

Good Afternoon Senators, Delegates, Honorable Members and Guests.

“Today we create history... Today we advocate on behalf of Baltimore City Urban Farmers... Today we salute the work of Black & Brown Farmers accross America.” Let’s get to work!!!

I am Farmer Chippy from The Plantation Urban Farm and together we started a mission to improve the lives of children in Park Heights by growing food on vacant lots. We recruited the community members, leadership, teachers, students, our Delegates and our Senator. We continue to finds innovative ways to include kids at risk in our community into the Urban Farming conversation. The dynamic vibes and resilience of these folks planted a seed inside me, it made me want more so I searched for more and found more confidence, more patience, more acceptance and more assistance. This brought me to the doorsteps of “BLACK EXCELLENCE”.

Today, with continued support of the USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program and our dedication to cleaner greener foods, we have managed to erect an 80ft Hoop House in Park Heights, Baltimore. Here is a look at where our organization is positioned in 2020:

Plantation Park Heights Urban Farm (The Plantation) is located in Park Heights, Baltimore. We grow food, flowers and herbs of various varieties for our community and 4 local Farmers Markets.

Our workforce includes 250 elementary school children from 5 neighboring schools, 33 teachers, 39 parents..... all on a mission to grow 165,000 pounds of food. We are growing Kale with Johns Hopkins University and Sweet Potatoes with University of District of Columbia. We are a Compost Partner with Baltimore Office of Sustainability - “Food Matters Initiative”. We are members of the Baltimore Farm Alliance - Policy and Advocacy Committee and the Baltimore City Delegate for Maryland Farm Bureau. Recently, elected Co-Chair of the NAACP Maryland - Environmental and Climate Justice committee.

Our current funding comes from Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Mayor and City Council of Baltimore in collaboration with Pimlico Community Developement Authority “Slots” Fund.

The Plantation is building the 1st “AfroAgriHood” - a thriving Marketplace, Community Shared Agriculture and Urban Farmer Training Resource Institute right here in Park Heights, Baltimore. We aim to purchase, refurbish and preserve the historic legacy of the 100 year old buildings along the 3800 block of Park Heights Avenue, Baltimore.

We are training-up the next generation of junior urban farmers from Baltimore’s Elementary/Middle Schools to Baltimore’s Urban Farms. We are working closely with Coppin State University, UDC and Morgan State University students to ensure our graduates can move on to the world of higher education. In our efforts to grow 165,000lbs of cleaner greener foods,

develop future farmers, scale up onsite community composting and fight food apartheid. We need all Stakeholders on deck!

We ask that you support HB 1534/Urban Agriculture Grant Program and endorse the Baltimore City Urban Farmer movement as we scale up to feed our communities.

Richard "FarmerChippy" Francis 🧑🏾 🌾

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