



## **PRESS RELEASE**

February 17, 2010

# **Delegation from Pottawattamie County and North Omaha Attend Training with MacArthur Fellow Will Allen at Growing Power in Milwaukee WI.**

Members of the Pottawattamie County Farm to Fork Local Food Policy Council, local food producers, representatives from the City of Council Bluffs, and representatives from communities in North Omaha met with Will Allen, founder and CEO of Growing Power in Milwaukee, WI over the past weekend (February 12, 2010).

Growing Power ([www.growingpower.org](http://www.growingpower.org)) is an internationally recognized leader in urban agricultural technologies as well as a leader in developing year-round growing techniques for northern climes. Will Allen is a MacArthur Fellow for his work in these areas (<http://www.macfound.org/site/c.1kLXJ8MQKrH/b.4537249/>).

The 20 person delegation met with Will Allen, his staff, and Milwaukee City Commissioner Rocky Marcoux to discuss ways to bring year round food production to Southwest Iowa in order to increase access to healthy local food in our communities. The delegation toured the urban farm and learned about the system of intensive farming techniques that also include aquaculture, vermicomposting, and livestock production.

The delegation learned about the economic development potential in a project like Growing Power; a self-sustaining facility that employs forty full-time employees earning between thirty and sixty thousand dollars a year. The facility also works with community groups to get vacant land into food production so that people can earn a stable income by growing food for local schools, institutions, restaurants, grocery stores, and personal consumption.

Council Bluffs City Council Member Matt Walsh said that he sees a value in creating a program like the one they visited in Milwaukee for Pottawattamie County and Council Bluffs; saying “locally grown food provides jobs, grows our local economy, and produces healthy food.”

With broad support in both Iowa and Nebraska, the delegation hopes to import the technologies presented at the training for development in the communities of Pottawattamie County, North Omaha, and throughout the two states. Developing a similar project here could provide technical assistance and training opportunities to current and potential local food producers in order to make healthy, local food available year-round in our communities.

Margarite Goodenow, Chairperson of the Pottawattamie County Farm to Fork Local Food Policy Council, felt that the methods used at Growing Power were “a forward thinking technology that if integrated into our local food system would offer many benefits.”

Nebraska State Senator Brenda Council (District 11), after attending the training in Milwaukee said she was “impressed with the operation; and sees opportunities to model a local program on the Growing Power facility to encourage local food production and increase economic opportunity and job growth in her district.”

This training opportunity was made possible by a grant from the Iowa West Foundation, whose generous support for developing community based food systems in Pottawattamie County has helped to create a sustainable local food movement in the county.

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