

Project: Crossroads Community Share Agriculture
Applicant: Allies, Inc.
Address: 1262 Whitehorse Hamilton Square Road,
Bldg A, Suite 101
Hamilton, NJ - 08690-3710

Partners: Rutgers Extension Cooperative
Master Gardeners – (Mercer)

Council Funds: \$45,000

Match Funds: \$ 9,000

Abstract: Crossroads is a community share agriculture (CSA) concept that will provide a productive, sustainable farm business model to employ individuals with developmental disabilities in Monmouth County. A CSA is a connection between a nearby farmer (Crossroads) and people who eat the food that the farm produces. The people support the farm (through purchase of a share), share the inherent risks and potential bounty. Most people with developmental disabilities still have limited employment choices with entry level jobs and workshop settings.

Crossroads offers opportunities for individuals with disabilities who enjoy working outside and to do so, allowing them to be part of a viable business and earn money. Allies' track record in community and business networking is an essential component to successfully launch a new business which will be a unique employment opportunity.

There currently are 22 sustainable CSA's in NJ with waiting lists capitalizing on the emerging market of eating fresh/ local food and being environmentally friendly. With this grant funding we are able to reach the point where the community shares will sustain the CSA on an on-going basis.

Deliverables

- Materials and strategy on purchase of Community Shares
- equipment, field design, and plantings acquired or ready to be delivered (list and discussion of use)
- reports on progress employees performing work and receiving continued training
- crops in place and sustainable sales figures for the period
- examples of growth for successful employee as model for employment options
- discussion of sustainability issues