

Code	700020
Subject	Todd Alexander
Date	5/3/2010
Interviewer	Michelle Epps
Abstract	Todd Alexander recently moved to Cleveland in the Ohio City neighborhood. He is working on establishing a market garden called Central Roots in Ohio City with the hopes of providing fresh produce for the local neighborhood. Todd Alexander majored in sustainability at Baldwin Wallace and has been active in other sustainability programs with the city of Cleveland. Todd discusses the phenomenon of "food deserts" and the hope that Central Roots will become an asset to the neighborhood.
Special Notes	
minutes:	0:51:23
	0 Intro, born in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Moved to Northeast Ohio when he was eleven years old and just recently moved to Cleveland.
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	2 Describes his neighborhood growing up.
	3 Remembers walking to get blackberries and how the area was being built up. Enjoyed playing in the forest and was "bummed" when the forest was torn down to build new housing.
	4 Discusses why he decided to move to Cleveland. Interned for the Sustainability Movement in Cleveland.
	5 Talks about Cleveland having a self-hate issue.
	6 Talks about why he chose to major in sustainability at Baldwin Wallace.
	7 Recounts playing in the woods when he was a kid and how it effected his choice in choosing sustainability as a major. Every kid wants to play in the woods.
	8 Talks about going to the West Side Market. Discusses the decision to move to Ohio City.
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	10 Talks about why the location was chosen for the garden.
	11 Mentions "food desert" areas.
	12 Defines what a "food desert" is.
	13 The neighborhood chosen for the garden has food access issues.
	14 Discusses that grocery stores carry different types of products to the location of the grocery store.
	15 Describes the neighborhood surrounding the garden. There is a lot of vacant land and looks like the countryside.
	16 Talks about VGS- a vocational school nearby. George Washington Carver Elementary School is being built at the end of the street on Thackery.
	17 Discusses the Cleveland Municipal Housing Authority. Talks about the community's reception of the garden.
	18 Recounts an incident of people on the neighboring streets coming over to volunteer.
	19 People are observing the work being done on the lot and want to get involved.
	20 Talks about cleaning the lot. The neighborhood has a diverse age group and is primarily African American.
	21 Mentions Poullette, the neighbor that lives across the street from the garden.
	22 Talks about older people that moved away from the neighborhood return to hang out with old neighbors.
	23 By altering the lot it will naturally cut down the criminal activity.
	24 Recounts a story about a people having sex in their car in front of the garden in the middle of the day while they were working in the garden.
	25 Discusses concerns about theft and the possibility of installing a fence.
	26 If you are in a community that appreciates the garden the neighbors will protect the garden.
	27 Heard about Re-Imagining Cleveland from OSU extension. Mentions Gardening for Greenbacks grant.
	28 Talks about applying and receiving other grants.
	29 Discusses the process of applying for the Re-Imagining grant.
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	31 Talks about getting funding for a "hoop house." Discusses acquiring letters of support for the grant.
	32 Discusses building a relationship with the new elementary school.
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	34 Describes what a market garden entails. Talks about how they are going to sell their produce.
	35 Discusses competing with the local grocery store for customers.
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	37 Talks about getting the soil quality and the getting the soil ready for planting.
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	39 Discusses making new soil.
	40 Talks about how soon the garden will be able to start selling produce.
	41 Discusses needing to put in purchase order to start bidding on supplies. There are parts of the grant process are taking longer than expected and certain things have risen that no one could have predicted, but this is to be expected since it is a pilot project.
	42 Gives an example of the bidding process for a hoop house.
	43 Needs are being met because they are given the opportunity to start the garden free of charge.
	44 It would have been helpful to have agricultural specialist consulted sooner in the process with consistent meetings with the specialists throughout the whole process.
	45 Talks about expectations after funding ends, hoping the funding is just a jump start and will be able to survive on the market garden revenue.
	46 Discusses plans over the next five years for the garden, would like to physically change Thackery Avenue and all two acres in the lot used for gardening or events.
	47 Would like to be able to employ people to work in the garden.
	48 Talks about the possibility of taking on some of the other vacant lots on the street for the garden.
	49 Discusses the uncertainty of how the garden will impact property values of the neighborhood. Talks about long term goals for the garden.
	50 One of the largest needs for the city of Cleveland is for projects to be permanent.
	51 End.
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