



# CENTER FOR HEALTH AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL

20 June 2008

To: Whom it may concern

Re: Daniel Bowman Simon and The White House Organic Farm Project

This year's the Global Environmental Citizen Award of the Center for Health and the Global Environment, Harvard Medical School, focused on the challenge of sustainably feeding a growing world population. Both of our awardees, Kofi Annan and Alice Waters, are meeting this challenge by working to create food systems that provide nourishment and support health, and protect the environment upon which agriculture depends.

In her speech, Alice Waters shared her dreams for a more sustainable future. These two dreams are an "Edible Schoolyard" in every public school in America, and an organic food garden at the White House. Jeffery Sachs, Special Advisor to the current and former United Nations Secretary-General, complemented these dreams in his speech accepting our award on behalf of Kofi Annan.

The Center had invited Daniel Bowman Simon, a young and passionate advocate, to the Awards gala, and, as he listened intently to Alice's speech, he was taken with the idea of establishing an organic garden at The White House. After taking part in a UN-sponsored urban agriculture tour in Brooklyn on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, he resigned his job to "start a farm at the White House." As part of the process, he is creating a non-profit organization, called *Do The Right Things*, dedicated to helping ordinary people share their values with elected officials, and inspire them to lead by example in their own lives. The White House Organic Farm Project is the inaugural campaign. Daniel seems determined to see this farm become a reality when the next president takes office in January, 2009.

With a great sense of urgency, Daniel is quickly assembling a team of expert advisors to develop the strategy and methodology for a farm at The White House. The campaign will be non-partisan, so that when all the votes have been counted and our next president determined, Daniel and his team can provide the president-elect with two deliverables: 1) a petition signed by people of all ages, from across America and around the world; and 2) a step-by-step guide on how to implement a sustainable urban farm on a portion of the seventeen acre site that is arguably one of the most influential and visible pieces of land. On January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Daniel plans to help coordinate a march from the Capitol to the White House with gardeners from across the country, who will carry with them their own heirloom seeds and those passed down from Thomas Jefferson, and plant them.

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Daniel has merged both of Alice's dreams, proposing that public school children will tend the farm, as the keystone of a healthy, nourishing curriculum. They will farm alongside, and in cooperation with, people with physical and mental disabilities who are in need of skills training and the therapeutic benefits provided by working the land. Rainwater will be stored to provide irrigation for the farm, reducing the impact on the City's potable water supply. The food "wastes" will be composted and used as life-sustaining fertilizer. After feeding the President, the President's family, and guests, as well as the White House farmers, the bounty will fill our Capital City's food pantries with fresh, healthy produce, delivered petroleum-free by volunteers on bicycle and foot. Birds, bees, and butterflies will flock to the White House grounds to eat and to pollinate the crops, and enhance biodiversity, which is necessary for sustaining human health.

This farm is intended to inspire visiting heads of state to also plant healthy, "edible schoolyards" in their own nations, and U.S. governors to invite children to farm the environs of their homes. Daniel hopes to inspire others to take up such farming and hopes these actions will stimulate small-scale gardening projects in many nations.

In an era that needs strong leadership and paradigm shifts, the White House Organic Farm Project could not be more timely. Such a visible model of sustainability will not only help our awardees realize their dreams, but, in synergy, help the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard fulfill our mission and vision to foster a healthy, environmentally- sustainable future for all.

Sincerely yours,



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The mission of the Center is to help people understand that our health, and that of our children, depends on the health of the environment, and that we must do everything we can to protect it.