special.