



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**THE FRANKLIN COUNTY GANTZ ROAD COMMUNITY GARDENS OPEN
FOR THE 2011 GROWING SEASON**

On Saturday, April 16, 2011, the Franklin County Gantz Road community gardens will open at 9 a.m. for the 2011 growing season.

The community gardens on Franklin County's southwest side began in 2008 at the direction of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners to support access to healthy, fresh and affordable foods for Franklin County residents.

"The health and well-being of Franklin County's resident's is so important," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown.

In a recent national county health rankings report conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute, Franklin County, Ohio ranked 65th out of Ohio's 88 counties with only 23 counties having similar or poorer health in their communities.

"Community gardens are an important tool in the fight against obesity and improving our overall health," continued Brown. "They produce nutritious food and create opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education for our entire community."

Community gardens are also an effective way to boost property values and attract new residents, businesses, and jobs by showcasing a commitment to a healthy, green, active lifestyle.

"I'm proud of the strong partnership with the Conservatory. It is a regional tourism asset that boosts this \$7.3 billion industry helping our taxpayers with a per family annual savings of \$1500.00. Additionally, the community gardening helps all people respect our natural resources, and learn to grow healthy foods too," said Commissioner Paula Brooks.

Not only do they produce nutritious food, they can also reduce a family's food budget, preserve green space, serve as a catalyst for neighborhood and community development and create income opportunities for residents.

In 2010 over 600,000 Franklin County residents received Food Assistance through Job and Family Services. “Community gardens are a great resource to help those in need,” said Commissioner John O’Grady. “Last year, gardeners at the Franklin County Gantz Road Community Garden location donated over 400 pounds of fresh produce to local pantries which serve Franklin County’s families, children and seniors.”

This year, 53 Franklin County residents and families will be gardening at the Gantz Road Community Garden. Plots range in size from a square plot (12’x12’), half plot (20’x10’) to a full plot (40’X10’).

On Saturday, gardeners will receive their plot assignments and will have access to the garden during daylight hours as well as on-site water for garden use at all times during the growing season.

The 2011 growing season begins Saturday, April 16 and will run through October 31st.

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Editor’s note: *The entire Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin’s Population Health Institute’s county health rankings report is available on-line at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/ohio>*