

Lexi Mason
The GLO Center
518 E. Commercial St.
Springfield, MO 65803

Ms. Bridget Dierks (Grant Programming)
The Community Foundation of the Ozarks
P.O. Box 8960
Springfield, MO 65801

Dear Ms. Dierks:

The GLO Center, Springfield, Missouri's longest-standing LGBTQIA+ nonprofit, provides necessary outreach and advocacy not only to members of our LGBT community, but we also serve Springfield's local community at large. To better serve the area, we are currently seeking funds for our community garden, which provides resources for low-income members of our greater community to become involved in an enriching experience and learn healthy habits.

We are reaching out to you to ask that you assist us in our mission to provide and support a more welcoming and inclusive community where everyone can thrive. The Community Foundation of the Ozarks has previously supported us in the past, and you have a history of showing support for other valuable community projects with goals such as ours.

Defining the Problem

The last few years have proven to be a difficult and revealing time. The Covid-19 pandemic had the unforeseen (albeit necessary) second order effect of magnifying, and bringing a sense of urgency to, some of our nation's most systemic societal issues. Some of those issues include: racism and discrimination towards minority and historically marginalized communities (such as LGBTQIA+), increased homelessness, and the increased prevalence of "food deserts" within low-income communities. Unfortunately, many of these issues frequently overlap. This tends to create even more challenges for our minority and marginalized communities. Some of the challenges created are: an increased distrust and disconnection with the community they call home, a decreased accessibility to healthy sustainable food sources, and ultimately, a decreased engagement in local politics, which in turn tends to marginalize and disenfranchise them further.

Our Solution: Tangible Action and Community Engagement

As you are keenly aware, these challenges are not foreign to the Ozarks. To help combat them, The GLO Center has created a community garden program known as the Jim House Community Garden. The goal of our program is to promote community engagement with the LGBTQIA+ community, create an inclusive cultural environment predicated on a diversity of ideas and worldviews, provide healthy food sources to our homeless and underserved populations, and to help educate the Springfield community on how to effectively cultivate a prosperous urban garden. Studies have shown that community garden programs such as ours are able to reduce the effect of food deserts in low-income populations, strengthen community bonds, and promote positive environmental externalities, such as improved air and soil quality. However, The GLO Center lacks the essential funding to fully implement this program and maximize its potential.

The focus of our organization has always been on serving the LGBTQIA community in the Ozarks. Since our founding in 1996 we have worked hard through support, resources, education, and advocacy to make the Ozarks a more welcoming and inclusive community where all can thrive. Through our many inclusive programs, including our community garden project, we work to make this goal a reality. Created in the honor of the Glo's founder, the Jim House Community Garden is one of our flagship projects to support the LGBTQIA community of Springfield. Since its creation in the summer of 2021, The Glo Center has maintained and operated our community garden for the benefit of the wider Springfield community. Located in a historically low-income neighborhood, our community garden goes beyond aiding only the LGBTQIA community and provides support to other peoples in need in the Springfield area. Over the course of our community garden's operation, it has provided fresh produce, gardening courses, and education to a wide variety of local community members, enriching their lives through better nutrition and community engagement. As these examples show, The Glo Center has the experience, dedication, and drive to ensure that our project of expanding this community garden will both succeed and continue to serve the marginalized groups of Springfield.

Funding Request

The current operating budget for our community garden is \$1,000, but this is not sustainable. This budget can barely support the maintenance of our current garden, let alone our educational efforts or any plans to grow. Right now, the community garden only consists of our pallet fence area, tool shed, and our compost area. However, if you see fit to provide us with our requested \$5,000 grant, we would use those funds to purchase the items needed for our expansion and continued operation, itemized below:

| Item | Quantity | Price Per Item | Total |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Electric lawn mower | 1 | \$179.99 | \$179.99 |
| Electric weed eater | 1 | \$32.00 | \$32.00 |
| Load of soil | 1 | \$500 | \$500 |
| Load of fertilizer | 1 | \$905 | \$905 |
| Perlite | 2 | \$5.37 | \$10.74 |
| Garden rakes | 2 | \$9.68 | \$19.36 |
| Shovels | 4 | \$32.99 | \$131.96 |
| Hand rakes | 6 | \$9.89 | \$59.34 |
| Leaf rake | 1 | \$10.99 | \$10.99 |
| Hand shovels | 4 | \$8.95 | \$35.80 |
| Plant labels | 1 pack | \$9.99 | \$9.99 |
| | | | \$1,895.17 |

Additionally, some of the requested \$5,000 grant will be appropriately portioned for our educational efforts. These programs include beginning our new wildflower garden, an introductory course on composting named Composting 101, creating new firefly and butterfly habitats, and adding a 3 sisters garden bed.

Thank you

With your generous support, the Glo center can continue to maintain, grow, and expand our community garden for the benefit of the greater Springfield area. The funds we're asking for today could support community enrichment, education, and health for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

The GLO Center